

A person wearing a full-body protective suit, including a hood and mask, is walking through a large fire. The fire is bright orange and yellow, with thick smoke rising. The person's silhouette is dark against the intense light of the flames. The overall scene is dramatic and emphasizes the theme of overcoming adversity.

# THROUGH THE FIRE

YOU CAN HAVE  
VICTORY IN  
YOUR LIFE

**RANDALL J. BREWER**

This book is dedicated to Nicole Kavana, who opened the door for me to reach the world through social media.

She was there when this outreach began, and her guidance was invaluable.

**THROUGH  
THE  
FIRE**



**RANDALL J. BREWER**

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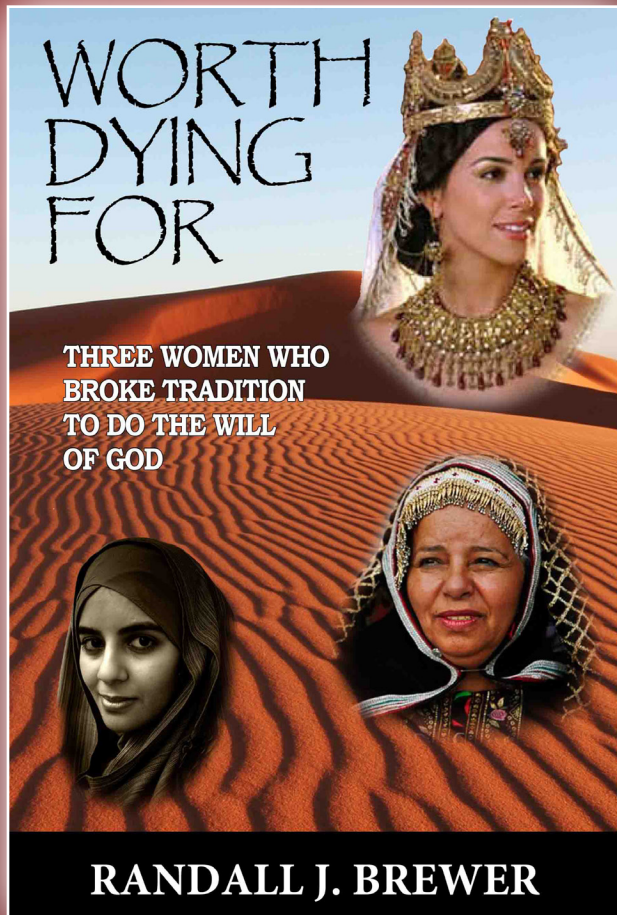
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**YOU** JUST THINK  
KNOW...

ABOUT THE  
WILL OF GOD THAT  
A WOMAN OF FAITH  
IS WILLING TO DIE FOR

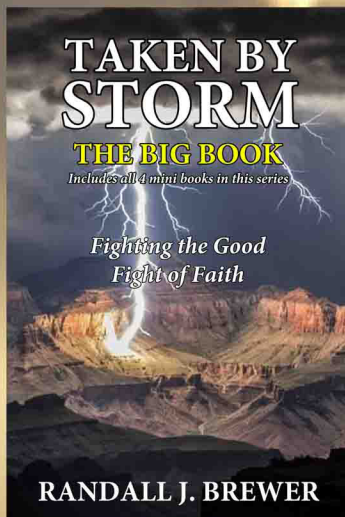
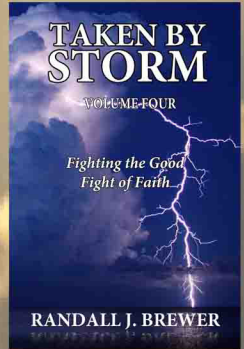
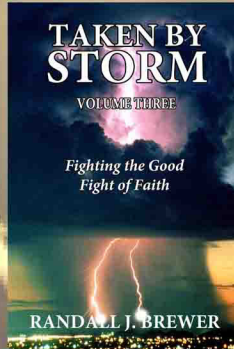
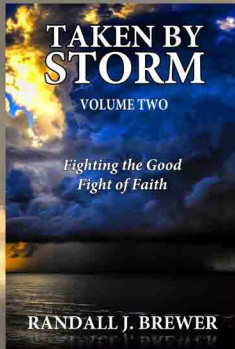
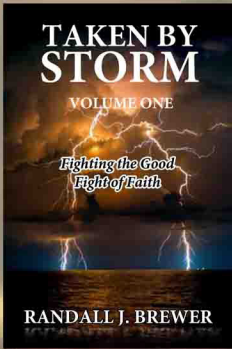


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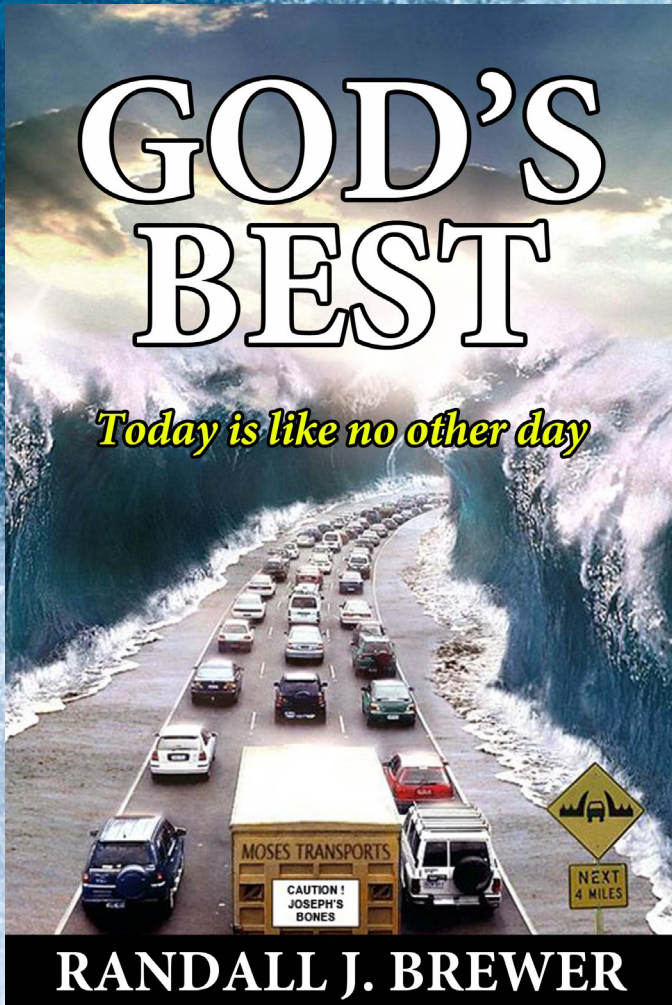
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**ALLOW GOD'S BEST  
TO COME IN  
LIKE A FLOOD**

# GOD'S BEST

*Today is like no other day*



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## IT'S HOT IN THE KITCHEN.

***...BUT DON'T BE IN A HURRY TO LEAVE!***

---

**M**any years ago, back when I was an immature Christian growing in the faith, I had a need that I was wringing my hands over. It was one of those *in your face* problems. When I finally got tired of worrying about it, I went to the Lord, presenting my problem to Him. I heard Him say, "Allow your faith to pass through the fire to the other side."

I was encouraged, mostly because I had gained God's attention, but also that He offered what seemed like a simple solution. Then I said, "...and You'll be on the other side waiting for me?" To which He replied, "No, I'll pass through the fire with you all the way."

Well let me tell you, the refining fire of faith was hot then, and remains hot today. No matter how mature you become, the heat from fiery trials can be scorching at times. But I'm glad to testify that along with spiritual maturity, comes deliverance and spiritual strength that is more than a match for anything the devil can throw at you. I still drink the spiritual milk of the Word as the babes of our faith do, but I use it to wash down the spiritual steak I'm eating.

In Randall J. Brewer's book, *Through the Fire*, he stresses the importance of growing up spiritually. If there was a theme to which we could properly categorize this book, it would be found in 1 Corinthians 13:11,

"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became an adult, I put away childish things."

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

INTRODUCTION  
**RAINY DAYS AND MONDAYS**

by Randall J. Brewer

**T**oday Is Monday and outside it's dark, gloomy, and rainy. Karen Carpenter used to sing, "Rainy days and Mondays always get me down." How about you? Is this how you feel? Are you feeling down and just plain yucky? Has the gray clouds of everyday living cast a dark shadow over your life? If so, have I got some good news for you.

Many times in the Bible, God did some of His greatest miracles in the dark. Go back to the book of Genesis where God created the earth and the land and the sea. Notice He didn't create the sun until the 4th day. That means this planet was created in the dark.

The Israelites began their exodus out of Egypt at nighttime in the dark. Joshua was in a battle and darkness was fast approaching. He prayed and God made the sun stand still. This planet stopped spinning at a time when it was supposed to be dark.

Go read the story of Gideon. This "mighty man of valor" and his 300 men fought and defeated

the Midianites at midnight - in the dark! Jacob wrestled with God and received his blessing in the darkness of the night. In the New Testament, Paul and Silas were released from the chains of darkness as they sang praises at midnight in the dark.

When Jesus was on the cross, darkness covered the earth for three hours. Jesus paid the price for our sins in the dark. And lets not forget the greatest event of all time. On the third day after Jesus died Mary went to the tomb early in the morning and found the stone rolled away. This means Jesus had to arise from the dead before morning arrived. Jesus arose from the dead in the dark!

If you are going through a hard time and the dark clouds are hanging over you, then get ready for a miracle! God's greatest miracles took place during the midnight hour. So don't give up, and press on. Let Jesus be the light in your life.

He's not the light *at the end* of the tunnel, He's the light *in the* tunnel.

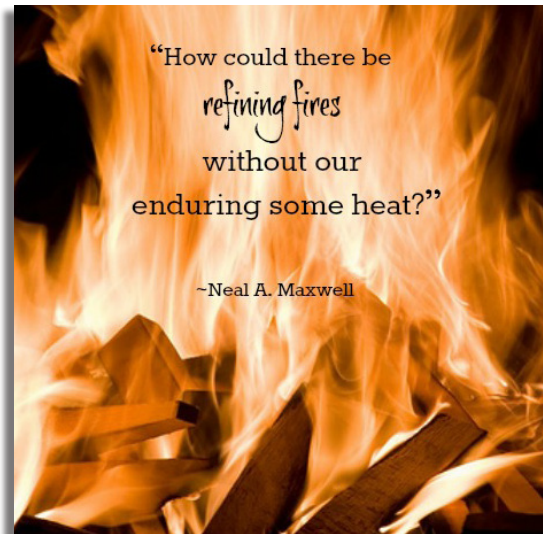
# I THROUGH THE FIRE

**I**t started out as a good week. You have been a devoted Christian for nearly ten years now, and you have committed your life in total surrender to your Heavenly Father.

- Daily you study the scriptures as you search out God's perfect will for your life.
- You have been a faithful giver for quite some time, and prosperity has come to every area of your life.
- A top employee at your place of employment is retiring, and you know that during the special meeting the boss called for at the end of the week you are going to be offered a promotion for the new opening.
- You were equally elated when your brother-in-law informed you that he had a pair of tickets to the championship ballgame that's been sold out for months.
- Also, a good friend of yours told you of a new fishing

hole he had found and you were finally going to get a chance to use the new boat you purchased two weeks ago.

- Last weekend you shot your best round of golf ever and you were informed of a golf cart on sale at a special price.
- Your travel agent just called and confirmed your reservations for the Caribbean cruise you plan to take your wife on next month for your fifteenth wedding anniversary.



- And finally, this Friday you will make the final payment on the mortgage to your house. Everything is going good for you.
- God is doing a new thing in your life and He has anointed you to start a much needed ministry at your church. Life is grand!
- You are filled with the joy of the Lord, and the peace of God rules in your heart.
- The wife is happy, the kids are getting good grades in school, and you finally lost that thirty pounds you’ve been so desperately trying to lose.

Yes sir, it has been a good week, glory to God. What could possibly go wrong?

Before you know it Friday arrives. You wake up filled with enthusiasm as you get dressed for work. You just know that promotion is yours, you just know it. There is a bounce in your step as you kiss the wife goodbye and head out the door.

You hear yourself singing, “Zippity-do-dah, zippity-yah. My, oh my, what a wonderful day.” You jump in the air and kick your two heels together. Today will be

a good day! Just then, you notice that during the night somebody let the air out of all four of your tires. “That’s okay,” you tell yourself, “nothing that a few shots from our new air compressor can’t solve.”

You turn toward the garage and are greeted with the fact that also during the night somebody had sprayed paint all over the front of your house. “Nope,” you say, “I also will not let that bother me. The wife and I talked about getting new siding for the house and now we’ll have an excuse to do it.”

You get the air compressor, fill up the tires, climb into the front seat of your car and all you hear is silence as you turn the key. You close your eyes and lean forward as you begin to bang your head on the steering wheel. “This can’t be happening,” you murmur as you wonder what could be wrong now. You open the hood and yep, you were right, somebody had stolen the new battery you had just put in the car three days before.

Having never been late for work you realize you better go inside and call your boss to inform him that you might be a little late this morning. When you do, his sad voice informs you that dur-

ing the night a fire had burnt the company to the ground and since he, too, was close to retirement, he had decided not to rebuild. All employees, therefore, were out of a job and would have to look for work elsewhere.

Stunned and speechless you put the phone down and look up only to see your little daughter standing in the doorway with her tiny face and body covered with the measles. Your wife suddenly runs into the room with tears running down her cheeks as she frantically tries to tell you that the huge expensive diamond that was on her engagement ring is no longer there.

The phone rings, and as you try to take in everything that's just happened, you pick up the receiver and are told that the dreaded in-laws are on their way to your house for a three week vacation. You put the phone down and roll your eyes upward where you notice fresh water spots on the ceiling that came to be there as a result of having a hole in your roof. You shake your head in mock surrender and ask God the most often asked question of all time, "Why me, Lord?"

Does this story relate to you? It may seem to be a little far-

etched, but the message remains the same. Tests and trials come into the lives of every born-again believer, even more so to those who have been anointed by God to destroy the influence of the enemy in the earth. And it is in the midst of all these trials that we read in James 1:12 <sup>MSG</sup>,

"Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate."

First and foremost, we need to realize that success is born out of adversity. Success that is birthed as a result of tests and trials can be compared to a farmer putting manure in a cornfield. As manure is used to fertilize the soil so the seeds can grow, so do tests and trials help develop our faith which produces patience, and this in turn brings success into our lives.

James instructs us to "count it all joy" when tests and trials come our way.

***The Christian is to be joyful "in" the trial, and not "because" of the trial.***

We can do this if we know what the outcome will be. Paul gives us the assurance that,

"If God be for us, who can be

against us” Rom. 8:31.

Tests and trials come to every believer and sometimes we slip and fall. David tells us in Ps. 37:23,24,

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand.”

A similar verse in Micah 7:8 tells us,

“Do not rejoice when I fall, my enemy; When I fall, I shall arise; When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.”

Each Christian should view their tests and trials as stepping-stones on their journey to becoming Christlike, and to fulfilling the call of God on their lives.

A boxer, as he climbs the ranks of his profession, will encounter a variety of challenges as he strives for the ultimate prize of a championship belt. His manager may put him in against an opponent who is tall and lanky, while the next time he will fight a guy who is short and stocky. For sure he will be put into the ring with an awkward southpaw and then with a guy who can knock a person out with either hand. How

will the young fighter react if he gets hurt and knocked down? Will he take the ten-count or will he get back up and continue fighting? If he is determined to go all the way to the top, he will have to face and conquer all the challenges that come before him. That is what a champion is and that is what a champion does.

