SCHOOLED: Back to School

After all these years, I still remember the exhilaration of the first day of school. I grew up in a conservative family and we didn't sport name-brand clothing, shoes, coats. In fact, most of our clothes came from Goodwill where my mom loved to shop. Us kids didn't have all the bells and whistles, but we did have everything we needed. And we ALWAYS had new duds for the first day of school.

I recall not being able to sleep the night before each first day. I remember the new outfit, complete with shoes and hair ties and a brand-new backpack, all laid out ready for the next day. The book-bag which had to last all year even smelled new and it was stuffed with unblemished college-rule notebooks, un-creased brilliant colorful folders, No. 2 pencils and brand-spanking-new erasers, and crayons and markers that had never yet touched a page.

So, I was thinking about life. Everyday, we are writing our very own auto-biography; and when we come into new experiences, it's almost like the first day of school. We show up at the bus stop of life, dolled up and dressed for success. But life's memoirs have a way of unraveling us at our very seams until we feel as if we might come undone. And while the world tells us there are no do-overs in life, there is a God who is head-over-heels in love with you and me; and is just waiting to be invited in so He can clothe us in garments of grace for every first that happens. No matter what marks life has scrawled across the blackboard of your life and mine, His grace obliterates even the eraser marks left behind from our mistakes. And He always promises to instruct us in ways beyond our own understanding. Welcome to your life, child. The Lord is here to guide and teach you with great patience and perseverance.

Colossians 3:9-10, 12-14, "'Don't lie to one another. You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it. All the old fashions are now obsolete…

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.'" (MSG)