



# TAKEN BY STORM

VOLUME TWO

*Fighting the Good  
Fight of Faith*

RANDALL J. BREWER







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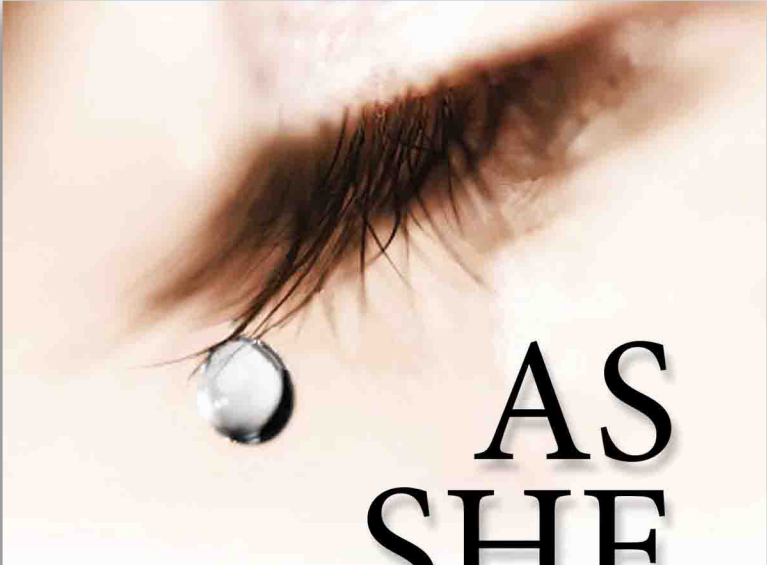


This book and the complete  
series of *Taken By Storm* is  
dedicated to my publisher,  
Paul Baker, a friend who  
sticks closer than a brother.



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A close-up photograph of a woman's eye, looking down. A single, large, clear tear is falling from the eye. The eyelashes are dark and long. The skin around the eye is fair.

# AS SHE SLEEPS

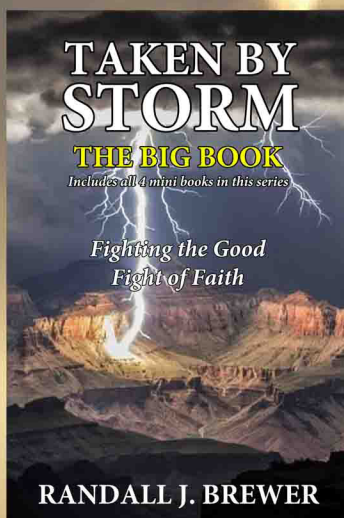
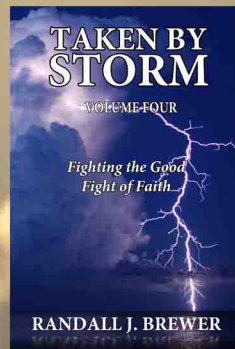
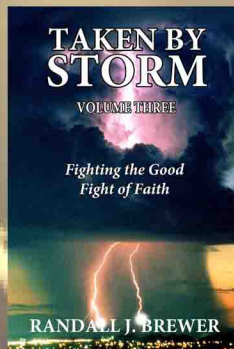
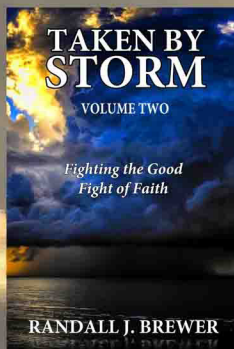
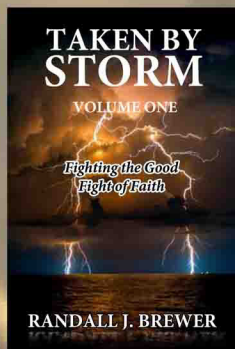
The story of a woman  
who found strength in the  
midst of adversity

**RANDALL J. BREWER**



# TAKEN BY STORM

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# CONTENTS

YOU MAY CLICK ON ANY  
TITLE OR PAGE NUMBER  
TO GO DIRECTLY TO THAT PAGE

## FORWORD

**SORRY I MISSED YOUR CALL,  
GOD** ..... i

## INTRODUCTION

**FAITH MADE EASY** ..... ii

### 1. SHIELD OF FAITH..... 1

*Life or death fight* ..... 1

1. *The Truth* ..... 2

2. *Righteousness*..... 3

3. *Your feet* ..... 3

4. *Salvation* ..... 4

5. *The Word* ..... 5

6. *The greatest defense* ..... 6

### 2. THE EVIDENCE OF FAITH

..... 10

*Gratefulness equals faith* ..... 10

*Spiritual fragrances* . ..... 11

*The spirit of thanksgiving* .... 12

*Self-pity is toxic* ..... 13

*Self-pity is a dangerous thing*  
..... 16

*Be thankful, grateful* ..... 18

*God's view on thanksgiving*  
..... 19

### 3. THE TIMING OF FAITH .....21

*Press on, never giving up* ..... 21

*Now faith* ..... 22

*Patience works perfection*.... 23

*Attitude is everything* ..... 24

*Understanding time* ..... 25

### 4. THE CRUCIBLE OF FAITH..28

*Spiritual strength meter*..... 29

*Spiritual meter reading*..... 29

*God: No restrictions* ..... 30

*The mechanics of faith* ..... 31

*God is a responsible God* ..... 32

*In the fire is strength* ..... 33

*Commitment equals  
responsibility*.....34

*Our primary desire* ..... 36

Author's Bio .....Back Cover



The background of the entire image is a dramatic landscape. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a bright rainbow visible in the distance. Below the sky is a flat, grassy field with some distant hills or mountains. The overall tone is somber and powerful.

# THE **KINGDOM** OF GOD

**suffers violence,  
and the violent  
take it by storm.**

Matthew 11:12

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## SORRY I MISSED YOUR CALL, GOD.

---

**I** once heard a person say in the midst of their tribulation, “Ok God, what’s the lesson this time so I can hurry up and get on with my life?”

This individual saw his trials and short-lived troubles as two flat tires instead of a rough and bumpy road he was required to navigate. Too many times we as Christians focus a great deal on the trial, rather than the cause of the trial and the Godly solution.

In *Taken By Storm*-Volume 2, the faith that overcomes the trials in our lives is explained, which by-the-way troubles aren’t always God’s ideas or the devil’s schemes. Far too frequently we bring trouble on ourselves through bad choices or carnal thinking. Many times we make decisions without checking with God first. But I can promise you He will get blamed, regardless.

One of the captivating aspects of the Bible is we find men and women of God in much worse situations than we’ve ever experienced, and yet God talked to them and they listened, and they were saved from their tragedies. Sometimes we need to be painted into a corner in order to finally hear God’s voice. Sometimes we just need to run out of options, except the One.

If you’re in a situation with no way out and you’re at a loss as what to do, because all seems hopeless and you’re out on a limb with the wolves below waiting for you, guess what: God is calling you.

Answer Him, “First, let me say *thank you* for your saving grace. And now about my problem... I understand you have solutions.”

Paul Baker,  
Publisher and Covenant Partner of Randall J. Brewer



INTRODUCTION

## FAITH MADE EASY

by Randall J. Brewer

I am greatly moved in my spirit by Ps. 46:1-3, “God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though it’s waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with it’s swelling. Selah.”

Have you noticed that all the heroes of the Bible didn’t have life so easy? Look at all the hardships Joseph, Moses, David, Paul, and even our Lord Jesus went through. Thankfully, each one of them displayed an unending dependency on God.