A champion is a person who refuses to quit, and does something about the tests and trials that come before him. Yes, sometimes a champion gets knocked down. In life we all slip and fall at one time or another. Remember, there is no shame in falling as long as you pick yourself up and continue the fight.

At the same time, Christians are told to,

“Lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” Heb. 12:1.

Endurance means to hold up consistently under fire. When you get knocked down, get back up because,

“Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

***A test or trial that comes***

***your way does not give you a reason to quit and run.***

Instead it is an opportunity for you to put on the armor of God and stand up and fight. And always remember, there is no victory where there is no war.

The prophet Isaiah says this, “**When** you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you” <sup>Is. 43:2</sup>.

Notice this verse does not say “if” you pass through the fire, it says “when” you pass through the fire. Satan will contest everything God wants to do for you and through you, and for sure tests and trials will come.

You must, however, understand that you are not Satan’s punching bag. When God sees an arrow coming at you He won’t stop the arrow, but He will provide a shield for you to use against the onslaughts of the enemy <sup>Eph. 6:16</sup>. Tests and trials are an open invitation for believers to use their faith against whatever Satan brings their way.

Sad to say, people rarely use their faith unless a demand is

made on it. On the contrary, faith should be a lifestyle for all Christians, because,

“Without faith it is impossible to please God” <sup>Heb. 11:6</sup>.

If people would daily use their faith, they would not be overcome by the wiles of the devil. 2 Cor. 5:7 says,

“For we walk by faith and not by sight.”

This is precisely what we should do when fiery trials come our way. We should exercise our faith before, during, and after our walk through the fire. Also realize that you don’t set up camp and live in the fire, you “walk through” the fire. In the fire you are constantly progressing and moving forward.

Isaiah says that the fire will not be kindled against you. God will not allow you to stay in the fire longer than you can endure it. Your fire will not last forever, and by walking through it you will eventually walk in a higher dimension with God.

***Fire is a place of purification that increases your wisdom and understanding.***

Even Jesus passed through the fire. Heb. 5:8 says,

“Though He was a Son, yet



He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."

A test or trial is when something in our life goes contrary to the way things are supposed to be, as outlined in the Word of God. Since we have arrayed against us an enemy who is a thief who comes to kill, steal, and destroy, almost daily we will be faced with the task of confronting the hosts of darkness.

Certainly a test or trial will create a need in our lives, and God has chosen faith in His Word as the avenue through which Christians get those needs met.

Our faith in God and our willingness and ability to believe the Holy Scriptures will be tested with each and every trial. **Faith needs a challenge**, and will get it's greatest opportunity for use through the tests and trials that come our way in day-to-day living. God's Word builds your faith up, but only tests and trials will allow your faith to go into action and operate. When all is said and done, we should not ask God to give us an easier life, but ultimately our goal should be to be made stronger in Him.

In his second letter to the Thessalonian church Paul commends his fellow believers for

having a faith that "grows exceedingly" <sup>2 Thess. 1:3</sup>. The Bible teaches that faith "comes" by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, but how does faith "grow"? The answer is found in the next verse.

"And this is a cause of our mentioning you with pride among the churches of God for your steadfastness - your unflinching endurance and patience - and your firm faith in the midst of all the persecutions and crushing distresses and afflictions under which you are holding up" <sup>2 Thess. 1:4</sup>  
AMP

The Message© Bible goes on to say,

"All this trouble is a clear sign that God has decided to make you fit for the kingdom. You're suffering now, but justice is on the way. When the Master Jesus appears out of heaven in a blaze of fire with His strong angels, He'll even up the score by settling accounts with those who gave you such a bad time. His coming will be the break we've been waiting for."

When faith comes, it must always be tested by fire, because God wants a pure and glorious church without spot or wrinkle <sup>Eph. 5:27</sup>. Is your faith like pure gold,

or is it cheap gold plating?

Faith is exercised and grows in the midst of persecutions and afflictions. This is why it is so important to stay in the Word and pass through the fire when tests and trials come. Ps. 12:6 says,

“The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

Most often it is in the fire when we recognize the grace and mercy of God.

There is only one thing the devil wants from you, and that is your faith. Without faith you are no threat to him. Satan’s goal is to keep you distracted and ignorant of the truth that will set you free.

We need to realize that by himself, Satan has never won a battle yet. He is a total failure and cannot defeat you without your permission. Permission is granted to him each and every time we run away from our tests and trials, and when we refuse to do anything about them.

2 Thess. 1:5, 11 says that our worthiness to God is proven by our passing through the fire. Don’t try to get out of all your troubles by ignoring them or by taking the easy way out. You must

pass through the fire! How? By using your faith! Your faith will not fail if you continue hearing– and hearing– and hearing– and hearing the Word of God.

***Don’t let distractions keep you from reading and confessing God’s Word.***

Know for certain that God will honor your faith at the point where it is developed. Since faith can grow, continue to build on the faith you now have so that your next walk through the fire won’t take so long and the victory will be greater. Believe Phil. 4:13 which says,

“I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me.”

Say,

“Yet in all these things I am more than a conqueror through Him Who loved us”

Rom. 8:37

Be convinced in your heart that God is on your side and He is bigger than any problem you have. Let the peace of God rule in your inner man during your times of struggle.

***Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the presence of God.***

The Amplified© version of Is. 59:19b says,

“When the enemy came in, like a flood the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him and put him to flight - for He will come like a rushing stream which the breath of the Lord drives.”

In Paul’s final letter before his death, he tells Timothy,

“Yes, and all who desire to live Godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” <sup>2 Tim. 3:12</sup>.

When tests and trials come Jesus tells us to,

“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven...”<sup>Luke 6:23a</sup>.

Satan cannot stand the sound of praise, and giving glory to God in the midst of the fire is the quickest way to make the devil shut up. Giving praise to God during a test or trial will be the last thing many of us will want to do, but we must do it anyway. This is what is called a “sacrifice of praise”  
<sup>Heb. 13:15</sup>.

Give praise to God when something goes wrong, even if you don’t feel like it. Continually making a “sacrifice of praise” will touch the heart of God more than anything we know.

***This is faith in action.***

When you do this you are not focusing on the circumstances around you, but rather on your Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

From a dungeon cell Paul wrote,

“Rejoice in the Lord always - delight, gladden yourselves in Him; again I say, Rejoice!” <sup>Phil. 4:4</sup>.

The Greek word for “rejoice” means to ‘brighten up, leap, and spin around.’ When trials come don’t look sad and gloomy. Put a smile on your face and brighten up! Stand in your living room and begin to jump up and down. Leap for joy! Spin around as you’re leaping and make a joyful noise unto the Lord. “This is not normal,” you might say. Of course it’s not. That’s way we’re called a “peculiar people” <sup>1 Peter 2:9</sup>.

The bottom line is that it works. As you praise God in this fashion and continue to confess what the Word says about your situation, all of a sudden God will get bigger and bigger in your heart, and the obstacle will get smaller and smaller. And before you know it, you will exit from the other end of the furnace of affliction having successfully passed through the fire.

Rejoice during the times of  
your struggle because,

“The joy of the Lord is your  
strength” <sup>Neh. 8:10</sup>.



# 2 NOT MY WILL

**S**ometimes you have to pass through the fire of not getting your own way, and like Jesus, must learn obedience by the things you suffer.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth’”

Gen. 1:26

Adam and Eve were the gods of this world and they were told to,

“be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” v. 28a. Ps. 82:6 states,

“I said, ‘You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.’”

Adam named all the animals and this showed he had authority over them. He was over

them and they were under him. They did not rebel against this for they too were in line with God’s plan.

Adam and Eve were called to rule and reign, and everything was going according to God’s divine plan, until the day they disobeyed God and ate the fruit of The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God gave the power and authority to Adam, and Adam sinned and gave it to the devil.

Satan is called the “god of this world” 2 Cor. 4:4 NLT, and in the wilderness he tempted Jesus with these words,



“All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours”

Luke 4:6, 7.

Satan did have all this authority, for if it wasn't true then it wouldn't have been a temptation. Jesus is called the second Adam <sup>1 Cor. 15:47</sup>, and He told the devil what the first Adam should have said to him,

“Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve” <sup>v. 8</sup>.

Jesus did not succumb to the temptation of the devil, nor did He throw off God's authority. He obeyed God the Father and went to the cross and triumphed over death, hell, and the grave. At His ascension He told the disciples,

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” <sup>Matt. 28:18,19</sup>.

In the beginning, God gave Adam all the authority to rule the world. Adam then sinned,

and when he did there was a legal transfer of this authority to the devil. Four thousand years later Jesus came and died, and when He arose from the dead He took back this same authority that had been handed to the devil. He then told the disciples,

“Go therefore...”

He said in Mark 16:17,18,

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

The devil will forever be a defeated foe, but make no mistake about it, he continues to roam about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour <sup>1 Peter 5:8</sup>. Although his future is not too bright, he is still alive and well on planet earth. He is a thief who comes to kill, steal, and destroy <sup>John 10:10</sup>.

He is a manipulator and a controller. He wants you to be mindless zombies who, like a robot, does whatever he tells you to do. And until you do something about it, he will have free reign in

your life to do whatever it takes to reverse the victory Jesus won for you at the empty tomb.

James 4:6,7 tells you what you must do,

“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

The BBE© Bible says,

“For this cause be ruled by God; but make war on the Evil One and he will be put to flight before you.”

The NJB© says,

“Give in to God.”

And the Wuest translation tells you to

“Be subject with implicit obedience to God at once and once for all. Stand immovable against the onset of the devil and he will flee from you.”

James is issuing an urgent call to his readers to repent from their ungodly behavior described in the preceding passages. He says in v. 8,

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and

purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

Like a commanding general, James issues a series of military-like commands which call for incisive action. The command to submit is a basic requirement which must precede obedience to the subsequent commands.

Proud people, by definition, are elevated above others and do not submit and surely won't obey any of the other commands. Only the humble receive the grace of God, and to be a partaker of this grace, you must choose daily to submit and surrender your will and your desires to that good and acceptable and perfect will of God

Rom. 12:2b

Only the lowly person, the humble man or woman, will willingly surrender his or her rights to God.

***Humility is among the qualities that you simply can not pursue directly.***

Along with traits such as self-control, patience, endurance, peace, and joy, humility is a by-product of living God's way and seeking and submitting to His will. When you give God His place over you and you take your place under Him, now the devil has to

take his place under your feet.

Don't start quoting James 4:7 beginning with "Resist the devil." James is saying that unless you are submitted to God first, you will not have the power to resist the devil. The sons of Sceva learned this the hard way. Acts 19:13-16 says,

"Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, 'We adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.' Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?' Then the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

There is no victory in the Christian life without the discipline of submitting to God.

The bottom line is that there is rank in the kingdom of God. There is rank among angels and demons, there is rank in governments and armies, and there is rank in families, churches, and

corporations. Not everything is on an even keel and plane. We are not all equal in rank and authority. In the parable of the talents one servant was made ruler over ten cities and another was made ruler over five. 1 Cor. 15 says in the resurrection our glory will differ like the stars.

"There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead..."

1 Cor. 15:41, 42a

Some stars are brighter than others, and this means that even in the next life there will be some who have more rank and authority than others.

To swim triumphantly in the river of grace you must first submit yourself to God. The word "submit" is a military word and comes from the Greek word "hypotasso." It means 'to rank or arrange under; to place under in an orderly fashion.' It implies that the one who is subordinate is ready and willing to obey the commands of his or her superior.

When you submit yourself to God you are saying that He has a place and rank over you and you are taking your place under Him.



Submit to God and then you resist the devil. An unsaved person can not resist the devil, for you can not yield to the devil and then try to resist him.

You can not be submitted to God and the devil at the same time. Joshua said,

“Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” Josh. 24:14,15.

“Submit” is a good word. It’s a Bible word. Submission says “Yes I will” and resist says “No I won’t.” The choice is yours. Nobody is going to make you submit, not even God Himself.

***Submission is being willing to do anything God asks you to do.***

Keeping rank means you submit to those who are over you and not submit to those who are

under you. It makes no difference how skillful you are or how much knowledge you have if you can’t keep rank. You’re unusable. If people can’t count on you to be in your position when and where you’re supposed to be there, then you will be worthless to the body of Christ. You need to be able to be counted on, and it begins with keeping rank and being in submission to those who are over you.

Even Jesus keeps rank! He said,

**“My Father is greater than I”**

John 14:28

And in John 12:49,50 He stated,

**“For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”**

He also said in John 13:16,

**“Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.”**

Matt. 8:5-13 tells the story

of a centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant. A centurion was a Roman leader of a hundred men and he had great faith, because he understood rank and authority. Jesus said he would come and heal the servant, but the centurion responded,

“Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

The man understood the giving and taking of orders, and it would be a better world if we all understood orders also.

We live in a society of sloppy Christians and undisciplined believers. Many Christians are too passive. They have an attitude that says “Whatever will be, will be.” Passivity is allowing the enemy to destroy people and this is why all believers must rise up and be strong. You must submit to God and resist the devil. The devil will flee from you because you have a place of authority over him, but this won’t happen until you first

give God His place of authority over you. Don’t give place to the devil <sup>Eph. 4:27</sup>, for if you are yielding to the enemy, he does not have to yield to you.

Entire and cheerful submission to the will of God is a Christian duty of prime excellence. Submission to our Lord and Savior will be manifested by ready obedience. Delays are essentially insubordination and neglects are a form of rebellion. 1 Sam. 15:23a says,

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”

### ***Pride and rebellion go together.***

Because of pride the devil rebelled against God, and because of pride Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. Rebellion and being unteachable result in things happening that are unrecoverable. Prov. 29:1 says,

“He who is often reprov’d, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

Because of rebellion and not submitting to the will of God, the generation in Moses’ time missed the chance to go into the promised land. If you rebel against God, you

are submitting to the enemy. And if you submit to the devil, he will laugh at you when you try to exercise authority over him.

Always remember that the devil is a liar and the father of lies <sup>John 8:44</sup>. He will tell you that a good thing is a bad thing. Don't rebel against submission, embrace it with all your heart and soul. Is. 1:19,20 says,

“If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword.”

Rebellion opens the door for calamity to come into your life, and the fear of submitting will keep you from enjoying all Godly blessings. You can be healed today and have the sickness return tomorrow if you rebel and don't submit. Submission and obedience make the blessings stay in your life.

***People run from the very thing they should run to.***

Jesus submitted to the will of the Father and said in Matt. 11:29,

“Take My yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Submission is unconditional surrender and is not an easy thing to do. It involves suffering, and if people say submission is easy for them, they haven't got a clue what true submission is. Jesus was in total submission to the Father and we read in Heb. 2:10 <sup>NLT</sup>,

“God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that He should make Jesus, through His suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation.”

How did Jesus suffer? Verse 10 <sup>NIV</sup> tells us,

“Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.”

Temptation is the avenue through which the devil attempts to get you to not submit to the will of God. You suffer when you have to put your flesh down. Jesus suffered being tempted.

Heb. 5:7,8 says,

“who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was

heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.”

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus cried out in pain and wept in sorrow as He prayed three times,

“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” <sup>Matt. 26:39a</sup>

Jesus did not want the pain of being rejected and forsaken by His Father, as He hung on the cross and took on the sins of the world.

“And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” <sup>Luke 22:44</sup>

Jesus is being tempted to not go to the cross and He is suffering. He is learning to be obedient and the ultimate example of submission is when Jesus said,

“Nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done!” <sup>Luke 22:42b</sup>

***True submission happens when you are not in agreement with what you are being told to do.***

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the will of Jesus was not the same as the will of the Father.

If their will was the same, Jesus could not have said, “**Not My will but Your will be done.**” Jesus submitted His will to the Father’s will. He put His flesh down and submitted to the will of the Father. This was not easy and this was not an agreement. There is much confusion in the body of Christ in this area.

You only have the opportunity to truly submit when you don’t agree. As long as you want to do what the person over you wants you to do, there is no submission involved. Your will is their will. This is not submission, that is agreement.

***To submit when you don’t agree, you must put your flesh under, bite your lip, and do what you don’t want to do.***

Your attitude is “not my will but Your will be done.” There is no other way to grow and mature.

Jesus learned obedience through the things He suffered, by not getting to do what He wanted to do, and by yielding to the will of the One over Him. 1 Peter 5:6,7 says,

“Therefore humble yourselves under the hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon

Him, for He cares for you.”

Your cares are about yourself, and Peter is saying to cast your “want” on Jesus, and go do what you’ve been told to do. He knows what you need, and if you will walk in faith, He’ll provide it for you.

- Humble yourself and bring your flesh under submission.
- Be teachable, be willing to humble yourself and take correction.
- Be willing to submit. True submission involves suffering, the pain and discomfort of not getting your own way.

You suffered being tempted to rebel and be disobedient. Rebellion is the very nature of the devil, and if you yield to rebellion you are not suffering.

Submission is not a bad suffering, it’s a good suffering. Some things need to be put to death in you. Paul said in Gal. 5:24,25,

“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

The Message© Bible says,

“Among those who belong to

Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good - crucified.”

When rebellion sets in, you need to pull out the spikes and hammer and crucify your flesh.

**Q** Is it easy? No! Jesus sweat blood doing this. Can you do it?

**A** Yes! You can do it by the grace of God. Should you do it? Yes! Is it worth it? Yes, a million times yes! Is there reward for doing it? Notice the results in 1 Peter 5:9,10,

## THE RESULTS

“Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”

When you put your flesh down and submit, you become like a mighty tree whose roots go down deep. You become like the house that’s built on the rock. You become perfected, matured, established, settled, and strength-

ened. You become Christlike, and are pillars of strength in a world filled with pride and rebellion. You're not moved by every wind of doctrine and every whim of your flesh, and you don't give in to temptation.

How do people get this way? They suffered not getting their own way. They suffered saying to God, "Not my will but Your will be done." God does not change, because He doesn't have to change. He gets it right every time. He's right every time about everything. And since He's right all the time, you must submit yourself to Him and to what He says is right and true.

Submission is to do what you're told by those over you, and smile while you're doing it. Submission goes to the heart of God and reveals how He operates. He could make you do anything, but He allows you to obey willingly.

If a person is forced to do something then it's not true submission. Jesus said in Matt. 20:25,26a <sup>MSG</sup>,

**"You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around, how quickly a little power goes to their heads. It's not going to be that way with you."**

The NL© Bible says,

**"My kingdom does not work the same as the world."**

Submission can't be forced and no where is this more important than in the marriage relationship. Eph. 5:22 says,

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

**#1** First of all, this was God's idea and not the husband's. There is rank in the family just like there is rank in the Godhead, the church, and every other area of life, especially in the kingdom of God.

**#2** Secondly, husbands are never to look at their wives and say, "Submit to me." Never!! You can't make anybody do anything! Attempting to make somebody do something is devilish.

The devil wants to control you and he doesn't care if it's your will or not. If a person is forced to do something, then it's not true submission. Husbands are never to flaunt their authority over their wives, for *it is not* the husband's responsibility to see to it that their wives submit to them. If they don't submit, then husbands are to back off and submit to God and do what He told them to do.

God told husbands to,  
“love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it” Eph. 5:25.

There are people who don't submit to God, so don't be surprised if they don't submit to you. Husbands are to love their wives, even if the wife won't submit. Obey God and love your wife anyway. Submission is not easy, but the rewards of doing it is worth all the pain and effort.

It will help considerably to understand that God did not tell husbands that their wives were supposed to submit to them. He was telling to the wives and husbands they should pay attention to what God said to them.

Husbands should focus on whether or not they're loving their wives as they should, and not on whether or not their wives are submitting to them.

Likewise, wives should focus on submitting to their husbands as unto the Lord, and not on whether or not their husbands are loving them as Christ loves the church.

What God said to the wives was between God and the wives, and what God said to the husbands was between God and the

husbands. God did not say, “Husbands, see to it that your wives submit to you. Wives, see to it that your husbands love you as he's supposed to.”

Peace and harmony come to the marriage relationship when each spouse submits, and does what God told them individually to do. It is between them and God as to whether they obey Him or not. If they don't obey, then it's not up to the other spouse to make them do it. If you get involved and try to force the issue, you'll muddy the waters and make the problem twice as bad. Focus on what God told you to do. Paul said in 1 Thess. 5:13b-15,

“Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the faint-hearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.”

The Message© Bible says,

“Get along among yourselves, each of you doing your part. Be patient with each person, attentive to individual needs. And be careful that when you get on each other's nerves you

don't snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out."

You were not put on this planet just so you could make a living and raise a family. No, you are here to make a contribution to the kingdom of God. And when you step forward to do so, without a doubt the enemy will come knocking on your door.

Every day countless prayers are going up to God asking Him to make the devil stop harassing those who are saying the prayer. These people are ignorant of the Word, for there is not one verse in the Bible telling you to pray and ask God to make the devil leave you alone. Not one! Yet people pray for this several times each day. James said "you" submit to God and "you" resist the devil.

## HOW DO YOU SUBMIT TO GOD?

**#1** First, you submit to His Word. If the Word tells you to do something, you do it. Don't pray about what the Bible tells you to do. You're either going to do it or you're not.

**#2** Also, being subject to the Spirit of God is submission to

God. He will lead you and guide you even in the smallest affairs of life.

**#3** Finally, you submit to God by submitting to those He has placed in positions of authority over you (see Rom. 13:1, 2).

God gives those in authority wisdom and grace that others don't get, not because of who they are personally, but because of the position they hold. You may be more spiritual than those in leadership and know more Bible verses, but not have the grace and anointing to lead like they do.

Leaders are called and empowered by God to lead, and when you submit to their authority you submit to God. Jesus told many of His disciples, "Come, follow Me", and they left what they were doing and followed Him. When you follow a person who says "come", you are in submission to that person. You drawing near to God reveals your submission to Him. You have come into His presence with thanksgiving in your heart and you have entered His courts with praise.

The blessings of life come when you hearken to His voice, when you "come" when He calls you to do so, and when you submit to His authority.



Submission is a beautiful thing and has many, many rewards. Embrace it today, but more important... *do it!*



# 3

## THE END OF

## YOUR ROPE

**T**he apostle Paul writes in 2 Cor. 1:8,

“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.”

Paul was one of the greatest men of faith who ever lived, and yet he had problems wherever he went. He said he was,

- “In labors more abundant,
- In stripes above measure,
- In prisons frequently,
- In deaths often.
- From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.
- Three times I was beaten with rods;
- Once I was stoned;
- Three times I was ship wrecked;
- A night and a day I

had been in the deep;

- In journeys often,
- In perils of my own countrymen,
- In perils of the Gentiles,
- In perils in the city,
- In perils in the wilderness,
- In perils in the sea, in perils of false brethren;
- In weariness and toil,
- In sleeplessness often,
- In hunger and thirst,
- In fastings often,
- In cold and nakedness - besides the other things that come upon me daily:
- My deep concern for all the churches” 2 Cor. 11:23b-28 .

These scriptures tell us that throughout his ministry, Paul often reached the end of his rope. All he could do is hang on and trust God. Yet not once do we hear him complain about

his hardships nor did he sink in the quicksand of self-pity.

Elijah, on the other hand, was one of the greatest prophets of all time, and in 1 Kings 19 he has a major pity party.

He had just won a major victory on Mt. Carmel and this stirred up the wrath of the wicked Queen Jezebel.

“And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent messengers to Elijah, saying, ‘So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.’ And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life...” vs. 1-3a.

Elijah had just seen the fire of God come down from heaven and consume a water-drenched sacrifice, and here he is running away from a powerless threat from an evil queen. Verse 8 says,

“So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.”

Here God performs another miracle. Elijah eats one meal and

it sustains him for forty days, and still he runs away.

Verses 9, 10,

“And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the Word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’”

Why run when you've been empowered with the anointing of God? Here comes the pity party,

“So he said, ‘I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant; torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.’”

He says the same thing in v. 14. It is interesting to note that when Elijah sank in the muck and mire of self-pity, that his role as a prophet soon came to a close. God's response to this pity party was he had Elijah anoint Jehu, who went on to put an end to the reign of Jezebel, and Elisha who replaced him as God's prophet in the land. Not long after this a chariot of fire appeared and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven <sup>2 Kings 2:11</sup>.

Indeed, the worst thing a

person can do when tests and trials come, is to fall into the destructive trap of self-pity.

Jer. 15 records another major pity party. Verses 17, 18 says,

“I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, nor did I rejoice; I sat alone because of Your hand, for You have filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable, which refuses to be healed? Will you surely be to me like an unreliable stream, as waters that fail?”

Jeremiah did not have an easy life. He was one of Judah's greatest prophets during its darkest days, and because of his radical message of God's judgment through the coming Babylon invasion, he led a life of conflict.

Jeremiah faithfully proclaimed the divine condemnation of rebellious Judah for forty years and was rewarded with opposition, beatings, isolations, and imprisonment. His sympathy and sensitivity caused him to grieve over the rebelliousness and imminent doom of his nation. He often desires to resign from his prophetic office, because of the harshness of his message and his reception, but he perseveres to Judah's bitter end.

He is the weeping prophet Jer. 9:1: 13:17 - lonely, rejected, and persecuted. More than once Jeremiah was at the end of his rope and his sufferings easily match those of the apostle Paul. Thankfully, the Lord had an answer for the self-pity the prophet felt in chapter 15.

“Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘If you return, then I will bring you back; You shall stand before Me; If you take out the precious from the vile, you shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, but you must not return to them’” Jer. 15:19

God gives the condition of what Jeremiah had to do if he was to receive help from the Lord. God said, “If you return...” When did Jeremiah leave? The moment he stopped talking by faith. God also said to take out the precious from the vile. That which is precious to God is our faith <sup>2 Peter 1:1</sup>, and that which is vile is unbelief.

A special promise is given to all of us in 1 Cor. 10:13,

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with each temptation will also make the way of es-

cape, that you may be able to bear it.”

Listen to how the Message© Bible translates this special promise,

“No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; He’ll never let you be pushed past your limit; He’ll always be there to help you come through it.”

If you 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 and your call will be fulfilled.

God wanted Jeremiah to return to what the prophet said in Jer. 15:16,

“Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your Name, O Lord God of hosts.”

The Word of God is powerful. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, and will turn you into the type of person who believes that whatever you do will prosper and succeed.

The Bible says you can do all things through Christ <sup>Philippians 4:13</sup>, the anointed One and His anointing, but first you must adjust your thinking to line up with the thoughts of God. Rom. 12:2a says,

“And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

The way you think can either cause you to press forward in the midst of a trial or it can become a roadblock that prevents your advancement in life.

Thomas Edison once performed ten thousand experiments in his quest to invent the light bulb and none produced the results he wanted.

“I have not failed,” he said. “I have successfully found ten thousand ways that will not work.”

When you think like that, there is no way the enemy can stop you from accomplishing what you set out to do.

Paul said in 2 Cor. 4:8,9,

“We are hard pressed on every side yet not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed.”

A winner is not a person who has never suffered a setback. A winner is someone who knows that when the setback comes he or she must rise to the occasion and continue forward.

***The thoughts, words, and actions of a winner will always be in agreement with the Word of God.***

This, in turn, will determine whether you will be a success or failure, because what happens “in” you is more important than what happens “to” you. You can have the attitude that God is bigger than any obstacle you face, or you can believe that He’s not. The former will allow you to release the power of God into your situation through faith, whereas the latter will confine you to a life of fear and failure. This truth is illustrated in Num. 13, which records the story of when Moses sent twelve people to spy out the Promised Land.

After being gone for several weeks, the spies came back and told of seeing huge fortified cities there and strong giants dwelling in the land. Everything the spies said about the land was true, the difference being Joshua and Caleb came back with a good report, while the remaining ten returned bearing a

bad report. Num. 13:30,31 says,

“Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, ‘Let us go up at once and take possession for we are well able to overcome it.’ But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We are not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we are.’”

Goliath was bigger and stronger than David, but that didn’t stop him from facing down and killing the giant.

***We need to understand that faith is not a denial of the circumstances.***

Joshua and Caleb saw the same giants as the other spies, but they knew God had given them the land and refused to allow the circumstances to dictate to them how things were going to be. This is called faith, and faith always has a good report.

Caleb said they were well able to take the land. To walk victoriously, we need to feed on the Word of God continually and maintain a good report on the evil day, when circumstantial giants block our path.

Num. 14:36-38 tells us that because the ten spies brought back a bad report they immedi-

ately died by the plague before the Lord, whereas Joshua and Caleb were the only members of their evil generation who entered into the Promised Land. This reward was given to them because they believed God in spite of the circumstances, and as a result brought back to the people a good report.

Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father in John 17:4 what should be the heart cry of every born-again believer,

**“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”**

This should be our utmost desire as well and the key to our success is commitment. Like Jesus, there is a price we'll have to pay to fulfill the call of God on our lives, and the down payment is commitment. Ps. 37:5 says,

**“Commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass.”**

Likewise, we are told in Prov. 16:3,

**“Commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established.”**

Commitment starts out as an act of our will. It is an act of

giving and it means to give priority to that which you are committed to.

***Commitment demands that you apply yourself by giving the very best you have.***

We must diligently apply ourselves to the dream God gives us and be willing to exert ourselves beyond the norm. Commitment will turn you into the kind of person who goes the extra mile, one who believes that whatever you set out to do will succeed and prosper. It is your level of commitment that will be the deciding factor as to whether or not you hear Jesus say when you stand before Him,

**“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord”** Matt. 25:21.

Rom. 12:1 says,

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”**

The Amplified© Bible calls the act of doing this “spiritual worship.” To be a living sacrifice

one must submit their will to God and become a yielded instrument for His service. One's whole being - spirit, soul, body - must be presented by a decisive act of the will to God to be used by Him. Yielding must not be thought of simply as a willingness to do some specific task. Rather, it consists of commitment and dedication by a person to love God and do whatever He commands.

When you are committed to something or someone, there is always a transfer of authority. It is an act of putting in charge or trust, an inward decision based on loyalty and dedication. It is the state of being obligated and it means "to surrender" or "to yield."

When a person enters their work place they automatically surrender their will to that of the authority of the supervisor. Moreover should we be committed to God and the call He placed on our life. And if we get committed and stay committed, if we don't shrink back and pull away on the evil day of adversity, then we'll have the determination and power to rise up and keep going forward when the storms of life blow our way.