Peter writes, “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy” <sup>1 Peter 4:12,13</sup>.

The Message© Bible puts it this way, “Friends, when life gets really difficult, don’t jump to the conclusion that God isn’t on the

job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner.”

The question is, “When is His glory revealed?”

- In heaven? *Absolutely!*
- At the rapture? *Positively!*
- Now? Today? In this life? *Most certainly!*

Does the Word not say that He will supply all our need “according to His riches in glory”? The Bible also says that it is through faith that we reach into the realm of glory and bring God and His supernatural provision down to our natural, physical world.

To walk by faith we must forever take heed to the words of the Apostle Paul recorded in 2 Cor. 4:18, “We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Isn’t that exciting? The struggles we have today are subject



to change. When a trial comes our way we can rise up and boldly declare, “This too shall pass!”

The secret is to not focus on those problems which can be seen in the natural realm, but to look at the answer which is on a higher plane in the realm of glory. After all, faith is “the evidence of things not seen” <sup>Heb. 11:1b</sup>.

I am convinced beyond all doubt that it is not hard to receive from God. It really isn’t. He is called “Jehovah Jireh” <sup>Gen. 22:14</sup>, the Great Provider. Our God is a loving Father who desires to pour out abundant blessings and supernatural provision into the lives of His children.

Rom. 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.” If He did all that for us while we were yet sinners, how much more does He desire to do for us now that we are His children?

The prophet Jeremiah caught sight of this revelation when he wrote in Jer. 29:11,

***“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you a future and a hope.”***

And let’s not forget the most famous verse of all, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” <sup>John 3:16</sup>.

Indeed, God’s greatest desire is to bless His children, but if the truth be told– the majority of all believers do not believe this proven reality. They hope He’ll answer their cry for help and when they do pray, their fingers are crossed for sure.

They struggle to believe their prayers will even get God’s attention, and consider themselves blessed if maybe one out of every ten prayer requests get answered, if that many.

Why is this so? Because in reality they are not doubting God and His willingness to bless them, but instead have a lack of confidence in the faith they have already received from God when they got born-again <sup>Rom. 12:3</sup>. They lack *faith in their faith* and their ability to use it, because they have a gross misunderstanding of how easy the walk of faith really is.

As I said, it is not hard to receive from God and walking by faith is one of the easiest things to do. In fact, people do it every day of their lives. They turn on a light switch, because they believe the light will come on when they do.



That's faith! People put the keys in the ignition switch of their car, because they believe it will start when they turn the key. Every day people wake up and go to work, because they believe the following Friday they'll receive a paycheck from their employer.

These are all examples of people walking by faith in the natural realm. It is a sad commentary that most people have more confidence in Commonwealth Edison and the Ford Motor Co. than they do in the Creator of the universe, and the faith that is already on the inside of them.

Think about it.



# 1

## THE SHIELD OF FAITH

*"Above all, taking the shield of faith."* Ephesians 3:16

A student in a Bible college was talking with one of his professors and was excited to tell his mentor how well his life was going, "When I first came here I was so tempted and tested I could barely keep my head above water. But now, praise God, my life at seminary has smoothed out. I'm not being tempted at all!"

The professor looked deeply alarmed and this was not the reaction the student was expecting. "That's about the worst thing I could have heard," he told the surprised student. "That shows me that you're no longer in the battle! Satan isn't worried

about you anymore."

### LIFE OR DEATH FIGHT

Since the enemy only opposes those who are the greatest threat to him, all those anointed by God should forever be prepared to confront spiritual attack. Because our adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour

<sup>1 Peter 5:8</sup>, we are instructed by Paul to "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" <sup>Eph. 6:11</sup>.

The Message® Bible says, "God is strong, and He wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget





in a couple hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the devil and all his angels.”

This equipment is called the armor of “God” because He both prepares and bestows it. We have no armor of our own that will be armor of proof on the day of battle. Nothing will hold up under the onslaught of the enemy but the armor of God.

Calling the day the devil attacks you an “evil day” <sup>Eph. 6:13</sup>, Paul goes on to list the various items of armor that the believer must put on in order to face and defeat the enemy.

## 1. THE TRUTH

He says in vs. 14a to “Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth...”

Every piece of armor that the Roman soldier wore was fastened to his belt and this signifies that the foundation of all we do is to be based on truth. And what is truth? In Greek the word “truth” is defined as ‘the reality lying at the basis of an appearance; the manifested, veritable essence of

a matter.’ In other words, truth is a growing knowledge and understanding of the scriptures and how they apply to life. Jesus said, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life...**” <sup>John 14:6a</sup>.

Jesus was the perfect expression of truth, not only in what He said but also in sincerity and the integrity of His character. Jesus once said that the person who heard and accepted the truthfulness of His Word and trusted totally in Him was likened to a man who built his house on a rock <sup>Luke 6:46-49</sup>. When the storms came the house stood up against every attack and test, because it was built on a secure foundation.

On the other hand, the man who built his house on the sand and did not have a proper foundation, found that his house was swept away when the storm came.

The foundation of truth is that which agrees with final reality and the storms of life bring out into the open and prove what your foundation is.

In order to survive the storm and it’s various tests and trials we must first put on the belt of truth

*The day the devil attacks you is an “evil day.”*



which means to wholeheartedly accept God's Word and His faithfulness in the fulfillment of His promise as exhibited in Christ.

## 2. RIGHTEOUSNESS

Paul next says to "put on the breastplate of righteousness" <sup>Eph. 6:14b</sup>. The breastplate protects the heart and all the vital organs of the upper body. To win a war a soldier must be well armed for battle, but if inwardly he has not a good heart, his armor will be of little use to him.

In the Bible the word "heart" represents the center of your innermost being which is your spirit.

You are a spirit, you have a soul, and you live in a body. It is from your heart which faith proceeds and allows you to believe the Word of God.

Paul said in 1 Thess. 5:8 to put on the breastplate of faith and love. Faith and love make up the righteousness of God for by faith we are united to Christ and by love to our brethren. Jesus said in Matt. 6:33a, **"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..."** Righteousness is the character or quality of being right or just. It is

that which conforms itself to the revealed will of God.

For the most part, righteousness can be defined as that gracious gift of God to man whereby all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are brought into a right relationship with God. The person who trusts in Christ becomes "the righteousness of God in Him" <sup>2 Cor. 5:21</sup>. In Christ, we become all that God requires us to be, all that we could never be in ourselves because of the bondage of sin.

*The heart represents  
the center of your  
innermost being.*

## 3. YOUR FEET

The next piece of armor we are to put on is found in Eph. 6:15, "and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

The Amp-lified® Bible says, "And having shod your feet in preparation (to face the enemy with the firm footed stability, the promptness and the readiness produced by the good news) of the Gospel of peace."

Shoes, or greaves of brass, were part of the military armor of a fighting warrior <sup>1 Sam. 17:6</sup> and its purpose was to protect the feet



from gall-traps and sharp sticks which were laid in the way in order to obstruct the marching of the enemy.

The gospel of peace enables us to walk with a steady pace in the way of the Lord without being hindered or overcome by the difficulties and dangers that may be on the path we are traveling.

To be ready for combat we must not be easily provoked nor prone to be quarrelsome. We must show gentleness and long suffering to all men and this will prevent many temptations and persecutions from coming our way.

Prov. 15:1a says, "A soft answer turns away wrath" and Ps. 37:7 instructs us to "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret - it only causes harm."