Eph. 2:10 says,

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus

for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Each of us have been created to perform "good works" and God has anointed us to do so. Samson, for example, did what was considered impossible, because he was anointed to do so.

Contrary to popular belief, Samson did not have bulging muscles like Hercules. No, he was strong because of the anointing and not physical muscles. When he responded to the ability God put inside him, he became strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The Message© Bible says in Phil. 4:13,

"Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One Who makes me who I am."

The enemy will launch an assault against everything God is doing, and this is why we can't be passive where the devil is concerned. We are a mighty generation chosen by God and we must never run from the enemy. Instead, we must rise up and prepare for war.

Much is at stake here. We are the answer to the troubles of our society and generation, and God



is waiting for us to step forward and do that which we've been anointed to do. We are not here to survive the assaults of the enemy, we are here to start them. God is with us and He will not leave us or forsake us. The anointing is a force that cannot be overcome by the enemy. It can only be responded to. The first step in having breakthrough and defeating the enemy is to, once and for all, get fed up with his efforts to bring you down.

In Gen. 27, Esau found out that his brother Jacob had deceived his father into giving him the blessing of the firstborn. Esau lifted up his voice and wept when he found out the blessing could not be reversed, so he pleaded with his father to give him a blessing as well. Here is what Isaac told him,

“Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; And it shall come to pass, when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck” <sup>Gen 27:39,</sup>  
<sup>40.</sup>

To be restless means to be fed up! You don't get anywhere and you don't accomplish any-

thing until you get fed up with your present condition. You can wish, hope, and cry all day long, but nothing will happen until you get fed up.

Things happen when a holy fervor rises up on the inside of you. Your countenance will change, you'll speak with authority, and you'll walk in dominion. Jesus said in Matt. 11:12b,

**“...the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”**

Get fed up! Get violent! Draw a line in the sand and tell the enemy, “Enough is enough!” Get aggressive and stirred up once again for what rightfully belongs to you. Get fed up for going without and then rise up and exercise your God-given authority over the devil. Live by the sword and never back off. The victory is yours if you get fed up and never give up!

After the exodus out of Egypt, God led the children of Israel the long way through the wilderness, because the people weren't ready for war. If they were willing to fight the enemy in order to possess what the Lord had given them, then God would have led them by the short route.

War has been declared, and to possess your mountain you can't have a lukewarm attitude when it comes to fighting the enemy. Don't be a weak kneed nobody, but rise up and go to war for the glory of God. If you ignore the devil he will destroy you. Don't be afraid of the enemy. He's a defeated foe. Instead, make the devil be afraid of you.

You are a warrior in the army of God by choice and by command. Your armor is not polished and nice, but is tattered and worn. You don't go over the mountain the enemy placed in your path, you go "through" it. This is why your victory is called a "breakthrough." You don't go around, under, or over your trial. You break "through" that obstacle and take back what the enemy has stolen.

Don't let the devil steal your focus and your purpose. He really doesn't want to kill you. He wants to control you, and if he can't do that, then he'll try to kill you. But those who know their purpose never give up. Instead, they get fed up and fight! Your purpose stays with you when you give your full undivided attention to it.

There is no vacation in the kingdom of God and you can't be

a mediocre weekend warrior. Purpose takes you out of the arena of the soul and puts you in the arena of faith, where you rise up and take the kingdom by storm.



# 4 LET GO AND LET GOD

**I**t has been said that stress comes from trying to do something about that which you can do nothing about. You do all the right things and confess all the Biblical verses that promise relief to your situation, but still nothing seems to work.

When all your efforts become futile and get you nowhere, then frustration and despair begin to sneak in through the back door of your spirit, soul, and body. Physical ailments begin to appear, you snap and get angry at loved ones, and before long you hear yourself saying things that a person of faith should not be saying.

“Where is God?” you ask. “Why is He letting all this happen to me? When will it all be over?” You cry out to Him and all you get is silence. To make matters worse, people who have the freedom and victory over whatever problem is plaguing you, somehow find a way of crossing your path.

You’re struggling with money problems and the rich neighbor across the street pulls into his

driveway with a brand new car.

Maybe you’re having marital problems and after an argument with your spouse, you drive past a church and see standing there a smiling bride and bridegroom getting rice thrown on them after having just taken their wedding vows.

Your emotional struggle gets harder and more intense as anger and jealousy come knocking on your door. It just doesn’t seem fair. You grit your teeth and your knuckles turn white as you grab hold of your steering wheel and condemn the world and all the unfairness that’s in it. Ever been there? Thankfully, there is a solution to all this.



Two questions most frequently asked by hurting people is “Why God why?” and “When God when?” Why did all this happen and when will it be over? If we are not careful, questions such as these can bring havoc to our minds, especially when they go unanswered.

You see, the mind is a strange thing, and if not renewed with the Word of God, can become your worst enemy. We all have one and it’s only desire is to always go in the opposite direction of where God wants you to go. Gen. 6:5 says,

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

With our minds we cause our tongue to bless God and curse men <sup>James 3:9</sup>, as well as doubt, worry, murmuring, complaining, and growing weary. It wants to do what God doesn’t want us to do, and it wants to know what God doesn’t want us to know.

People think Satan tempted Adam and Eve with an apple, but he did not. He tempted them with knowledge.

“And the Lord God com-

manded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’” <sup>Gen. 2:16,17</sup>.

Satan told Adam and Eve that they could know things that God didn’t want them to know.

Today that same temptation is alive and well on planet earth. We want to know everything, but some things we don’t need to know. Paul said in 1 Cor. 2:2,

“For I am determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

When we are attacked with tests and trials because we have been anointed by God to serve Him, we must stop trying to figure everything out and let God be God.

This is when you’ll have your breakthrough:

***When you stop trusting in yourself and start trusting God.***

We prove we trust God when we refuse to worry and when we get comfortable, not knowing how or when the breakthrough will come. This is why

Paul tells us to,

“Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:23,24).

The Message© Bible says,

“And so I insist - and God backs me up on this - that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. They’ve refused for so long to deal with God that they’ve lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. They can’t think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion. But that’s no life for you. You learned Christ! My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to Him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything - and I do mean everything - connected with that old life has to go. It’s rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life - a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your con-

duct as God accurately reproduces His character in you” Eph. 4:17-24.

The “new life” Paul talks about here is the life of faith where we trust God completely and don’t get consumed with the questions that our minds are sure to produce. Questions like “Why God why?” and “When God when?” Instead we should follow the wise instructions of Prov. 3:5-7a,

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes...” This is what it means to put off the old man and put on the new man <sup>Col. 3:9,10</sup>.

As you travel down the road of life, God leads you one step at a time. We “walk” by faith and not by sight <sup>2 Cor. 5:7</sup>, and Ps. 37:23a says,

“The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord...”

We read in Heb. 11:8,

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

Paul said in Acts 20:22,

“And see, now I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there.”

Faith produces dependence on God and ignores the questions that plague our mind. Jesus said in John 15:5,

**“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”**

Prov. 20:24 says,

“A man’s steps are of the Lord; How then can he understand his way?”

He can’t and this is why it’s so important to put your complete trust in God. Not knowing the answers to all of life’s questions causes us to enter into the rest of God. This haven of rest is found when you refuse to worry about anything. In God’s rest you are able to boldly proclaim,

**“I don’t know what tomorrow holds <sup>James 4:14</sup>, but I know Who holds tomorrow.”**

Prov. 25:2a says a very unusual statement,

“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter...”

God knows everything and this is what makes Him God. If we knew everything God knows, then He couldn’t be our God. There is no such thing as trusting God without unanswered questions. He gets glory when you don’t know everything, but trust Him anyway. Ps. 71:1a says,

“In You, O Lord, I put my trust.”

David wrote in Ps. 27:13,14,

“I would have lost heart unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say on the Lord!”

Our problems don’t steal our joy, it’s our attitude and all that “stinkin’ thinkin’” that steals our joy. The Amplified© translation of these verses says,

“What would have become of me had I not believed that I would see the Lord’s goodness in the land of the living? Wait and hope for and expect the Lord; be brave and of good courage and let not your heart be stout and enduring. Yes, wait for and hope for and expect the Lord.”

To have breakthrough in

our lives we must lay aside all the questions and wonderings in our minds, cast all our care onto the Lord, and then step back and let God be God.

Who we are and what we become in life is determined by us and us alone. We cannot control our neighbor or the boss at work, but we are instructed to take control of the way we respond to the every day circumstances of life. This, of course, is a lot easier said than done. To do this will take a lifetime of determination, endurance, and oftentimes intense struggle and hardship.

You see, our emotions are real. So often in the Christian camp we are told to ignore our feelings and live in the realm of the spirit. It is true, in the makeup of every believer our emotions and feelings can rightfully be called “the weakest link,” but how can you ignore something that is so real and relevant in our lives? After all, Jesus Himself was a very emotional man.

- He wept;
- He got angry;
- At times He became very frustrated;
- And in the Garden of Gethsemane He struggled so

fiercely with His emotions that, His sweat became as drops of blood.

No, we cannot ignore our feeling and, in truth, we’re not supposed to.

***The Bible does not tell us to ignore our feelings, but rather to control them.***

It was this same Jesus Who at times displayed His emotions so openly Who said,

**“In your patience, possess your soul”** Luke 21:19.

Why did He say that? Because He knew that if you do not take control of your mind, will, and emotions, for sure they will take control of you.

How important is self-control? In Gal. 5:22,23 it is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit and John the apostle writes,

“Beloved, I pray that you prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” 3 John 2.

Financial success and physical health is in direct proportion to how well one takes control of way-ward emotions and vain questions that plaque our mind. In Acts 24 Paul had an audience with Felix the governor and v. 25

says,

“He reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.”

A person becomes righteous in the sight of God when they get born-again, and in the end when all is said and done, we must all stand before the throne of God, where we will all be held accountable for what we’ve done with the life we’ve been given.

Paul tells us that between conversion and the judgment to come, one’s life should be lived with the trademark of self-control and the diligence that goes with it.

The word “self-control” is a translation of the Greek word ‘eg-krateia’. This word is derived from “kratos,” which means ‘strength and power’.

The fruit of self-control brings with it the same strength and power that raised Jesus from the dead <sup>Eph. 1:19, 20</sup>. A believer must have so much control over his mind, will, and emotions, that his feelings become his slave. Since a slave has no legal rights of his own, and is bound by law to his master, all emotions that are brought into subjection must be obedient to its owner.

***Do not ask yourself  
how you feel,  
but tell yourself  
how you feel.***

When you take control of your emotions, you take control of your life. According to Paul, the result of not having self-control is to become a “castaway” <sup>1 Cor. 9:27</sup>, and in the Greek this word is defined as “unapproved, rejected, worthless”.

Because of a lack of self-control, many believers have become worthless castaways and have dropped out of the race for the incorruptible crown. Clearly, living a life of self-control should be a top priority for every believer.

Let’s look again at what Jesus said and see the time frame for when the best opportunity is for us to take control of our feelings and emotions. He said,

***“In your patience, possess your soul”*** <sup>Luke 21:19</sup>.

Having patience indicates that you are standing in faith as you wait for some prayer request to be manifested. In other words, something in your life is not right.

- You are in the midst of a struggle, and feelings of doubt and frustration are knocking on the door of



your soul.

- You have feelings that are real and they're causing you much pain.
- Your emotions are under constant attack as days go by, and your struggle is still there and no relief seems in sight.
- You obey the Word to the best of your ability, but still the situation gets worse and worse.
- You are ready to pull every hair out of your head as you continually try to do something about that which you can do nothing about.
- A feeling of helplessness swarms over you, and at times you feel like a puppet on a string being controlled by some diabolical force.
- You cry out, "God, where are You? Why God, why? When God, when?", and it takes every ounce of spiritual energy you've got just to keep from giving up.

It is in times like this, when you are on the brink of what seems like a hopeless situation, that God says to "possess your soul." He does not say to do this when all is

going well. No, we are told to take control of our emotions when they are under attack the most.

Just how does one take possession of their soul? By following the example of Jesus, of course. He surrendered His will to the Heavenly Father and said in John 12:49,

**"For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father Who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak."**

Words are the most powerful force in the universe. What you say can make you or break you. Prov. 21:23 says,

**"Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles."**

Do not give birth to negative feelings by speaking them out of your mouth. Heed the words of James 1:19b which tells us to be,

**"Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."**

Prov. 17:27 says,

**"He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit."**

Know with certainty that the trial that plagues you most will never go away until you get your

emotions under control. Molehills turn into mountains when, like a runaway train, your emotions go unrestrained. Silence is the key to gaining self-control. After all,

“Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips he is considered perceptive” *Prov. 17:28*.

In Matt. 11:28, 30 Jesus spoke these comforting words,

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

What Jesus is saying here is that instead of getting all wrapped up with our problems and bent out of shape trying to solve them, we can cast all our care onto Him *1 Peter 5:7*, and live a life that is free of care and worry.

He did say His yoke is easy. In the world of agriculture, a yoke was used to bind two oxen together to gain added strength for the purpose of plowing a field. The Lord is telling us that we can be yoked together with Him, and as a result of doing so we will find rest

during our times of struggle. The yoke is the Lord's, but the responsibility of putting it on is ours. When we don't put it on, then we are taking on the care and the worry that comes with the every day problems of life.

Not once are we told to ignore our problems, but we are told to not worry about them. Worry is an expression of fear and doubt, and James 1:7 says that the person who doubts should not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.

It is amazing to see how differently God looks at our problems, compared to how we look at them. Paul writes in *2 Cor. 4:17*,

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment...”

He calls the fiery trials we go through “light” and our years of struggle are “but for a moment.” These are the words of a man who had cast all his care onto the Lord; Who said His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Your burden becomes His burden when you take His yoke upon you and cast all your care onto Him.

An example of casting your care onto the Lord is found in the story of Moses leading the children of Israel out of bondage in

Egypt. Soon after fleeing from their oppressors, the children of Israel were faced with an impossible situation about which they were helpless to solve. With the Red Sea before them and the army of Egypt behind them, these same people who witnessed so many miracles began to murmur and complain. Thankfully, Moses had faith in his God.

As he obeyed the Lord and was about to lift his rod to part the Red Sea, he told the people,

“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.

In other words, cast the care of the impossible situation that confronts you, onto the Lord and then step back and get out of the way.

***This is what it means to  
“LET GO AND LET GOD.”***

There is no secret formula for casting your care onto the Lord. Just speak out loud and tell the Lord *and* the devil what you’re doing. When a problem confronts

you say,

***“Lord, I’m letting go of this problem. I’m casting the care onto You, and I refuse to worry about it.”***

That’s all you have to say. A peaceful calm will flood over you and before you know, it your problems one by one will begin to fall off by the wayside. Once again it will be confirmed that the Lord can take care of your problems a whole lot better than you can. But first you must let go of them. And, by all means, don’t fall into the illusion that some of your problems are too small and too petty to trouble the Lord with. To God, all our problems are small.

Never wait until the last moment before you cast your care onto the Lord. Do it today. Do it now! You won’t regret it.



# 5 CREATION'S TIMETABLE

**T**he book of James is often called the Proverbs of the New Testament, and rightfully so. Powerful wisdom is on display in the pages of this book written by the half-brother of Jesus, wisdom both rare and essential.