Webster's dictionary defines "peace" as 'an agreement to end hostilities' and when Jesus calmed the storm He said, "**Peace, be still!**" Mark 4:39.

Peace is a fruit of the Spirit Gal. 5:22 and it comes from Christ. Jesus said in John 14:27, "**Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Let not your heart be**

**troubled, neither let it be afraid."**

Peace is the result of the spiritual prosperity that comes with a harmonious walk with God and is also the evidence of faith. If you are walking by faith you will have peace. Heb. 4:3a says, "For we who have believed do enter that rest..."

*Peace is that sense of rest and contentment which comes when we believe that God is "able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask or think"* Eph. 3:20.

*Cease from anger, and forsake wrath... it only causes harm.*

#### 4. SALVATION

In Eph. 6:17 we read, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

The helmet is that piece of armor that protects the head, and salvation must be our helmet.

To wear the helmet of salvation means to know that your salvation is absolutely secure and complete. Jesus said in John 10:27-29, "**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone snatch them out of**



My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Fathers' hand."

Paul wrote in 1 Thess. 5:8 to put on "as a helmet the hope of salvation." A well founded and well built hope will both purify the soul and keep it from being defiled by the enemy.

Is. 26:3 <sup>AMP</sup> says, "You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You, and hopes confidently in You. So trust in the Lord - commit yourself to Him, lean on Him, hope confidently in Him - forever; for the Lord God is an everlasting rock - the Rock of ages."

A good hope will comfort the soul and keep our mind from being troubled and tormented by the storms that come our way.

The desire of the enemy is to attack our mind and tempt us to despair, but a good hope keeps us trusting in God and rejoicing in Him. Heb. 10:35 says, "Therefore, do not cast away your confidence which has great reward." Hope, therefore, is the confident and

favorable expectation of future good. It's the blueprint of faith.

Jer. 29:11 says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Hope is a goal setter and faith is the power to bring what is hoped for into manifestation.

Heb. 11:1a says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for..." Many people, however, do not use their faith because in their minds

they think their storms are bigger than God. It is for this reason that Paul tells us to "be transformed by

the renewing of your mind" <sup>Rom. 12:2</sup>. This comes about when we use the only offensive weapon in the armor of God called "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17)

*Hope is the confident  
and favorable expectation  
of future good.*

## 5. THE WORD OF GOD

Heb. 4:12a says, "For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword."

The Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible says the Word is "alive and full of power - making it active, operative,



energizing and effective.”

Mans’ mind has been darkened by sin <sup>Rom. 8:7</sup> and must be brought to the place where it thinks as God thinks. To do this we must continually use the sword of the Spirit and say what God says.

This comes about when we study, meditate, feed on, practice, and confess the Word of God. In the wilderness Jesus resisted the temptations of Satan by saying, “It is written...” <sup>Matt. 4:4, 7,</sup>

<sup>10.</sup>

When you confess the Word over your storm, the enemy will flee and the rough waters and blowing wind will become peaceful and still.

In the sixth chapter of Ephesians, Paul strives diligently to persuade his readers to put on the whole armor of God. Truth, righteousness, peace, salvation, and the Word are to be used in the warfare against the forces in the unseen world against which we are powerless except through the aid of Christ.

## 6. THE GREATEST DEFENSE

There is, however, one piece of armor which Paul seems to give special attention to. In vs. 16 he writes, “above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy.”

The phrase “above all” literally means ‘in addition to.’ All the armor is important but only this piece can extinguish and put out all the fiery darts of the evil one.

Storms such as disease, financial setbacks, condemnation, fear, and family problems are but a few of the woes that can be quenched with the shield of faith.

In our fight with the devil, we are not in a game of “*win a few, lose a few.*” In the game of life, we play until we win, and Christians everywhere need to develop within themselves a killer instinct when dealing with the devil. His sharp, pointed arrows are real and they are aimed and shot at the born-again believer with the deadly intention to “kill, steal, and destroy” their life.

Since there is no armor for the back we must not expose

*Man's mind must  
be brought to  
the place when  
it thinks as God  
thinks.*



ourselves by turning and running away when the enemy's onslaught begins. In the good fight of faith we must walk headfirst into the storm with the shield of faith ever before us.

It is important to realize that this *shield of faith* is not a small round shield that is held on the arm by two narrow straps thus leaving many parts of the body exposed. A Roman shield covered the whole body which the soldier could hide behind when the enemy shot their arrows at him.

The best warriors would have another person called an armor-bearer go before them with the shield, and when the onslaught began both would hide behind the shields' wall of protection.

Likewise, your whole life is to be protected and shielded by faith. It doesn't take much faith to receive from God, it just takes active faith. Faith is to be a way of living and not just something you use when you get into trouble.

The born-again believer must...

*sit by faith,  
sleep by faith,  
eat by faith, and*

*walk by faith.*

The shield of faith must be kept in front of you at all times. Do not lay it down or sit it aside. Be consistent and take it with you wherever you go. Don't leave home without it.

Rom. 10:17 says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

***Maintaining a constant confession of what the Word says about you will keep the shield of faith before you at all times.***

Do not lay down your shield of faith and wait until a problem arises before you confess the Word in that specific area. Use the shield of faith and confess what you have need of before you need it.

Faith is not to be used only when you get hit by an arrow. On the contrary, faith is to be used before the arrow leaves the enemy's hands. Notice also that the shield protects all the other armor which will not work outside of faith.

For example, Heb. 4:2 says this about the Word which is

*It takes  
active faith to  
receive from God.*



the belt of truth, “For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them, but the Word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.”

Another example is hope. Hope by itself is only a dream. Hope needs the substance of faith in order for it to do any good <sup>Heb. 11:1</sup>.

It also goes without saying that righteousness and peace also need faith before they will be of any benefit to the believer. All the pieces of armor are important to the believer, but for sure the shield of faith needs to be the first thing the enemy sees when he looks your way.

As Christians we are not of this world and the shield of faith is needed, because the world which we are in is involved in unbelief and is under the control of the devil.

1 John 5:19 <sup>AMP</sup> says, “We know positively that we are of God, and the whole world around us is under the power of the evil one.” The evening news will reveal the negativity of this planet.

This world always has a negative report, and all too often Christians pick up on this negative spirit and eventually they too just get plain negative.

Faith, on the other hand, always has a good report. Heb. 11:2 <sup>AMP</sup> tells us, “For by faith, and trust and holy fervor born of faith, the men of old had divine testimony borne to them and obtained a good report.” And what is a good report? It’s doing what God does and saying what God says in any given situation.

Faith is a relationship with Jesus, and since Jesus is the Word (John 1:1,14), then faith is a relationship with the Word.

A good report is when we confess faith-filled words based on the holy scriptures. Saying you are dying of cancer is a bad report, whereas confessing “By Jesus’ stripes I’m healed” <sup>1 Peter 2:24</sup> is a good report. Always confess that your cup is half full and not half empty.

Jesus said in John 8:31,32, “If you abide in My Word you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth

*The shield of  
faith needs to be the  
first thing the enemy  
sees when he looks  
your way.*



shall make you free.”

Notice the phrase “you shall know the truth.” In the Bible the deep physical intimacy between husband and wife is defined by the word “know.” Gen. 4:1a says, “Now Adam knew his wife and she conceived...” In order to walk victoriously one must likewise love the Word in the same way a man loves his new bride on their wedding night. They are so much in love and so devoted to one another that nothing could pull them apart or come between them.

Gen. 2:24 says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” You too, must cling to and become united with the Word until the words of God are continually flowing out your mouth. God told Joshua, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success”

Josh. 1:8

If you also will heed these words of instruction, then and only then will the Word be able to

“make you free.”



## 2

### THE EVIDENCE OF FAITH

*"But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory  
through our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Cor. 15:57.*

**I**n every fight there is a winner and a loser and in the good fight of faith "we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us" Rom. 8:37.

#### GRATFULNESS EQUALS FAITH

Paul writes in 2 Cor. 2:14-16a, "Now thanks be to God Who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us manifests the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To one we are the aroma of death to death, and to the other the aroma of life to life."

God leads you to victory and the steps you take are steps of thankfulness. Giving thanks is the most powerful expression of faith there is and it increases your capacity to receive from God.

The Message® Bible states, "In the

Messiah, in Christ, God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us, He brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breath in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way to salvation - an aroma redolent with life. But those on the way to destruction treat us more like the stench from a rotting corpse."

Through-out the Old Testament, priests were commanded to burn incense that would become a sweet fragrance in the nostrils of the Lord. This is what you





will become when you develop a lifestyle of giving thanks unto His holy Name.

## SPIRITUAL FRAGRANCES

Victory has a smell to it. You can smell the fragrance of victory. Spiritual things have a smell to them and so often we miss out on these vital truths because we're so caught up in the natural, physical world. You need to realize that God intends for His people to be fragrant, to have a heavenly odor radiating out of them, a sweet aroma that is pleasing to the Lord.

You are to smell like life, like victory. Giving thanks will cause a heavenly fragrance to radiate out of you. You can't smell this spiritual fragrance with your natural senses like you would perfume or cologne. No, this is a spiritual smell and it is not imaginary. It is real in the same way that God is spiritual and He is real.

How you smell can affect how well you feel and perform in life. You can smell like depression and defeat or you can smell like victory and newness of life.

It all begins with having a grateful heart that is forever

giving thanks unto God. Saying "thank you" is more than a polite response. It's a powerful, spiritual force that will lead you to victory in the good fight of faith.

***Giving thanks to God before the manifestation comes, is an expression of faith that releases the power and grace of God into your life.***

Jesus set the example when He fed the multitude with five barley loaves and two small fish. John 6:11 states, "And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the wish, as much as they wanted."

Along with giving thanks at the last supper, Jesus also gave thanks to the Father at the tomb of His dear friend Lazarus:

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, **'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.'** Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice,

*Victory has a smell to it.*



**‘Lazarus, come forth!’** And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, **‘Loose him, and let him go’**” John 11:41-44.

## THE SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING

When Jesus encountered these afore mentioned problems, the first thing He did was give thanks to the Heavenly Father. This reveals to us that there is a divine connection between thanksgiving and victory.

Faith will always thank God for things it hasn’t received yet. When faith is expressed God will pour out His grace into your situation to bring to pass that which you are believing for. You gain access to God’s grace through words of thanksgiving.

Developing a lifestyle of giving thanks won’t happen by itself. You must work at it, you must do it day and night, at work, at home, and at play. Make it a habit to say several times a day, “Thank You, Lord!”

Being thankful will keep you focused and connected to God. It’s not faith if you wait until you prayer is answered, to thank

God. No, thank Him before the manifestation. Let every problem and need you have be a reminder to thank Him more.

The devil is forever roaming around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour <sup>1 Peter 5:8</sup>. He performs his evil schemes by offering to the weak and uninformed alternate choices and lifestyles that are contrary to the will of God.

- The Lord offers us blessings and prosperity, whereas the devil brings cursings and poverty.

*Being thankful will keep you focused and connected to God.*

- The opposite of divine health is sickness and disease, and the great enemy of faith is doubt and unbelief.

- There is also an alternate lifestyle to thanksgiving and that is the devilish act of murmuring and complaining.

The root of these “profane and vain babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge” <sup>1 Tim. 6:20</sup> is self-pity.

1 Samuel tells the story of a woman drenched in this sometimes suicidal act of



desperation and what she had to do to receive from God.

The Book of 1 Samuel describes the transition of leadership in Israel from judges to kings. Samuel was the last judge and first prophet and would be used by God to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel, and later David as the king-elect.

### SELF-PITY IS TOXIC

Chapter one describes the events leading up to his birth. His father's name was Elkanah "and he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children" <sup>v.2</sup>.

Elkanah loved Hannah more, but this brought no comfort to his grieving wife. "And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the Lord had closed her womb.

So it was, year by year, when she (Hannah) went up to the house of the Lord, that she (Peninnah) provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat" <sup>vv. 6,7</sup>.

Hannah cried night and day and was almost suicidal. This is

not right. There is no excuse to be this way. The Bible says to come boldly to the throne of grace, not sobbing. God wants to hear words of faith coming out of your mouth, not words of desperation. Hannah was feeling sorry for herself until finally her husband had enough of it. "Then Elkanah her husband said to her, 'Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?'" <sup>v.8</sup>.

Essentially what Elkanah was saying is that, if you don't thank God for what you already have, you can lose it all and not receive from Him in the future. At no time did words of thanksgiving escape out of Hannah's lips and her tears of unbelief "limited the Holy One of Israel" <sup>Ps. 78:41b</sup>. If you're not thankful you will be unthankful, and waiting to give thanks is an act of unbelief.

"So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the Lord. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish" <sup>vv. 9,10</sup>. Silently Hannah made a vow unto the Lord that

*God wants to hear words of faith coming out of your mouth.*



if He would give her a male child she would give him back to the Lord to be His servant all the days of his life.

Still no comfort came to her heart, and so sorrowful was she when the vow was made that the priest who watched her thought she was drunk. “And Hannah answered and said, ‘No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxication drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord’” v.15.

Upon hearing Hannah’s explanation, Eli the priest sent her away and said the Lord would grant her petition. Hannah heard from the Lord and verses 18b-20a shows the Biblical way to receive from Him...

“So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. Then they rose early in the morning and worshipped before the Lord, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel...”

As long as Hannah wept and was sorrowful she did not receive the answer to her prayer. But when the wailing stopped, and along with her husband she began to worship and thank the Lord, then and only then was she able to conceive the son she so desperately wanted.

Samuel grew up to be one of the greatest prophets in all the Bible, but he may not have even been born had his mother not stopped feeling sorry for herself.

*“Get behind Me, Satan!  
You are an  
offense to Me.”*

Jesus was once encouraged to bask in self-pity, and His stern rebuke when this

happened should be a wake-up call to those desirous to walk by faith.

We read in Matt. 16:21-23, “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You.’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘**Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the**



things of God, but the things of men.” The phrase, “far be it from You” literally means ‘pity yourself’ and Satan was using Peter to get Jesus to think about Himself and fall into the snare of self-pity.

The timing of Peter’s rebuke could not have come at a worse time. It happened shortly prior to the Lord’s trial in the Garden of Gethsemane where He fought the temptation to have self-pity and quit. His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even to the point of death, and He fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” Matt. 26: 38,39.

Because of the sin of mankind that He was about to carry to the cross, Jesus knew He would be separated from and forsaken by the Father and this is what made the struggle so severe.

The temptation Jesus faced was whether or not to be led by His feelings and this is precisely what Peter wanted Him to do. The salvation of sinful man was dependent on the Lord winning this battle, thus the harshness of the Lord’s rebuke to Peter.

Never feel sorry for yourself. One of the most destructive things you could do is submit to self-pity. This is pride, selfishness, and unbelief and will cause you to be cut off from the grace of God.