Wisdom is so much more than knowing the truth of God's Word, it is the skill in living it out in our every day lives.

***What good is a truth if we don't know how to live it?***

***What good is an intention if we can't sustain it?***

James knew that when a person commits their life to Jesus and gets promoted to the role of being a servant of God, then anything and everything that can possibly go wrong, sooner or later does. This is why he begins the first chapter of his book with one of the most profound statements in all of scripture,

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of

your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” James 1:2-4

It is during the hard times when we find out who we really are and what we're made of. It's where the rubber meets the road.

Read carefully the Message® Bible translation of Heb. 10:32-39,

“Remember those early days after you first saw the light? Those were the hard times! Kicked around in public, targets of every kind of abuse - some days it was you, other days your friends. If some friends went to prison, you stuck by them. If some ene-



mies broke in and seized your goods, you let them go with a smile, knowing they couldn’t touch your real treasure. Nothing they did bothered you, nothing set you back. So don’t throw it all away now. You were sure of yourselves then. It’s still a sure thing! But you need to stick it out, staying with God’s plan so you’ll be there for the promised completion. ‘It won’t be long now, He’s on the way; He’ll show up most any minute. But anyone who is right with Me thrives on royal trust; if he cuts and runs, I won’t be very happy.’ But we’re not quitters who lose out. Oh, no! We’ll stay with it and survive, trusting all the way.”

To be “perfect and complete, lacking nothing” is the description of a well-rounded, perfectly contented life. To fit in with God’s timetable, therefore, we must forever strive to be content, even when our breakthrough does not come when we’d like it to.

God wants us to enjoy the journey we are on, and contentment will bring you to the point where you’re not disturbed or disquieted in your spirit.

## CONTENTMENT

To be content means to have an uncomplaining acceptance of one’s position in life, and if you are content you will not worry, murmur, envy or be overcome with greed. Contentment is necessary because your happiness is based on how content you are. The Message ©Bible says in Phil. 4:11,12,

“I’ve learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I’m just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I’ve found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty.”

The only cause of sadness in one’s life is the lack of contentment, therefore, we must thrive to learn to be content at all times.

Life is not always fair. One child gets born in a poverty stricken nation, while another gets born to Hollywood millionaires. We have all seen God-fearing believers struggle to make ends meet, while the leaders of organized crime and casino owners make millions of dollars each and every week. Some believers get fast breakthroughs while others seem

to be in a non-stop struggle with the trials of life. Whenever God is approached about this seemingly unfairness, His answer is always the same.

“Be content,” He says, “with such things as you have” <sup>Heb. 13:5</sup>.

Contentment is a vital necessity that needs to be learned and be in full bloom in order for faith to work. If you're not content, then you'll gripe and complain about your current circumstances, and negative words of doubt and unbelief will flow out of your mouth. This, of course, will hinder your faith from bringing the blessings of God into your life.

People who complain are not content, thus they are never happy.

***Remember, Paul calls contentment the “recipe for happiness.”***

When was the last time you heard a happy person speak negatively? A joyful Christian knows that their happiness is the steppingstone to better things to come, and this is why all you'll hear out of them are positive, faith-filled words.

To be happy you must be content, and this comes by accept-

ing your position in life without complaining about it. There is no other way. Besides, complaining never changed anything anyway. So why do it?

The pursuit of a better life always begins with contentment, but it doesn't end there. Consider what Paul says in Phil. 3:12,

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have already perfected; but I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has already laid hold of me.”

Paul is telling us to always be content but never be satisfied. To be content we must always be growing and pressing on. The word “grow” means ‘to increase’ and 1 Tim. 6:6 says,

“Godliness with contentment is great gain.”

Growth is what keeps your contentment alive, and it is easy to be content if you know increase is on the way.

At a new job, for instance, a worker should be content and thankful for the starting wage <sup>Luke 3:14</sup>, but nobody wants to work at the same company for several years and get paid the same amount as the day they started. No, for the worker to be content,

then increase must take place. Likewise, the employer expects from the new hire increase in effort and productivity. When enough companies do not grow, they close their doors and often-times this leads the nation into an economic tailspin. The same will happen to us mentally, physically, and spiritually if growth is not a major factor in our lives.

The greatest hindrance to growth is satisfaction. This causes you to accept things as they are and creates in you a “whatever will be will be” mentality. In truth, satisfaction is the birthmark of laziness. Those who are lazy will not work at—nor do those things that are required for growth to happen, because they simply do not care about the important things in life. They are willing to sit back and watch the world pass them by, yet they’ll be the first ones to complain when hardships prevent them from enjoying the finer things in life.

The secret to overcoming the spirit of laziness and to enter into a state of contentment is to grow hungry for the things of God. Hunger is the result of not being satisfied and it makes a demand on growth.

If you’re satisfied where

you’re are in life, then you won’t push yourself to climb to the next level of spiritual development and maturity. This attitude prevents growth from happening. 2 Peter 3:18a says,

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus.”

Growth is a command from God and is what contentment feeds on. The very first command given to Adam and Eve was “be fruitful and multiply” <sup>Gen. 1:22</sup>.

In the parable of the talents <sup>Matt. 25:14-30</sup>, the unfruitful servant was condemned and sent away into eternal torment. As you can see, growth is very important to God. He is the God of increase and He wants and expects you to grow. Therefore, if your life is not yet filled to capacity with the things of God, then allow dissatisfaction to create in you a craving for more of the benefits that come as a result of being a follower of Christ. In other words, become a seeker of God.

It stands to reason that the quality of one’s life is in direct proportion to the quality of their search for God. Jer. 29:12,13 says,

“Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and

I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

We cannot seek God and pursue Him half-heartedly and expect to find Him. He deserves greater honor than that. We are in a season where God is telling us to turn our eyes back upon Him.

Today graven images are taking the place of God in the lives of many believers. A graven image does not have to be a statue like the golden calf built while Moses was on the mountaintop meeting with God. No, a graven image is anything we have our eyes on that *takes the place of God*.

- Do you play golf with your friends on Sunday instead of taking your family to church? If so, then your golf game has become a graven image.
- Is the TV set on when you should be having a family Bible study? More times than not, there is no greater damaging idol than the television set and the video store.
- Do you live for the “almighty dollar”? Does money consume your thoughts?

Do you work overtime and spend time away from your family and church when it really isn't necessary?

- Is the accumulation of “things” the only motive you have for living? Do you believe that “he who dies with the most toys wins”? If so, then you are an idol worshipper.

We are told in Matt. 6:33 to, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.”

The problem today is that too many believers are seeking the “things” first, and hoping that God will be added to their lives. This ought not to be.

***Anything in your life that you prioritize before God is a graven image,***

—no matter how good the “thing” may be in and of itself. The quest for a better life will always lead to the throne room of God, and we must not let things take the place of Him in our lives. Besides, when you seek God and find Him, you'll have everything you'll ever need. When Jesus becomes your “all in all” contentment will flood



over you like a mighty river. In His presence is “fullness of joy” <sup>Ps. 16:11</sup>. Truly, that is the recipe for happiness.

James says to “let” patience have it’s perfect work. This “perfect work” won’t happen on it’s own. You’ve got to submit your will to the timing of God and “let” it happen. We have to stop being in such a big hurry all the time and realize that as we wait properly, strength of character is being created in our spirits. When this happens, you’ll stop reasoning with your mind and start trusting God with your heart. If not, you’ll get stressed out and it won’t be long before you’ll suffer burn-out. We have to stop trying to make things happen on our own strength and ability, and learn to enjoy the process. We have to let God be God. Ps. 68:1 says,

“Let God arise and His enemies be scattered.”

Remember, we are led one step at a time, little by little, line upon line, precept upon precept, from glory to glory. “Hurry” leads to worry, so God wants us to cast all our care onto Him, and then go out and enjoy our lives. We do what we can do and leave the rest in His very capable hands.

Paul assures us that, “being confident of this very thing, that He Who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” <sup>Phil. 1:6</sup>.

The Message© Bible says,

“There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God Who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.”

As all this is going on, patience is performing a “perfect work” on the inside of your innermost being. David knew this and prays in Ps. 51 what should be the heart cry of every believer. The entire chapter should daily be on the lips of all who seek to live a Godly life. Notice especially what he prays for in vs. 10,

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

**PATIENCE** Having a “steadfast spirit” is by definition what the nature of patience is all about. Patience does not mean you put up with things and hope one day things will get better in the sweet by-and-by. This is not patience. Patience means

consistency, being constant, never changing regardless of the circumstances you are in. Like Jesus, patience is the same yesterday, today, and forever <sup>Heb. 13:8</sup>. James says about the Heavenly Father,

“With Whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” <sup>James 1:17b</sup>.

That is the definition of patience. A patient man is one who is the same if his circumstances are good or bad, whether he has a million dollars, or if he owes a million dollars. He talks the same, acts the same, and reacts the same. His attitude is, “I’m not moved by what I see. I’m moved by what I believe, by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God <sup>Matt. 4:4</sup>. He changes not his confession or his reaction to the trials of life. He laughs at adversity and has joy in tribulation.

David prayed for God to create in him a clean heart and a steadfast spirit, because he knew how important patience was, that there is no such thing as a “drive-thru breakthrough.” If this prayer is also the desire of your heart, then it will help to understand how and when this creation pro-

cess takes place.

To better comprehend creation’s timetable, it is best to go back to the beginning of time as we know it and see what truths are revealed in the Genesis story of when God created the heavens and the earth.

The story of life, the Bible, begins with God wanting something. Do you know what is the number one desire of God’s heart? What does He want more than anything else? The answer is a simple one and is found in His Name. Our God is a loving “Father” and His biggest desire is for a family. This always has been and always will be His number one desire. The first command He gave Adam and Eve was to “be fruitful and multiply.” Knowing this, we can go to the first chapter of Genesis and see how His desire got manifested.

Verse 1 says,

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

If we were to ask God why the family He so abundantly wanted was not created on the first day, He would probably respond by saying, “Everything in it’s time.” Solomon wrote in Eccl. 3:1,

“To everything there is a sea-

son, a time for every purpose under heaven.”

A careful study of God’s Word will reveal dozens of verses about the “appointed time” when certain events will occur. The message derived from such a story is that, in spiritual terms, timing is everything.

We see in Gen. 1 that God did not receive His number one desire on the first day of creation, or the second day, or even the third. Man was not created until the sixth day, which was the last day of creation. We learn that before God’s desire was fulfilled, that other things had to happen first. A sequence of other creations took place before He formed man out of the dust of the earth.

If this is how creations timetable works with God, then we can come to the rightful conclusion that this is how it will work with us as well.

To walk by faith we must be “sequence minded,” which is another way of saying “everything in it’s time.” The kingdom of God is based on the principle of seed-time and harvest. There is a sequence here. First you prepare the ground, and then you sow your seed. Next you water and fertilize that which has been planted, and

finally after a season of growing and much waiting, you reap that which was sown. Man’s biggest problem is that he wants instant results and wants to do things out of sequence. God didn’t do it that way and neither should we.

A man who wakes up, showers, gets dressed, and goes to work will begin his day properly, but a man who does things out of sequence will have problems. A man who wakes up, showers, goes to work, and then gets dressed will be having a very bad day.

To live a victorious Christian life one must grasp the reality of creation’s timetable which is everything in it’s proper time and order.

A baseball game comes to mind where a home run represents the answer to a prayer. The batter hits the ball - he prays his faith-filled prayer - and what does he do next? He sees it’s a home run ball, but he doesn’t stand there on home plate or return to the dugout. No, he goes to first base, then second, then third, and finally home. There is a sequence here that the batter has to follow.

As we stand in faith, we must also do the same thing. Why? Because God has a purpose for us being on first base. We must

follow this sequence - creation's timetable - and this requires patience, endurance, and perseverance. Problems arise when we are on first base and decide to cut across the field to third base, or we hit the ball and run to second. These problems are called trials, and they'll continue until we get it right and do things in the proper and Godly sequence.

There are lessons to be learned in trials, and the reasons a lot of them keep happening is that the lesson did not get learned. We get stubborn and want to go to third base when it's God's will for us to be on first. It's like trying to put a square peg into a round hole. It just won't work. And people wonder why their prayers are not getting answered?

The writer of Hebrews tells us that it is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God <sup>Heb. 6:12b</sup>. He goes on to say in Heb. 10:36,

“For you have need of endurance so that after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise.”

This takes time and causes the believer to enter into a season of waiting. Waiting reveals patience and is a weapon Satan dreads for you to discover. As you

perform the works that accompany faith, you should at the same time be learning as much as you can from the Word of God. Waiting enables you to gather accurate and untainted information.

***The quality of your information determines the quality of your decisions, and this determines the quality of your life.***

Waiting brings you truth. Much waiting brings you much truth. Jesus said in John 8:32,

“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”

None of this is done in vain and Lam. 3:25, 26 shows us that proper waiting guarantees favorable results,

“The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.”

We saw in the Genesis account of creation that God wanted a family, but man was not created until the sixth day. Notice that everything God created prior to that was for the benefit of man. He created nothing for Himself on those five days. The sun, moon, stars, land, water, animals, and vegeta-

tion were all for the good of man.

The message of CREATION'S TIMETABLE is that everything that happens to us before our prayers get answered is for our benefit, although we probably don't realize it at the time. The Bible says,

"All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" Rom.

8:28

We all must believe that something good is being created in us as we await the manifestations of our prayers. If believers realized this, they would no longer get frustrated when their prayers are not answered right away. Instead they should put all their energy into focusing on what God is creating in them today.

How many times do we think God is holding back on us? He isn't! It is His desire for us to become as Christlike as we possibly can be, and some lessons can only be learned as we await the answer to our prayers. It is during that waiting phase when He creates in us those characteristics that will make us more like Him. This is the double blessing of creation's timetable. We ultimately get our prayers answered plus we get the benefit of all those

wonderful God-like qualities that were created in us as we awaited the manifestation. This is how and when David's prayer in Ps. 51 becomes a reality.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" Ps 51:10.

May they both be used for the glory of God.



# 6 A TIME TO WAIT

**A** young man in his early twenties made this observation, “It’s amazing how smarter my parents became the older I got.” As he grew older and maturity slowly began to be developed in his life, this young fellow realized that his parents weren’t so stupid after all. We read in Prov. 4:1, 2,

“Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding; For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law.”

Verse 10-13 says,

“Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life will be many. I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in the right paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, and when you run, you will not stumble. Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; Keep her, for she is your life.”

Finally, we read in Prov. 5:7,

“Therefore hear me now, my children, and do not depart from the words of my mouth.”

If we are taught by scripture to put our trust in the instructions of a wise earthly father, how much more should we take heed to the loving words of our divine Heavenly Father? How often does foolish thinking cause us to think we know what’s best for our lives more than God?

So often we want God to do what we want, instead of submitting our will to do what He wants. When things don’t go our way, we oftentimes get frustrated and falsely accuse God of not loving or caring for us. Nothing



could be further from the truth. A firm conviction must be birthed in our hearts that God is a good God, and that He loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us <sup>John 3:16</sup>. That is love to the highest degree. 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.”

Compare this to what John says in 3 John 2,

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”

Soul prosperity is when you lay aside the doubts and questions that come to your mind and learn to live by grace through faith <sup>Eph. 2:8</sup>.

We get miserable when we try to do God’s job with our own power and abilities, or when we try to understand His way of doing things with our limited minds. We need to forever believe that God is in control of our lives and enter into the rest of God.