A person who feels sorry for themselves is never thankful, because they feel they deserve whatever is due them. Grace is given to the humble and not to those who think they deserve it.

The main characteristic of a humble person is they are always giving thanks unto God. God “gives us richly all things to enjoy” 1 Tim. 6:17 and the humble receive

this grace as a personal gift from God. Thanksgiving and grace go hand in hand, so never say that you deserve anything. Instead, cultivate a lifestyle of thanksgiving and experience victory every day of your life. The more thankful you are, the more the grace will flow.

There is a story in the Bible about a wealthy man who thought he deserved everything even to the exclusion of others.

King Ahab was the husband of the wicked Queen Jezebel and 1 Kings 21 tells the story of how

*One of the most destructive things you could do is submit to self-pity.*



he wanted to own a personal vineyard next to his palace that belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. This particular vineyard was Naboth's inheritance from his forefathers and he refused to sell it to the king. "So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, 'I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.' And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food" <sup>v.4</sup>.

Ahab was the king and had everything a person could possibly want. He had great wealth and an abundance of land. He had soldiers to fight for him and servants to grant his every wish. Still, he was unthankful for the things he did have and thought he deserved more.

Proverbs 27:20 states, "Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied." If a person is not thankful for what they already have, the more they'll want. They falsely believe they deserve more and will not be satisfied until they obtain even that which belongs to

another. Eccl. 5:10 says, "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity."

## SELF-PITY IS A DANGEROUS THING

...and before long an evil plot was made to bring false charges against Naboth for which he would be stoned to death. This plot was devised by Jezebel when she went into her husband's chamber and fed his self-pity. "But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up" (vs. 25).

Verses 12-16 tell us the details of this evil plot, "They proclaimed a fast, and seated Naboth with high honor among the people. And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him; and the scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, 'Naboth has blasphemed God and the king!' Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones, so that he died. Then they sent to

*If a person is not thankful for what they already have, the more they [will] want.*



Jezebel, saying, ‘Naboth has been stoned and is dead.’ And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, ‘Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.’ So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

An innocent man died because Jezebel fed Ahab’s self-pity. The only thought in the mind of her self-centered husband was that he deserved what belonged to another man.

The favorite subject of the carnal mind in one’s self and Rom. 8:5a states, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh...” The difference between carnal people and spiritual people is what’s on their mind.

The Message® Bible tells us in verses 8-9, “Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is

the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores Who God is and what He is doing. And God isn’t pleased at being ignored.”

So what should Hannah and Ahab have done instead? They should have realized that faith works through love, and so also does thanksgiving. Peninnah had her children and Naboth had his vineyard, so words of praise

and thanksgiving should have flowed out of their innermost being. Love cares about the other person,

and spiritual maturity comes when you can be thankful when another person is blessed.

Rom. 12:15a tells us to “Rejoice with those who rejoice...” and v.14b says “bless and do not curse.” How you treat other people reveals how thankful you are for what the Lord has already done for you. Therefore, never be envious or jealous, but forever strive to obey the words of the Apostle Paul recorded in Eph. 5:20, “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

*Focusing on the self  
is the opposite of  
focusing on God.*



When evil thoughts cloud your mind and prevent you from giving thanks unto God, then special attention must be given to the words of the Apostle Paul recorded in 2 Cor. 10:3-5, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not [what] was according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

This is what Jesus was doing when He rebuked Peter. Peter was trying to put an image on the inside of Jesus and He sternly cast it down. This is what Adam and Eve should have done to the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

We don't receive from God according to His power or what His will is. We receive by faith and faith is expressed with praise and thanksgiving.

When you are unthankful, there is a void inside of you and something bad will fill it. Thoughts of jealousy, envy, hatred, and self-

pity will try to enter in whose only objective is to destroy your life.

Joseph's brothers were envious and it led to bitterness and hatred. They didn't know that love envies not, and if another member is honored then all the members should rejoice with him

1 Cor. 13:4;12:26b

## BE THANKFUL, GRATEFUL

Always give thanks unto God both for what He is doing in your life and in the lives of others. This will give you access to God's grace and Col. 1:12 states, "giving thanks to the Father Who qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light."

To be "thankful" means 'to be grateful, to acknowledge, to remember.' David wrote in Ps. 103:2, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." When you remember all that God has already done for you, praises of thanksgiving will flow out of you. "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name" <sup>Heb. 13:15</sup>.

*Acknowledge [Him]  
when the Lord does  
something good  
for you.*



Acknowledge when the Lord does something good for you, express it, tell it, and give thanks for it.

*Thanksgiving is an exercise in true humility and will qualify you for greater grace.*

Also, “let you conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” <sup>Heb. 13:5</sup>. If you are not thankful and content now, you won’t be later.

## GOD’S VIEW ON THANKSGIVING

A story recorded in Luke 17 reveals to us the Lord’s attitude on the subject of thanksgiving. “Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted their voices and said, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’ So when He saw them, He said to them, ‘**Go, show yourselves to the priests.**’ And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed” <sup>vv. 11-14</sup>.

According to Old Testament

law, you go and present yourself to the priest after you’re healed, not before. When these lepers left to go to the priest they were not yet clean. They acted in faith and as they went, they were cleansed.

“Now one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, ‘**Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?**’ And He said to him.

**‘Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you whole’**” <sup>vv. 15-19</sup>.

It is commonly taught that a leper who is cleansed means that the disease has stopped growing and no longer eats away the skin of the person. However, the dead skin is still there. A leper who is made whole, however, means that the skin that has rotted away gets restored to it’s original condition. This is what happened to the man who returned to glorify Jesus and give Him thanks. Thanksgiving qualified this man for greater

*You can thank your way out of any problem you have.*



grace.

The message to be learned here is that you can thank your way out of darkness into the light, out of defeat and into victory. When you give thanks your bondage will be turned into liberty, your poverty into plenty, and your sickness into health.

Thanksgiving is giving glory to God and magnifying His holy Name. David wrote in Ps. 69:30, “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.” You can thank your way out of any problem you have or you can bask in self-pity and murmur and complain your way into a life of defeat and victory.

The choice is yours. Never let the Lord say of you, “Where are the other nine?”



### 3

## THE TIMING OF FAITH

*"My times are in Your hands."* Ps 31:15a

**P**aul wrote in 1 Cor. 16:9, "For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries."

The Message® Bible says, "There is also mushrooming opposition."

He went on to say in 1 Thess. 3:3,4 "that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know."

When you rise up and set your heart like flint to fulfill the call of God on your life, then you can be certain opposition will come. The Lord said this about the Apostle Paul, "...he is a chosen

vessel of Mine to bear My Name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My Names' sake."

All this opposition should not cause you to give up and walk away, but instead to rise up with a holy determination to do that which the Lord wants you to do. Even Paul said in Phil. 3:7-9a, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him..."

### PRESS ON, NEVER GIVING UP

How did Paul respond to all the trials and opposition in his life? Verses 13b-15a says, "but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press





toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind..."

What did Paul do? He pressed on! He never gave up and he kept going forward. He then told those who are mature to do the same thing. In Phil. 4:1 he said to "stand fast in the Lord." This means you never give up in the face of opposition.

Remember, being a servant of God is not for the weak hearted, and it is only those who finish the race that receive the prize.

## NOW FAITH

Ps. 34:19 says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all." God tells us "what" He is going to do in our lives, but rarely does He tell us "when" He's going to do it. Why is this so? It's because He wants us to keep pressing on. If He told us the answer was soon forthcoming we'd be tempted to slack off in our good fight of faith, and if He revealed we'd be in this season of affliction for a long time to come, we may get discouraged and quit. Not knowing "when" the breakthrough will come keeps

hope alive and Heb. 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Faith is our handle on what we can't see and v.6 says that without faith it is impossible to please God. David wrote in Ps. 31:14,15, "But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me." He told God "what" he wanted - deliverance from his enemies - but he left the decision of "when" this would happen in the hands of God.

*Waiting is a fact of life and we're all going to do it.*

He said, "My times are in Your hand." We must accept God's timing to have peace.

- *Without peace, there is no joy.*
- *Without joy, there is no strength.*
- *Without strength, there is no breakthrough.*

Let's face it, everybody waits. Waiting is a fact of life and we're all going to do it.

- Moses waited 40 years on the backside of the desert;
- Caleb waited 45 years to get



his mountain;

- Abraham waited 25 years for the birth of Isaac;
- Joseph waited 14 years for the fulfillment of his dream, and
- David ran and hid from the evil King Saul for 13 years as he waited to be made king over all of Israel.
- Job, Ruth, and Esther all waited on God to move in their lives.
- Even today Jesus is waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool.

*An attitude of hope  
and expectancy grows  
only under trial.*

## **PATIENCE WORKS PERFECTION**

As you can see, everybody waits. If the truth be told, we spend more time waiting than we do receiving. For the rest of our lives we'll have to deal with things for which we'll be required to wait. Like it or not, this is the lifestyle we are all required to live. We are always going to have to wait for something so we better get used to it. So, we can do it the right way or we can do it the wrong way. Either way, we're still going to have to wait.

If you do it the wrong way you're going to be miserable, and

if you do it the right way you'll live a happy, victorious life. Yes, good things come to those who wait properly. The Bible says that it is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God <sup>Heb. 6:12</sup> which, of course, includes our much needed breakthrough.

Patience is so important that God is called in Rom. 15:5 "the God of patience and comfort." Notice that when you wait properly, your life will be filled with comfort.

Understand that patience is not the ability to wait. It's how you act while you wait.

It's an attitude of hope and expectancy and it grows only under trial. God determines the timing of things in our life and we chose the attitude.

We all need to wait on God with a good attitude. As you endure the trials of life with a good attitude, patience is given and developed. The more you wait the better your patience will be.

James 1:4 says, "But let patience have it's perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." That's a powerful promise!

The Message© Bible says,



“So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.”

We read in vs. 12, “Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.”

### ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

Wait with a good attitude and don’t murmur and complain. You don’t have patience if you have a bad attitude. We should not shun patience but instead should embrace it as if it were our best friend.

Jesus said, “In your patience possess your souls” <sup>Luke 21:19</sup>. One way to possess your soul is to understand that God is different from us. He sees things and does things in a way that is different from our choosing and understanding. Is. 55:8,9 says “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways’, says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your

thoughts.’”

God made us in His image, but since the fall in the Garden of Eden, man has set out to do things his own way. As evidenced in scripture and each of our own private lives, things almost never turn out the way we want then to when we get stubborn and insist on doing things according to how we want them done. Thankfully God, in His infinite mercy, sent Jesus to earth for the purpose of getting man back on track and in line with God’s perfect will.

*We should embrace  
patience as if it were  
our best friend.*

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus set the example for all of us to follow when He prayed “...nevertheless, not My will but Yours be done” <sup>Luke 22:42b</sup>. In the Lords’ prayer Jesus taught us to pray to the Father and say, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” <sup>Matt. 6:10</sup>.

Later in the same chapter He tells us what we must do in order to transfer the priority of doing things our way to the submissive action of allowing God to have His way in our lives. Matt. 6:33a says, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...” What does it mean to “seek first



the kingdom of God”? It means to seek God’s way of doing things.

## UNDERSTANDING TIME

Remember, His ways are above our ways. There are certain things involved with Christian growth and development that if not understood, can cause a believer to get discouraged and walk away from their faith. One of these areas is the subject of time. 2 Peter 3:8 says, “But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.”

Notice the importance Peter puts on us learning this concept. He says “do not forget this one thing...” What he is saying must therefore be important. A similar passage of scripture is found in Ps. 90:4, “For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night.” These scriptures verify that God does not see time in the same light as people do.

For example, in Rev. 22:7a Jesus said, “Behold, I am coming quickly!” This was spoken two thousand years ago and Jesus calls this time frame “quickly”. Here is another example. After the

rapture of the church all believers will attend a reward ceremony called “the Marriage Supper of the Lamb” which will take place during the seven year tribulation period on earth. The deeds of all believers will be reviewed at this time and rewards will be given out for service done unto the Lord during one’s lifetime. It has been estimated that if each believer stood before the Lord for only one minute this ceremony would still take thousands of years to complete. But in time as we know it, the event will take place in seven short years.

*“Do not forget this one thing...”*

These scriptures make it clear that what time means to God and what it means to people are as opposite as night and day. It would benefit us all to search the scriptures and seek out God’s way of measuring time and apply the same principle to our every day lives.

Man measures his existence on planet earth in quantities of time commonly known as seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries and millenniums, whereas God measures time in seasons. Eccl. 3:1 says, “To everything there is a season, a time



for every purpose under heaven.” Webster’s dictionary defines “season” as ‘a time characterized by a particular circumstance or feature.’ A season also has a beginning and an end. In nature there are four seasons that we go through in a calendar year. There is winter, spring, summer and fall. Each one has particular features and different characteristics from the others but it is important that we go through each and every season.

Likewise, in the realm of the Spirit it is also important that we experience all of God’s seasons and go through the different things we go through, so that we develop and grow and mature properly in the things of God. Some things just don’t happen instantly in the Christian life.

Christian maturity is developed and not received and this takes time. Yes, you do receive the fruit of the Spirit when you get born-again, but none of these qualities begin to operate fully and automatically when you get saved. These are developed and this takes time. It takes growth and this is a process.

Any farmer will testify that in order to receive a crop from his efforts, the seeds he sows must go through a planting season, a watering season, a growth and development season, and finally there is the harvest season. All these seasons have different characteristics and features that surround the different stages of growth that the plant is in. A full-grown plant doesn’t mature instantly, therefore, it is vitally important for that plant to go through each and every season in its growth and development.

It is the same way with those in the body of Christ. 2 Cor. 6:2 tells us, “For

He says, ‘In an acceptable time I have helped you.’ Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

There was a time when people could not get born-again, because Jesus had not come to earth yet. There was a time for Jesus to come, a season for Him to walk the earth.

Thankfully, now is the time. Today is the day of salvation. You can get saved now, healed now, and delivered now. At the same time we are told in Phil. 2:12b to

*Christian maturity  
is developed and  
not received.*



“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” The Word must be planted and given time to grow. Since God is a “now” God, people think that if the answer to their prayer is not manifested immediately then something is wrong. This is not necessarily so. There is a process of time involved in walking in the things of God. The Bible says it is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God <sup>Heb. 6:12</sup>.

Patience is a vital ingredient in the walk of faith and is only developed by remaining strong and steadfast in the season of tests and trials <sup>James 1:2-4</sup>.

If things are not going right for you at this time, then you can rejoice knowing that your time of trial is but for a season. And don't forget, every season has a beginning and an end. With confidence you can look at your problem and say, “This, too, shall pass.”