History records for us countless tales of people who did this and became champions, from Biblical times in the past

to modern times in the present. Champions emerge from all walks of life, from the mentally handicapped child running a race in the Special Olympics, to a world renowned scientist making a brilliant and life changing discovery. All are champions! All are heroes! And “since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,” champions who did not quit, let us also “run with endurance the race that is set before us” <sup>Heb. 12:1</sup>.

May we never forget the encouraging words of Is. 40:29-31,

“He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

Words spoken at the end of one’s life have special value attached to them. A person can look back at his or her life and see what really matters and what doesn’t. Take, for instance, these famous last words,

“I regret that I have but one life to give for my country.”

Or how about,

“Give me liberty or give me death”?

These words say something about the men who spoke them. Last words mean something. They are filled with thoughts and beliefs that come from a lifetime of experiencing the best and worst that life has to offer. What an honor it is to listen to an elderly person reminisce about days gone by. To hear them talk about all the hardships they’ve faced and what life was like in a bygone era, will help young people today appreciate the things they now have. Prov. 16:31 tells us,

“The silver-haired head is a crown of glory.”

People who are well advanced in years and have fully experienced the journey of life, know what they’re talking about.

The Bible is also filled with meaningful last words of people about to enter Gloryland.

- How important it is to read the last words of Jesus before He ascended on high and to hear His desire for all men to be saved.
- 2 Timothy is the final letter

written by Paul before his death. It will greatly encourage you and lift you up as you hear Paul express himself to his ever-loyal friend and companion.

- Samson, with his eyes gouged out and his hands resting upon two pillars, made his only recorded faith confession just moments before his greatest victory and his own death.
- Joshua records in the final chapter of his book these famous words,

“Choose ye this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 14:15

What a powerful way to close out the story of one’s life!

There are many others, of course, but probably none more interesting than the last recorded words spoken by Joseph, one of the most respected men in all the Bible. Every now and then, quite often really, one will come across a verse of scripture that just doesn’t seem to fit in with the rest of the Word. Joseph, toward the end of his story, speaks one of these verses.

After the death of his father



Jacob, Joseph tearfully listened to his older brothers plea for their lives. They cried out and said it was their father's final wish that they be not put to death for selling their younger brother into slavery many years before. Knowing they deserved the full fury of Joseph's wrath and expecting it to be put upon them, they went and fell down before him, offering their total surrender in service to him. How shocked they must have been as they heard the warm-hearted Joseph speak these famous last words,

“Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive” Gen. 50:19, 20.

A casual reader of the Word will take this to mean that God caused a series of evil events to take place in Joseph's life in order to get him to his place of authority in Egypt. Was Joseph telling his older brothers that God was responsible for the envy and jealousy that rose up in them when they were told of their younger brother's dreams? Likewise, did God cause the wife of Potiphar to burn with lust for her husband's young and

handsome servant? Is this the message Joseph was conveying to his older brothers? If so, his words would be quickly contradicted by James 1:13 which says,

“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.”

Jesus Himself prayed to the Heavenly Father that He,

“Lead us not into temptation”  
Matt. 6:13.

Our God is a God of love and He does not cause evil to come against us.

On the contrary, He delivers us from evil and the Evil One. This being true, what exactly did Joseph mean when he said,

“What you meant for evil, God meant for good”?

As we travel down the journey of life, living for God is like driving down a long, straight, and narrow highway Matt. 7:13,14. For one reason or another, we often get out of His perfect will, and this is like turning off the main highway and getting off onto some side road. What Joseph is saying here is that sometimes God uses roadblocks and detours

to get us back onto the straight road of walking in His perfect will. A roadblock prevents you from continuing down the road you are presently on. Simply put, a roadblock “blocks the road.” And if we are on the wrong road, to go further may oftentimes bring despair, destruction, confusion, and maybe even death.

But if our hearts are right, and we are earnestly trying to follow God’s will for our lives, He will use a series of roadblocks and detours to guide us back onto the right path. Have you ever started to say or do something, when all of a sudden you got a check down in your spirit telling you not to do that? That’s a roadblock.

***Spiritual roadblocks are good and not bad, and God uses them when we’ve wandered off the beaten path.***

We must also realize that roadblocks and detours are for our own protection. You drive up to a bridge that’s been washed away by a recent flood, and you come across a big and wide roadblock. A large orange sign is attached to the roadblock and in bold, black letters is the word “Detour.” Below the sign an arrow points in a specific direction. Why is that roadblock there? It was put there

so you wouldn’t drive your car off the bridge. It’s there for your protection. People murmur and complain when they come across roadblocks, but if it were not there, certain destruction would come to whomever tried to cross the bridge.

The question to be asked is this: Did God cause the flood which brought about the washing away of the bridge? Of course not. God did not cause the flood, but He did have the proper authorities put up the roadblocks so people would not get hurt and killed.

- In the case of Joseph, did God cause his brothers to sell him into slavery? No, but He could have caused the people who bought him to make Egypt their destination.
- Did God cause Potiphar’s wife to lust after and lie about Joseph? No, but He could have placed it in Potiphar’s heart to have Joseph put into prison instead of being put to death.
- Did God cause the chief butler to forget about Joseph for two years after being released from prison? No, but He did cause Pharaoh to have a dream which caused

the butler to remember his former cellmate. This, in turn, is what led to Joseph's release from prison.

Can you see how these roadblocks and detours put together eventually led Joseph to the throne room of Egypt? What his brothers meant for evil, God meant for good.

More times than not, inconvenience often accompanies roadblocks and detours. You cannot travel as fast on a side road as you can on the main highway. This usually rubs against our flesh and, because of a lack of understanding on our part, we are blinded to what is happening in the spiritual realm. True, a roadblock caused by us wandering off the proper path can bring an inconvenience, but that does not mean it has to be a hindrance.

***It is our attitude  
that determines if a roadblock  
will be a hindrance  
or a blessing.***

We need to have the attitude Joseph had when he said,

“What you meant for evil,  
God meant for good” <sup>Gen 50:20</sup>.

Joseph knew that no matter what circumstances he was in, God was at work in his life. Joseph

knew that,

“All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” <sup>Rom.</sup>

8:28.

For sure, being sold into slavery and thrown into prison was an inconvenience to Joseph, but because of his attitude it wasn't a hindrance. God was working in his life through a series of roadblocks and detours and, when all was said and done, Joseph was precisely where God wanted him to be.

Staying on the straight and narrow road is not always an easy thing to do. Thankfully, we can rely on our Heavenly Father and His divine foresight to guide us and keep us going in the right direction.

A Christian man recently bought a plane ticket and was scheduled for an afternoon flight. He ran into a roadblock and was thus prevented from catching his plane. Shortly after takeoff that same plane crashed, killing all who were on board. Thank God for roadblocks! We can learn from this story, as well as from the life of Joseph, that circumstances beyond our control may sometimes force us off the straight and narrow

road.

***It may not always be our wrong doing that causes us to get off onto some side road.***

- Was that Christian man responsible for the roadblock that prevented him from getting on that airplane? No!
- Was Joseph responsible for the envy and jealousy that rose up in his older brothers? No!
- Was Joseph responsible for the lust of Potiphar's wife and the lying spirit that was within her? No!
- Was Joseph responsible for the chief butler's sudden lapse of memory? Once again, no!

True, sin and willful disobedience, as well as a lack of knowledge, can force us off the main highway of life and onto a side road of trials and much hardship. But most often it is the normal circumstances of day-to-day living in an imperfect world that causes us to reach out to God and His divine guidance. Whatever the reason, we can know for sure that when we cry out to God He will be there for us.

## COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

And whatever the enemy throws against us, we can be confident that, through a series of roadblocks and detours, God can turn it around for our good.

Let's look now at the story of the forefathers of Joseph where God used a major road-block in their lives to bring about His perfect plan, when their will did not line up with His own.

The promise had been given. One night God took Abraham outside and told him that the day would come when his descendants would outnumber the stars in the sky <sup>Gen. 15:5</sup>. This promise, plus a vow that Abraham would inherit the land to where the Lord had sent him, was sealed in blood when, in the form of a smoking oven and a burning torch, the Lord Himself passed between the pieces of sacrificial animals that Abraham had cut in two and placed on the ground <sup>Gen. 15:17</sup>.

A covenant had been "cut," and twenty-five years later the first step in the fulfillment of this promise came to pass when Sarah, in her old age, gave birth to a son whom they named

Isaac. Eccl. 3:1b says that there is,  
“A time for every purpose  
under heaven.”

And we read in Gen. 21:2 that Isaac was born “at the set time” of which God had spoken to Abraham. Everything was unfolding as the Lord had promised, but before the plan could be completed, an important lesson would have to be learned on the need to wait on the Lord.

So many times, during our journey down the path of life we do things that are spiritually correct and in line with the Word of God, but still the circumstances that surround our lives do not line up with how the Word says they should. Questions arise and doubts linger at the door of our heart, when in the limited capacity of our own intellect we attempt the near impossible task of trying to figure out for ourselves what is going on.

Isaac was now forty years old and the time had come for the miracle son of Abraham to take a bride and carry on the bloodline, through which the birth of the Messiah would come. Abraham sent his oldest servant Eliezer back to his homeland for the purpose of finding a bride for Isaac, and through divine intervention was

led to a beautiful, loyal, and hard working young woman by the name of Rebecca. Eliezer knew that this young maiden had been personally chosen by God to be the bride of his master’s son, and immediately they began their long journey back to where the promise of God would again continue to unfold.

Isaac knew the purpose of Eliezer’s departure, and one can only guess at the thoughts that passed through his mind as he awaited the servant’s return. In the evening Abraham’s son of promise would go out into the field to meditate and it is a certainty that he saw the same stars God had shown his father so many years before. Like his father, Isaac’s descendants would also outnumber the stars above, and the return of Eliezer with his God-chosen bride was the next step in the fulfillment of the promise made so long ago.

One thing he must have been taught by his father was the importance of waiting on the Lord. Waiting is one thing, but waiting on the Lord is totally different. Timing is everything, and in the realm of the Spirit it is vitally important when it comes to the fulfillment of God’s promises.

When you wait on the Lord, you are submitting yourself to His perfect will which is directly related to His perfect timing. Remember, it is the Lord Whom you are waiting on. He knows better than we do when and in what order things should happen and unfold in our lives.

It was twenty-five years between the time God gave His promise to Abraham and the day when Isaac was born. And now, forty years later, Isaac was in a season of waiting as he anxiously awaited the return of his father's servant.

Then it happened. One evening as he was out in the field pondering all that had happened and what was about to happen, he looked up and in the distance saw a caravan of camels coming his way. The servant Eliezer had returned, and walking beside her camel was a young woman who, out of respect and humbleness, had taken a veil and covered herself.

Here was the woman chosen by God to be his wife, and Isaac took her as his own and quickly fell in love with her. He took her into the tent of his deceased mother, and Isaac received comfort from the woman who through divine

appointment would allow his father's bloodline to continue. Little did he know that another season of waiting was about to begin.

It did not take but a short while for those intended to benefit from God's promise to realize that something was terribly wrong. For some reason Rebecca could not conceive, and before long the rightful conclusion had been reached that the wife of Isaac was indeed barren.

What thoughts enter into a person's mind when the will of God is known, but yet the manifestation of a divine plan does not come to fruition? Doubt, fear, and anger are but a few of the emotions that one must contend with as frustration sets in, and questions arise as to what, if anything, could possibly be wrong. Sarah also did not conceive right away, after the promise had been given, and one can only believe that Abraham advised Isaac not to "get in the flesh" and create another Ishmael like he had done years before. The only thing that could be done is to go on living, and in faith begin to wait on the Lord.

Scripture does not tell what happened during the next twenty

years, but we read in Gen. 26:21, “Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife because she was barren; and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebecca his wife conceived.”

Isaac would soon make a drastic mistake that, if not corrected, would alter the plan of God and bring an end to the divine bloodline that would one day usher in the birth of God’s Son into the world. There was, however, one person God could count on to obey Him no matter what the consequences may be.

A war was taking place inside her. In Rebecca’s womb, a struggle for dominance was causing her much discomfort and the questions that arose in her mind caused her to inquire of the Lord as to why this was so.

“And the Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger”<sup>Gen. 25:23</sup>.

It is a fact of scripture that when God speaks to a family member it is usually to the husband to whom He speaks. Not this time. God spoke to Rebecca

and this is the first indication that Isaac had stepped out of God’s perfect will. It should have been Isaac that made this inquiry of the Lord, but since he got what he wanted with his wife’s pregnancy, he apparently felt no need to pursue the plan of God any further. Unbeknown to anybody but Rebecca, God was about to change the way He usually does things.

Traditionally it was the firstborn son who received the birthright and the family blessing that was passed down from the father. This time, however, tradition would be broken, for God said the older would serve the younger. The day would come when drastic measures would have to be taken in order to keep alive God’s original promise to Abraham.

Isaac was sixty years old when his twin sons were born. In time they grew up, and the firstborn son named Esau became a skillful hunter and a man of the field. He was an outdoors man much like his father, and Isaac loved him best because he ate of his son’s game. Jacob, however, was a mild man dwelling in tents, and since his mother knew he was God’s choice to carry on the promise to Abraham, she gave all

her love to him.

Several more years passed, and the day came when Isaac was near death. Wanting to bless his firstborn, he asked Esau to first go hunting and bring him some cooked game to eat. While he was away Rebecca had Jacob dress up like his hairy brother, thus fooling the blind Isaac who, without realizing it, fulfilled the will of God by blessing the smooth-skinned Jacob.

Throughout history both Rebecca and Jacob have been labeled as liars and deceivers, but in truth they are to be commended for their courage to stand up and do whatever it took to see the will of God fulfilled.

We can also see in this story why God caused Rebecca to be barren when she first married Isaac. It stands to reason that if she had conceived right away, then Isaac would not have been old and blind when it came time to pass on the family blessing. This being so, then no way would he have allowed himself to be deceived and would have destroyed the plan of God by blessing Esau instead. His season of waiting was brought about by his own selfish ambitions that took him out of the will of God.

We can learn from this story that waiting on God keeps us in His perfect will. Sometimes it is *our wrong impressions* of what God wants, that is the cause for us having to wait longer than necessary.

Always know what God's will is and then order your steps accordingly. Why wait longer than you have to?





# 7 NO TURNING BACK

**N**ow when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David” <sup>1 Chron. 14:8</sup>.

David was not the only person this happened to. This type of demonic activity is seen throughout the entire Bible. One such person who dealt with much persecution as he set about to do the will of God was Nehemiah.

He was a contemporary of Ezra, cupbearer to the king of Persia, and went on to lead the third and last return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile. While Ezra dealt with the religious restoration of Judah, Nehemiah was primarily concerned with Judah’s political and geographical restoration. They combine to make an effective team and Malachi, the last Old Testament prophet, also ministered during this time to provide additional moral and spiritual direction.

The book of Nehemiah takes us to the end of the historical ac-

count in the Old Testament, about four hundred years before the birth of the promised Messiah.

Nehemiah was a person who demonstrated by his actions that he was a man of courage and he had much integrity, godliness, and selflessness. His compassion for the oppressed made him willing to give up the luxury and ease of living in the palace of the king in order to help his people. He was extremely dedicated and his concern for God’s work showed that his priorities were in the proper order. He was a leader who led by example because he knew where



to go for help in time of need.