With every Godly principle that you try to inhabit into your life, comes with it a season of testing and growth. God will take you through different seasons that will have particular features

designed to change your life into His image. Learn to recognize the seasons in your spiritual life. Many times you'll grow rapidly, but other times you'll go through a longer period of stabilizing and growth.

With God a delay is not a denial. When He wants to make a mushroom, He does it overnight, but when He wants to make a giant oak tree He takes a hundred years.

***The best things in life take time.***

*Don't forget, every  
season has a beginning  
and an end.*

You gave your life to God, now give Him your time also. Pray as the psalmist did in Ps.

31:15a, “My times are in your hand...” Then stand back and watch the blessings come.



## 4

### THE CRUCIBLE OF FAITH

*"In the world you will have tribulation."* John 16:33

**D**id you know that there is a way to tell how strong you are in the Lord? There is. If you want to know how much you weigh, you go step on a scale. Right? If you want to know how tall you are you go get a tape measure. If you want to know how strong you are physically you go to the weight room and see how many pounds you can lift over your head. But what about spiritually? How can you tell how strong you are spiritually? The answer is found in the trials we face.

***God promises that there will be no trial in our life that we can't overcome.***

In other words, we are stronger in the Lord than anything the devil throws our way. A baby Christian will have "baby" trials. As one grows in the Lord, the trials also will

grow and increase. "New level, new devil." So if you're having big, hard trials then that means you are big and strong spiritually. A baby Christian can defeat and overcome baby trials, and a strong Christian can have a breakthrough over strong trials.

God says that in Him we are all stronger than any trial that comes our way. And it's the size and intensity of the trial that indicates how strong you are spiritually.

During those times when it seems like your world is falling apart, then rise up and rejoice, because in Jesus you are stronger





and mightier than that trial.  
Hallelujah!

### SPIRITUAL STRENGTH METER

A trial is your “strength indicator.” Don’t fret or worry during hard times. Rejoice! The enemy just showed you how strong you are in the Lord. If it’s a big trial then say, “Thank you, devil, for recognizing how strong I am in the Lord.”

Yes, there is a limit on how much he can attack you. He cannot attack you beyond your level of spiritual strength.

You cannot be overcome by the enemy unless, of course, *you let him*. Daily confess out loud, “Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.”

Paul tells us what to do when trials come knocking on our door. Eph. 6:16 says, “above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

Faith is taught throughout the Bible and is the thread of the fabric of God’s Word. It is a spiritual force that is established in the heart and is based on the Word of God. It is a substance

from heaven that like the wind, cannot be seen, but the results thereof can be.

- Faith is everlasting in its nature and eternal in its operation and use.
- Faith is the ability to believe what you have heard, yet have not seen, based solely on your confidence in the speaker.
- It means to have confidence in the testimony of another.

The obvious question to be asked then is, “Who’s doing the speaking?” Is the person speaking reliable and dependable? God is!

Mal. 3:6a says, “For I am the Lord, I do not change.”

- Faith, therefore, means to have a confidence in the absolute truthfulness of every word that comes from the mouth of God.

### SPIRITUAL METER READING

The level of your faith is determined by how well you trust the Creator of the universe. The basis of that trust begins with a thorough knowledge of God, Who is revealed in and throughout His

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Holy Word. The more you read and study the Bible the greater you will come to know Him, thus increasing your potential for faith.

Daniel, for instance, had more knowledge of God than he did of lions. Three times a day he diligently knelt before the Heavenly Father and communed with the King of kings and Lord of lords. As a result of this, Daniel had a God Who was larger than all the lions in the world. The more you know somebody and see what their character is, like the more you'll be willing to put your trust in them and what they say.

### **GOD: NO RESTRICTIONS**

Trusting in the Lord, therefore, is a sure thing because He is an absolute. He never changes. People everywhere, no matter who they are, have the capability of letting you down. This is not so with God.

- God is love <sup>1 John 4:8</sup> and,
- Love never fails <sup>1 Cor. 13:8</sup>.

When we put our trust in the Lord we soon discover that He is more than worthy of our

confidence. Every human being is born into the world with the ability to exercise a natural kind of faith. People crave for the opportunity to put their trust in someone other than themselves.

People want to believe, they need to believe. They want to be able to put their confidence in someone that will not let them down or bring disappointment to their lives. The problem is they believe in people who are always

changing and going through various mood swings, thus are not always dependable. Still, people continue

to believe in them because they are tangible and can be related to with the five physical senses. You can "see" your doctor or the mechanic down the street who promises to have your car repaired by the end of the day, but rarely does.

True Biblical faith, however, is to believe in the unseen. *Natural* faith says "I'll believe it when I see it" whereas *Biblical* faith says "You'll see it when you believe it." You cannot please God by believing what you can see. Even the heathen do that.

In reality, natural faith

*People crave for the opportunity to put their trust in someone other than themselves.*



is nothing more than wishful thinking. The God kind of faith, to be sure, is not based on feelings or the five physical senses, but on the written and revealed Word of God.

A familiar passage of scripture concerning faith is Rom.10:17, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

To better understand faith and how it comes and how it works, one must go back to their first encounter with faith, the day they got born-again. Rom. 10:8-10 says, “But what does it say? ‘The Word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.’”

## THE MECHANICS OF FAITH

This is how faith comes and works.

1. You hear the Word by confessing it out loud with your mouth.
2. Eventually, if you will do this long enough, you will come to believe in your heart those same words you’ve been hearing yourself speak.
3. The moment you do, the exact moment you believe in your heart what you’ve been confessing with your mouth, God will bless you by giving you the faith you need to receive from Him that which you’ve been believing for. *It’s that simple.*

Eph. 2:8 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

### ***What is the gift of God? Faith!***

Rom. 12:3 says that “God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” It goes without saying that whoever gives a gift must first own and possess the gift before they can give it away. The faith God gifts you as a gift is the same faith that He possesses! It’s His faith! Hallelujah!

1 John 5:4 says, “For

*“So then faith comes  
by hearing, and  
hearing by  
the Word of God.”*



whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith." The faith you now have as a born-again believer is "born of God," and is the same faith God used to create the universe. This is what is meant by saying faith is a heavenly substance <sup>Heb. 11:1</sup>. It comes from heaven! It comes from God! It's His faith and He gives it to you as a gift when you believe.

### **GOD IS A RESPONSIBLE GOD**

If giving us His faith were not enough, God has also taken on the responsibility of performing His Word when the believer applies their faith to any given situation. God is faithful and the integrity of the Lord is unquestionable to those who know Him.

Num. 23:19 says, "God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not make it good?" Faith is when you trust God enough to believe that He will perform that which He promised in His Word.

Jer. 1:12 says, "Then the

Lord said to me, 'You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My Word.'" Abraham, the father of our faith, had a strong conviction in his heart concerning the faithfulness of God to perform His Word. Rom. 4:20,21 says, "He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform."

In other words, God has given us His personal guarantee that He will cause to happen whatever it is we are believing Him for, based solely on the Word of God.

Our faith moves the hand of God "Who is able to do exceedingly above all that we ask or think" <sup>Eph. 3:20</sup>. The Amplified® Bible says God will "do super-abundantly, far over and above all that we dare ask or think - infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes or dreams." This is what is meant when Jesus is called "the finisher of our faith" <sup>Heb. 12:2</sup>. We do the believing and He does the performing. Plus, it's His faith! What more could anyone ask?

We must forever be armed

*And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith."*



with the shield of faith, because without exception tests and trials come into the lives of every born-again believer. Oftentimes they come when you least expect it, when everything seems to be going good for you. They come and will continue to come until we all go home to be with the Lord.