The first seven chapters of the book of Nehemiah are devoted to the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. Jerusalem was the spiritual and political center of all of Judah and without walls could hardly be considered a city at all. Nehemiah secured permission from the king to go to Jerusalem and in the darkness of the night inspected the broken down walls of this great city. He then exhorted the people,

“Then I said to them, ‘You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and it’s gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach.’ And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me. So they said, ‘Let us rise up and build.’ Then they set their hands to do this good work” Neh. 2:17,18.

Behind the scene, however, an evil plot was being birthed in the hearts of those who would rise up and oppose the work of Nehemiah and his faithful men. We read in Neh. 2:10,

“When Sanballat the Horoni-

te and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.”

Nehemiah responded in vs. 19b,20,

“...they laughed us to scorn and despised us, and said, ‘What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?’ So I answered them, and said to them, ‘The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem.’”

The line had been drawn. Nehemiah and his men would complete and fulfill their call. For them, there was no turning back.

Jesus said in Luke 9:62,

“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

The Message© Bible translates the words of Jesus this way,

**“No procrastination. No backward looks. You can’t put God’s kingdom off till tomorrow. Seize the day.”**

History records for us the stories of champions who indeed

seized the day. They set out to accomplish a certain task and never looked back. Julius Ceasar once sent explorers to a foreign land, and to assure the mission's success, he gave the command for the ships to be burned once his men arrived at their destination. For him, there was no turning back.

During World War II, General George Patton had a reputation for refusing to retreat when under heavy bombardment from the enemy. His reasoning was that he didn't want to pay for the same real estate twice. For him, there was no turning back.

In the Bible we read where the farmer Elisha, when called to follow Elijah, went back to his farm and slaughtered his oxen and burned his plowing equipment <sup>1 Kings 19:21</sup>. He destroyed his means of income because he was not willing to start something for God that he was not willing to finish. For him, there was no turning back.

Also, Mark 10:50 tells how blind Bartimaeus threw aside his garment when called by Jesus to Whom he had cried out for mercy. This was no ordinary garment. This piece of cloth signified that Bartimaeus was legitimately blind and was his license to be a legal

beggar. Bartimaeus, however, had faith in his Lord and he knew he would no longer need his garment, so he threw it aside. This blind beggar stepped out in faith and for him there was no turning back.

The availability of the blessings of God are abundant on the earth here in the last days, but instead of growing stronger, the church has instead become,

1. Complacent,
2. Indifferent, and
3. Unassertive.

A lot of people know the Word, but only quote it in peace time.

***Churches are to train people to be an army and to fight.***

But, sad to say, most only go through the motions and don't produce anything. When God led the Israelites out of Egypt, He got the people to cross over the Red Sea, but He couldn't get them over the narrow Jordan River. The wilderness experience was to be a type of boot camp preparing the people for war. Instead of believing and adhering to the positive report of Joshua and Caleb, the people instead believed the negative report of the ten other spies

and refused to cross over. The bad report the ten spies brought back from Canaan was that they were like grasshoppers in comparison to the giants in the land <sup>Num. 13:32,33</sup>. The children of Israel were held in bondage by the negative words that came out of their mouths.

A person will believe whatever they hear themselves say. The giants didn't keep the Israelites out of Canaan, the grasshoppers did. If we are weak in our own eyes, so will we be weak in the eyes of others.

God got the Israelites out of the bondage of Egypt and into the comfort of the wilderness, but He couldn't get them from the place of comfort into the Promised Land which was a place of war. God even assured the people that victory would be theirs, but it wouldn't come automatically. There was a part they had to play.

When God told Moses to lift up his rod and split the Red Sea He first told him to "tell the children of Israel to go forward" <sup>Ex. 14:15</sup>. God demands participation! Faith without works is dead <sup>James 2:17</sup>! Moses had to lift up the rod, but the people had to go forward!

***Faith never backs up,***

***it only goes forward.***

When the time came for the children of Israel to enter the Promised Land, they refused to go forward and cross over the Jordan River. The result of their disobedience is that, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, that entire generation died off in the wilderness.

And why could they not enter in? Because of unbelief <sup>Heb. 3:19</sup>. On the contrary, if our faith is to be genuine, we must persistently heed the words of Heb. 10:39 <sup>NIV</sup>, which says,

"But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed but of those who believe and are saved."

For sure, Nehemiah and his men did not shrink back even in the midst of much opposition from the enemy. Neh. 4:1 says,

"But it so happened when Sanballot heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews."

Why did Sanballot throw the fiery dart of ridicule at these people? Because people who don't want to progress in the things of God, don't want you to progress either. Those who condemn your dream don't have one for them-

selves. Your progress makes them look bad, so instead of repenting and growing in the things of God, they decide to cut down and ridicule those who are. So what did Nehemiah do? He prayed and cast his care onto the Lord.

“Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked You to anger before the builders”<sup>vv. 4, 5</sup>.

Jeremiah said the same thing in Jer. 18:23,

“Yet, Lord, You know all their counsel which is against me, to slay me. Provoke no atonement for their iniquity, nor blot out their sin from Your sight; But let them be overthrown before You. Deal thus with them in the time of Your anger.”

People are not our enemy, the devil is. Eph. 6:12 says,

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiri-

tual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

When the enemy uses people to accomplish his evil doings, understand that the battle is the Lord’s<sup>1 Sam. 17:47</sup>. Pray and cast the care onto the Lord and continue going forward in the fulfillment of your call. This is precisely what Nehemiah did.

“So he built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work”<sup>v. 6</sup>.

Nehemiah and his men pressed on with a holy determination. They were soldiers in the army of the Lord and were continually in an open, prolonged state of fighting and warfare. When Jesus was in the wilderness the devil tempted Him not once, not twice, but three times. Over and over again the devil tried to get Jesus to sin and thus bring an end to the call on His life. Luke 4:13 says,

“Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.”

The Message© Bible says,

“The devil retreated temporarily, lying in wait for another opportunity.”

This is why we need to keep watch and be prepared because the devil is forever seeking whom he may devour. He's a thief who comes to kill, steal, and destroy. The threat of attack is always there, and when Sanballot and his cohorts,

“Heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion” Neh. 4: 7b, 8.

This is a common theme in all of scripture. Ps. 83: 2-5 says,

“For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; And those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. They have said, ‘Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.’ For they have consulted together with one consent; They form a confederacy against You.”

Satan has mounted an all out assault against the faith of the brethren, which means we've got

to fight for what rightfully belongs to us. God never intended for us to run from the devil and those who choose to do his bidding. Why run from an enemy who was defeated two thousand years ago on Calvary's tree?

Although his future is forever sealed in scripture, the devil still continues his onslaught against the body of Christ, against which we must fight the good fight of faith. By using the armor of God we must stand up and defend what is ours. There is no protection for the back because we are to face the enemy head-on and put him under our feet where he belongs. David said in Ps. 18:39,

“For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose against me.”

Nehemiah knew this and his response is seen in Neh. 4:9,

“Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.”

Nehemiah prayed! Like Paul, he knew in Whom he believed 2 Tim. 1:12 and was persuaded that God would be for him an ever-present help in time of need Ps.46:1. He knew that “greater is He

Who is in me than he who is in the world.” <sup>1 John 4:4</sup> Nehemiah prayed without ceasing, and kept on doing what he knew was God’s will and purpose for his life.

“And our adversaries said, “They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease” <sup>Neh. 4:11</sup>.

Once again the enemy tried to stop the work from being completed, but as always Nehemiah was ready for them.

“Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, ‘Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.’ And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had brought their counsel to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work” <sup>Neh. 4:13-15</sup>

The devil will oppose you every step of the way, but you never have to be afraid of your en-

emy. As Nehemiah so boldly proclaimed in v. 20b,

“Our God will fight for us.”

The people prayed, they wore their armor and kept watch, and they continued the work. Nehemiah 5 and 6 records how further opposition came through extortion, compromise, slander, and treachery. Nehemiah knew that with God on his side no weapon formed against him would prosper and in Neh. 6:15, 16 we read

“So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul, in fifty-two days. And it happened when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.”

When you rise up and do your part, God will rise up and do His. God has put in the hearts of all His children a burning desire to do something in and for the kingdom of God. As one grows in their walk with the Lord they will find that the things God tells them to do will more than likely be impossible by human standards. And why is this so? Because if it were possible in the natural realm,

then it wouldn't require any faith, and Heb. 11:6 says that it is impossible to please God without it.

*In order to please God and use our faith, we must be willing to face the impossible and take a risk.*

Even a farmer who has faith in his crop must take a risk and hire laborers to reap his fields before he receives payment for his harvest.

## RISK-TAKERS: PEOPLE OF FAITH

Just what is a risk-taker? A risk-taker is a person who doesn't consider the circumstances surrounding them. Risk-takers are people who face the impossible and are able to use their faith to hook up with the supernatural power of God. They are the ones who are willing to burn the bridges behind them and put their trust in God and His Word, even when the odds seem to be against them. Jesus said,

**“The things which are impossible with men are possible with God”** Luke 18:27 .

Another time He said,

**“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes”** Mark 9:23 .

From the mountaintop God is shouting to all those who have a heart, to fulfill the call on their lives, “Do not be intimidated by the word ‘impossible’!!” Why does He say this? Because God is a miracle working God and miracles make the impossible possible.

All serious believers who have a heart's desire to serve their Lord will receive from Him a call on their lives that will be impossible to fulfill on their own. And you know what? That's precisely how God planned it. He wants to be involved in everything you do. If what you are called to do for God was possible with natural gifts and abilities, then He wouldn't be needed. So what does He do? He calls you to do the impossible. That way you will always be seeking Him out for His divine help, guidance, and intervention.

If you by yourself can fulfill your vision, then your vision is too small. It's not from God. How can we know this to be true? Because God deals with the impossible. Facing the impossible keeps us trusting God, for without faith it is impossible to please Him. Know with certainty that when you trust God and one impossible task gets fulfilled, another one will soon pop up in its place. That's



what serving God is all about. It's about facing one impossible situation after another. Over and over again this will happen if your call is genuinely from God, so don't be intimidated by it. In fact, you should come to expect it. Therefore, don't get discouraged every time you run into a brick wall. That roadblock you face is just another opportunity for you to cry out in faith to the God of the impossible. That's what He's there for. We do the possible and He does the impossible.

Consider these Bible verses,

**"...for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you"** Matt. 17:20

**"But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible'"** Matt. 19:26

**"For with God nothing will be impossible"** Luke 1:37

Finally, let's look at Jer. 32:17,

"Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is

nothing too hard for You."

Hallelujah! Are you facing an impossible task in your quest to serve the Lord? Are you fighting an uphill battle? Is there a mountain blocking the path you are currently on? Is there a Sanballot in your life who has become to you a thorn in the flesh?

***If so, then rejoice!***

You're precisely where God wants you to be. All you have to do is hold your peace and stand back, and watch God do that which is impossible. After all, that's Who He is. He's the God of the impossible.

The question is, do you believe and do you trust God? Do you really, truly believe that He can do the impossible? If so, then take that match, turn around and set fire to that bridge you just crossed over, because in the kingdom of God there is no turning back.



# 8 KEEP GOING

**N**ative American Joseph Fire Crow co-authored the inspiring words to a song he recorded called “The Legend of the Warrior.” Read carefully the words of encouragement that is contained in each line of this powerful song.

“A young Lakota asked his grandfather why life had to be so difficult sometimes. This was the old man’s reply.

*Grandfather says this...*

In life there is sadness as well as joy, losing as well as winning, falling as well as standing, hunger as well as plenty, bad as well as good. Grandfather does not say this to make you despair, but to teach you reality, to teach you that life is a journey sometimes walked in the light, sometimes in shadow.

*Grandfather says this...*

You did not ask to be born but you are here. You have weaknesses as well as strengths. You have both because in life there are two of everything. Within you is the will to win as well as the willingness to lose, the heart to feel compassion as well as the smallness to be arrogant. Within

you is the way to face life as well as the fear to turn away from it.

*“Grandfather says this...”*

Life can give you strength. It can come from facing the storms of life, from knowing loss and feeling sadness and heartache, from falling into the depths of grief. You must stand up in the storm. You must face the wind and the cold and the darkness. When the storm blows hard you must stand firm for it is not trying to knock you down. It is really trying to teach you to be strong.

*Grandfather says this...*

Being strong means taking one more step toward the top of the hill



no matter how weary you may be. It means letting the tears flow through the grief. It means keep looking for the answer though the darkness of despair is all around you. It means to cling to hope for one more heartbeat, for one more sunrise. Each step, no matter how difficult, is one more step closer to the top of the hill. To keep hope alive for one more heartbeat at a time leads to the light of the next sunrise and the promise of a new day.

*Grandfather says this...*

The weakest step toward the top of the hill, toward the sunrise, toward hope, is stronger than the fiercest storm.

*Grandfather says this...*

Keep going."

Keep going! This is the heart of the message in Paul's second letter to his young friend and protégé, Timothy. Written from a cold Roman jail, this is the last letter penned by the great apostle before he died a heroic martyr's death. Prison is the last place from which to expect a letter of encouragement, but that is where Paul's letter originates.

Paul, the aged and experienced apostle, writes to the young pastor Timothy who is facing a heavy burden of responsibility in the church at Ephesus. Timothy is

in great need of encouragement, because of the hardship he is facing, and Paul uses this letter to instruct him to never give up and keep going forward in his heavenly call.

Timothy was being persecuted by the secular authorities and by division and deception from within his own church. As a spiritual father, Paul urges his young helper to overcome his natural timidity and boldly proclaim the gospel, even if it means that he will suffer for doing so.

Paul knows as he writes this final epistle, that his years on earth are quickly drawing to a close, and he seeks to challenge and strengthen his somewhat timid, but faithful friend. In spite of Paul's bleak circumstances, this is a letter of encouragement that urges Timothy on to steadfastness in the fulfillment of his divinely appointed task. This letter is, in reality, a combat manual for use in spiritual warfare, and Paul focuses on the need to persevere in present tests and trials, and to endure future hardship. In other words... ***keep going!***

In 1 Timothy, things are going good for the young pastor. The Spirit of God was moving mightily and daily people were being

added to his church. Timothy was so overwhelmed with the growth of his church that he really didn't know what to do about it. This is why Paul wrote 1 Timothy, which is a letter of instruction on how to organize a local church. But 2 Timothy is different. Nero had risen in power in Rome and set out to destroy the Christian faith and the local church. Fear gripped the hearts of the people and Timothy's deacons and elders began to leave him, along with most of his congregation.

In 1 Timothy, his church is flourishing, and now in 2 Timothy it's dwindling smaller and smaller. At first Timothy was overwhelmed with rapid church growth, and now in 2 Timothy he is overwhelmed with the lack of church growth.

It was during this time of much persecution and hardship that Timothy received his second letter from his friend and mentor, the great Apostle Paul. He begins by saying in 1:2,

“Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

In other letters recorded in the New Testament, Paul begins by saying,

“Grace and peace to you” (see Phil. 1:2 and Col. 1:2).

But here he adds “mercy” to his greeting.

***Rest assured that when God gives you something hard to do, He'll add mercy to your grace and peace.***

Timothy was plagued also with thoughts of quitting and Paul addresses this in verses 1:6, 7,

“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

Paul knew that God's callings are His enablings. Where God guides, God provides. If He called you, He'll equip you.