Jesus said, **"In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world"** <sup>John 16:33</sup>. Since tests and trials will always come our way, the attitude we have when they do come and what we decide to do about them, will be the deciding factor as to whether or not we live a victorious Christian life.

Tests and trials are not easy and were never meant to be. They do, however serve a purpose. Jer. 9:7 <sup>AMP</sup> says, "Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Behold, I will melt them by the process of affliction to remove the dross and test them; for how else should I deal with the daughters of My people?'"

Ps. 66:10-12 tells us, "For You, O God, have proved us, You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net, You

laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water, but You brought us out to rich fulfillment."

### IN THE FIRE IS STRENGTH

The Bible talks of God's children being refined as silver and gold. This metaphor is borrowed from the technology of refining precious metals, which included heating them in a crucible to see if all impurities had been removed. These metals pass repeatedly through the furnace until all the dross (the melted impurities found in raw ore metal) breaks away and floats to the top.

The refiner then removes all the impurities and disposes of them. It is said that the refiner knows the process is completed when he is able to see his image reflected in the precious metal purified.

God is compared to a refiner of silver and gold, which means *He allows* His people to be cast into the furnace of affliction <sup>Is. 48:10</sup> until they are purified and clearly reflect His image in their lives. Dan. 12:10a says, "Many shall be purified, made spotless and white, and be tried, smelted and refined."

*Tests and trials are not easy and were never meant to be.*



Job, a man who definitely passed through the fire when Satan brought several tests and trials into his life, tells us, “But He knows the way that I take. When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold, pure and luminous”

Job 23:10

Indeed, fire is a blessing if you know how to use it. From one point of view, times of distress constitute a testing of God’s people as to their trust in- and loyalty to God. Sometimes the best place to be is in a position where there is nothing else you can do but sit back and trust God.

With the Red Sea before them and the Egyptian army behind them, Moses told the people of Israel, “Do not be afraid. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” Ex. 14:13,14.

Passing through the fire is a sign of your commitment to God. If you run away from every test and trial that comes your way, “if you faint in the day of adversity,

then your strength is small” Prov. 24:10.

## COMMITMENT EQUALS RESPONSIBILITY

Many people run away from making a commitment to God or anybody else, because with it comes responsibility. In the day and age in which we now live, people do not want to be responsible for anything. They “don’t want to get involved” or they’re “too busy.”

Tests and trials that come as a result of being anointed to serve God will bring change into your life and many people don’t like or

want to change. They run away from change and responsibility as if it were some incurable plague. They run away from the effort, work, and pain that the changes to serve God and to become Christlike require.

Daily they avoid the challenges of improving themselves with spiritual growth and are content to lay back and live the easy life. Tests and trials will require work on their part and most people don’t like to work. They want to take the path of least resistance. They enjoy living

*“Do not be afraid.  
Stand still and see  
the salvation of the  
Lord...”*



in their comfort zone and they crave the quiet life with as little distractions as possible.

They like microwaves and remote control switches. They wouldn't think of getting out of their easy-chair and walking across the room to turn on the television set themselves. These people are not workers, they are floaters. They float through life and take whatever this world throws at them. Whatever will be will be.

It is these lazy people who will never gain prominence in the kingdom of God. They are satisfied at being where they're at, wherever that might be, and will never rise above the level of being mediocre believers. These are the people who back away from the heat of walking through the fire of spiritual growth. They pull back and become only "half-baked." The Bible calls these people "lukewarm" and says that God will spew them out of His mouth <sup>Rev. 3:16</sup>. This statement is hard but true and the sooner the decision is made to face our trials head on and not run away from them, the better off we'll be.

When a test or trial comes

our way the first thing we should do is determine the cause of the fire. God does not ordain all fire and it's not always the devil's fault either. Many times we bring fire into our own lives. We cannot blame God or the devil if we are facing a financial crisis because we violated the proper use of credit cards at Christmas time. We need to accept responsibility for our circumstances, because where we're at today is a result of the decisions we've made throughout our lives. We need to be teachable

and learn from our mistakes, because Satan will fight and attack you through your lack

of knowledge. If we will refuse to panic when the tests and trials come, if we stay connected to Jesus through the fire, then ultimately spiritual growth will come.

Pain always precedes promotion. Many Christians fail to grow, because they never see the connection between their problems and their future dreams and victories. A crisis is a signal for you to learn and grow, not lose.

Your problem is your promotion. A problem will introduce you to yourself and

*Pain always  
precedes promotion.*



cause you to find out what you're made of. Every obstacle will bring change into your life. You'll either be stronger because of it, or you'll be weaker.

Great leaders are those who refuse to quit, but instead will rise above their problems. All born-again believers should view the tests and trials that come their way as opportunities for their lives to be built up and molded until they become mature in the Lord. This is how holiness comes and God Himself said, "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

Do not let your head hang low and confess that you're walking through the valley. In Christ there are no valley experiences. Some mountains are just higher than others.

### OUR PRIMARY DESIRE

The primary desire for believers should not be to live a trouble free life, but rather to develop inside themselves those qualities that will mold and shape them into the very image of Christ. Surprisingly, this is the purpose hardships serve. No pain, no gain. Maturity and strength of character always comes to the

believer when they respond to the tests and trials of life in the proper way.

It is faith that causes one to rise up in triumph over their troubles and to rejoice in the midst of their sufferings. Pressure, hardship, and affliction produces patience inside of you, and as you put your hope in Jesus, unwavering endurance will create in you the character needed to stand tall as you walk through the pitfalls of life.

*Pressure, hardship,  
and affliction  
produces patience.*

This in turn produces joy, and the strength you receive from this spiritual fruit will give you the confidence and hope to put your faith in God "Who always leads us to triumph in Christ" <sup>2 Cor. 2:14</sup>.

God never promised us an easy life, but He did say in Jesus we could have a victorious life. Life is what you make it, whether good or bad, therefore, on the evil day when calamity strikes, go to Ps. 91 and meditate therein day and night. As you do you will come to realize that like the three Hebrew children you can be in the midst of the refiner's fire and not be burned.

And when you exit the



furnace of affliction you will come  
out smelling like a rose.







**Randall J. Brewer** has been faithfully serving the Lord since the day he first bowed his knees before Him in the summer of 1974.

Since that time Randall has stepped through every door that the Lord has opened for him and over time he has been involved with a children's ministry, a teenage street ministry, and has led a Christian singles ministry. He has been involved with an outreach to those in prison and many inmates have been blessed as the result of his efforts.

Randall has also managed a church bookstore, has been the substitute host of a three hour Christian radio program, and has taught Bible classes at church and hosted many home cell groups.

Recently the Lord had him write the eye opening story "Heaven: The Great Adventure" with the promise that it would open doors all over the world, giving those who read the message the incentive to grow closer and stronger in their own personal walk with the Lord. Since the completion of this book, Randall's work has been translated into several languages, and invitations have come in to teach all over the world.



Randall and his beautiful wife Anne Marie have been bonded together by one God, with one love, for one purpose. They know firsthand the trials and pain that come with having a sincere desire to serve the Lord.

The result of going through many harsh battles is that the Lord has anointed them to lift up and exhort those who are also serving the Lord and going through similar circumstances.

Their mission in life is to encourage all believers to rise up in the midst of their adversity and become all they were meant to be in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Their heartfelt prayer is that once you read this book, your life will never be the same.

**BACK**