God told Jeremiah,

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; And I ordained you a prophet to the nations” <sup>Jer. 1:5</sup>.

Jeremiah thought he was inadequate and, because of this, reluctance gripped his heart.

“Then said I: ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.’ But the Lord

said to me: ‘Do not say, “I am a youth,” for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,’ says the Lord” <sup>vv. 6-8</sup>.

God is not looking for ability, *but availability*. God expects each of us to answer the call on our lives. When you do, He will equip you to fulfill your call. God said in Zech. 4:6,

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit’ says the Lord.”

God will ‘show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” <sup>2</sup>  
Chron. 16:9

God empowers you with the Spirit of His holy anointing, and just as His Word does not return void <sup>Is. 55:11</sup>, neither will the call that is on your life. God will enable you to do that which He has called you to do <sup>1 Tim. 1:12</sup>.

So what did Paul tell Timothy to do?

“Stir up the gift that is inside you.” He was saying, “Don’t retire! Refire! Keep going! Don’t disregard or walk away from the call on your life.” He said

God “has saved us and called us with a holy calling” <sup>1:9</sup>, so “hold fast the pattern of sound words which you heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” <sup>v.13</sup>.

In an earlier letter to the Ephesian church Paul wrote,

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” <sup>Eph.6:10</sup>.

Timothy was on the front lines of battle and Paul repeated these same words of encouragement in 2 Tim. 2:1,

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

The Message© Bible says,

“So, my son, throw yourself into this work for Christ.”

To be “strong” means to be invested with Holy Ghost power! When you are tempted to quit stand strong and lay hold of a steady current of God’s almighty power which comes to you as the result of God’s grace. In your mind be fully convinced that what God has promised to do in your life He is also able to perform <sup>Rom. 4:21</sup>.

God wants us to have a sound mind, because a mind that is not renewed with the Word of

God produces cowardice. So trust God and keep going forward at all times.

It has been said that if there were no problems there would be no solutions. Yes, finding solutions is very rewarding, but sometimes you reach a point where you would gladly give up the reward if the problem would only go away by itself.

But such is not the case, and this is how it is in life as well. Problems come and they cannot be ignored. Be as it may, the worst thing a person can do is sit back and do nothing, for this gives the enemy free reign to wreck havoc in your life. No, to win the battle of life one must forever be moving forward.

The trials of life are often compared to storms. Many times we encounter hurricane-type conditions such as what was described by the apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 1:8 when he said he was

“Burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.”

One thing to learn in the midst of all these trials is that life goes on. The clock is always ticking and any meteorologist will tell you that all storms move forward

as well.

In the center of all hurricanes is a peaceful, calm harbor of rest known as the “eye of the hurricane” and this is where the throne room of God is at. You see, as long as we are here in this earth-suit, we will have problems that will not go away on their own, but thankfully we can go to Jesus Who is our “refuge and our strength.” And where do you find Him? In the eye of the hurricane.

You will always find Jesus in the center of your storm. The problem many people have is once they’ve taken refuge in this “eye,” they want to strip themselves of their armor and rest awhile. This is not bad in and of itself, because we all need a season of rest from time to time.

However, we cannot set up camp here and discontinue the good fight of faith, because our enemy does not know what the word “rest” means. That storm is always moving forward, and with it so is its peaceful center. If we remain in our comfort zone and don’t move forward also, then the eye of the hurricane will pass over us and the turbulent winds of the violent storm will hit us from behind when we least expect it.

If we would all take inven-

tory of those times when we've been wounded in battle, we would realize that it happened when our shield of faith was so full of arrows that we just had to lay it down, and we rested longer than we should have. Resting too long brings with it the temptation to fall asleep on our watch and this we cannot do.

To remain in the center of the eye of the hurricane we must continue to confess God's Word and always keep going forward. In World War II, the great General George S. Patton was known for his relentless drive to keep going forward. "No retreat, no surrender" was his motto, and this must be ours as well.

There is, of course, a reason for this. Shortly after Paul wrote of his hardships at the beginning of his second letter to the Corinthian church, he went on to write these encouraging words,

"Now thanks be to God Who always leads us in triumph in Christ..." 2 Cor. 2:14a

This verse doesn't say that God will take a victory and instantly drop it in your lap. No, it says that God will "lead" you to that victory. The reason we must keep going forward is because that's where our victory is. It's out

there in front of us. Even while Jesus was hanging on the cross, He was looking forward to the victory that would be His and ours at The Resurrection. Therefore,

***don't look at what you're going "through," but focus on where you're going "to."***

Don't look at what is, look at what is to become.

Being led to victory can be compared to a taxi driver taking his customer to a certain destination. There are many routes the driver can take, but the customer does not burden himself with such details. He knows where he wants to go and he trusts the driver to get him there. This is how it is when God "leads us in triumph," and likewise we must put our total trust in Him to get us to where we want to go.

If a trial comes our way and we find ourselves in "the valley of the shadow of death," then we must trust God and realize that this valley is on the route that leads to our victory. Sometimes you may feel like you're on a rugged obstacle course going through a maze of difficulties, and the end to your problems is nowhere in sight. Once again, *the only thing you can do* is put your total trust in the One Who is leading you.

This may seem confusing at times, but thankfully we don't have to understand it in our mind in order to believe it in our heart. Prov. 20:24 says,

“A man's steps are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way?”

Nobody said this journey was easy. It's not. We are in a war and even Jesus said to “**count the cost.**” He also said that He would never leave us or forsake us. A valley is not a bad place to be if you and Jesus are going through it together.

Ps. 37:23,24 tells us,

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down for the Lord upholds him with His hand.”

At all times you must believe that you are on the roar to victory and are being led every step of the way by the One you call your Lord.

***Remember, the only way out of the valley is to march forward and go through the valley.***

Someone once said that “great people are ordinary people with extraordinary amounts of determination.”

Obey the Lord's command to “Rise up!” and never allow that trial to keep you idle. Doing nothing only increases the opportunity for you to feel sorry for yourself, and we all know that will get you nowhere. Keep going forward and take hold of that victory that rightfully belongs to you.

Where do you find your victory? It's on the path you're already on, so keep your head held high, knowing that crises and trials are on the road to your miracle.

And by all means, never look back and always keep your eyes in front of you, because that is where your victory is. A pastor once told his congregation,

“When you've had a setback... don't take a step back...get ready for a comeback.”

Though the wind may blow and the rain will fall, we can find comfort in the eye of the hurricane by putting our confidence in the words spoken in Nahum 1:3,

“But the Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm.”

Rest assured, the victory is there but you must march forward to get it. Put one foot in front of the other and... ***keep going!***





# 9 RUN TO WIN

**E**ric Liddel was a runner. He was a fast runner and he raced to win. He was also a missionary whose only purpose for running was to bring glory to God. 1 Cor. 9:24 was planted deep in his heart,

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”

His relentless pursuit of the Olympic gold medal in the 1920’s was chronicled in the movie, “Chariots of Fire.” The movie showed his inner struggle of not wanting to put his love of running before his love for God. Convinced that a gold medal would help him spread the gospel message to all who would listen, he agreed to run and ultimately won the highest Olympic prize in the 400 yard dash.

Eric Liddel was a rare breed of runner who personified the meaning of the word “champion.” He continually focused on what he believed to be his mission in

life and he pursued this vision with everything he had.

One scene in the movie highlighted his vigor and his unwillingness to quit. At an event where he was in the audience to watch other runners race, his fans coaxed him to go down to the track and run with the others. Reluctant at first so as not to show off his running ability, he finally agreed and soon following the loud burst from a gun signaled the start of the race.

With fire in their feet and the wind to their backs, each runner began the journey where at the end only one person would be crowned the winner. As expected, Eric Liddel pulled to the front of the pack. Suddenly and to the surprise of all, this champion of a



man stumbled and began to fall. Seconds seemed like hours as he hit the ground and tumbled to a halt. Being only an exhibition, most runners would have stood up, brushed the dirt off their clothes, and walked away. Not Eric Liddel. He was a champion and champions do not quit. Eric Liddel knew that anyone who put his hand to the plow and looked back was not worthy of the kingdom of God.

As if in slow motion, he looked up only to see the backs of the other runners quickly widening the distance between himself and them. With determination in his eyes and courage in his heart he rose to his feet and began the impossible task of catching the others. Eric Liddel knew that his God was the God of the impossible and with each step taken he drew closer and closer to the racers before him.

Soon he passed one runner and then another. The ribbon ending the race was now in sight, and as the seconds passed all the other runners found themselves in the awkward position of looking at the back of their national hero. Moments later Eric Liddel's chest broke the ribbon and was declared the winner of what was

for him only an exhibition race.

Eric Liddel demonstrated in this race what it is like to be a born-again believer. Tests and trials come to all Christians and sometimes we slip and fall.

***There is, however,  
no shame in falling  
as long as you pick yourself up  
and continue the race.***

Eric Liddel was a man who would not accept defeat whether it be in athletics or day-to-day living, and neither should we.

Ps. 37:23,24 says,

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down for the Lord upholds him with His hand.”

A similar verse is found in Micah 7:8,

“Do not rejoice when I fall, my enemy; When I fall, I shall arise; When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.”

In 2 Timothy, Paul was endeavoring to encourage his young protégé to have the same non-quitting spirit that was in the heart of Eric Liddel. He knew that success was in Timothy's future. Hab. 2:3a says,

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.”

When God gives you a vision He'll show you what the end result will be. However, He rarely reveals to us what happens between “I believe – I receive,” and “there it is,” because He does not permit discouragement to grip our hearts. To combat this temptation to quit and give up, we must learn to see as God sees. Most definitely, God always sees the end from the beginning. Heb. 12:2b says this about Jesus,

“Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.”

Jesus saw the end from the beginning. Likewise, Eric Liddel always pictured himself crossing the finish line first.

In Judges 6:12, the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and called him “a mighty man of valor.” Gideon was reluctant to accept this honorable description of himself. He was afraid of his own shadow and considered himself the least of his brethren. In his own eyes he was a big, fat zero.

Thankfully, God sees something in all of us that we can't see ourselves. This is why we must all

see as God sees. God calls you a champion before you ever become one. He calls you healed when your body is riddled with sickness and disease. He calls you prosperous when bill collectors are knocking at your door. Gideon learned this valuable lesson, and when he did he went from being a zero to a hero.

We learn from Gideon to open our eyes and see what God sees. When you do, you may be surprised at what you see. Before Gideon accepted the call on his life, he asked the Angel why his country was so downtrodden if the Lord in fact was with them. The Angel didn't answer this question. He said to go and do what God tells you to do.

***Stop asking questions! Just go and get the job done!***

One of the greatest enemies of God is procrastination. Jesus told the disciples to feed the multitude, but they hesitated. At first they didn't do what Jesus told them to do. The miracle happened when they put actions to what Jesus said and began to pass out the loaves and the fishes. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Do the thing and you'll have the power to do it.” This is what was in Paul's heart as he tried to encourage Timothy

to catch a vision of the potential he had inside of himself.

God is a big God and He gives His children big dreams. Dreams put fuel in your tank and gives you the energy to fulfill your call. It gives you the desire to press on to do what other men cannot do. It gives you “staying power” to grow strong and not quit in the midst of your adversity.

Many people let go of their dreams because they don't want to pay the price. Paul knew we can't be successful for God without a Godly dream, and there was no way he was going to let Timothy pack his bags and quit. He was saying in this letter, “If you're going to run in the race, then give it everything you've got. Run to win!”

“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” <sup>2</sup> Tim. 2:3.

There is no room for cowards in the kingdom of God and this is why God said in Joel 3:9,10,

“Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears; Let the weak say ‘I am strong.’”

The Message© Bible records Paul's words this way,

“When the going gets rough, take it on the chin with the rest of us, the way Jesus did.”

Paul was militaristic and barbaric in his call and he was telling Timothy to get out there on the battlefield, and if you have to suffer then suffer. Paul then said,

“And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things” <sup>2</sup>

Tim. 2:5-7.

An athlete who refuses to play by the rules will never get anywhere, and it's the diligent farmer who gets the produce. Timothy was a man involved in a great competition, and Paul was telling him to have the commitment of a soldier, prepare like an athlete, and work like a farmer.

He was saying work! work! work! and work hard! hard! hard! Labor to the point of sweat and tears. And when you rise up like an eagle and face your storm, God promises that you will partake of all the blessings that come as the

result of being a servant of God.

In the Bible an eagle is a symbol for the born-again believer <sup>Deut. 32:11; Is. 40:29-31</sup>. An eagle has hollow bones which helps this magnificent bird to negotiate the wind currents, causing it to hover and soar in the air with hardly any effort at all.

When violent storms come, the eagle does not seek refuge in the branches of a huge tree or under an outcrop of solid rock. No, he flies to the highest point possible, turns, and faces the storm. When the storm arrives, the strong wind currents lifts the eagle up and takes it higher and higher into the heavenlies. Eagles have been seen at 33,000 feet up where jet airplanes fly.

Because of the storm, he becomes a stronger bird and Paul is telling all of us that when the storm clouds of life cast their dark shadows over our heads, to face the storm and fear not. The greatest danger in your spiritual life is security. We all need to live on the cutting edge of insecurity, because the dreams God gives us are much bigger than what we're able to accomplish on our own. If they weren't, then we'd never know what faith is.

One of the most important

lessons Jesus taught His disciples was not to fear. Satan is a corrupted angel and fear is corrupted faith. It is the substance of things not desired.

On one occasion Jesus and His disciples were on a boat in the midst of a storm, and to the dismay of all the others who were in fear, Jesus was sound asleep. This fact alone conveys the message that storms are not a cause for alarm with Jesus on board. Isaiah 54:14 says,

“In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression for you shall not fear, and from terror, for it shall not come near you.”

Storms are not a cause for fear or panic for the born-again believer, and with Jesus on board you can have the bold confidence to stand up and face your storm.

A cattle rancher in Montana made a discovery that taught him a lesson for living a victorious life. The winters in Montana are brutal and only the strong and hardy cattle can survive. This rancher observed that the cattle who marched head first into the blizzard always survived, while the cattle who turned their tails to the storm died. The rancher found this breed frozen against a barbed

wire fence with their heads down whereas he found the other cattle who faced the storm alive and well, strong survivors. With Jesus on board you can face your storm and fear not. Ps. 118:6 says,

“The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

The storms of life come to prevent the forward progress of the work of God that’s being done in and through the lives of all willing believers. If tests and trials are raging against you, then this can be a joyful testimony that you are in the process of doing something good for the kingdom of God.

Victory is assured and the winds will cease when you realize that storms are, in reality, your stamp of approval that you are indeed flowing in the will of God for your life. Phil. 1:28 <sup>AMP</sup> says,

“And do not for a moment be frightened or intimidated in anything by you opponents and adversaries, for such constancy and fearlessness will be a clear sign (proof and seal) to them of their impending destruction; but a sure token and evidence of your deliverance and salvation, and that from God.”

There is never any forward motion without resistance, and if you are to continue to be a vessel of honor for the Lord, you must never let a storm delay your plans and interfere with the calling on your life.

Matt. 14:25 records how Jesus, in another storm, walked out to the boat where His disciples were, in spite of the horrific conditions around Him. The blowing wind and pounding rain did not interfere with what He set out to do.

Did you ever wonder why Jesus did not calm the storm before He set out on His journey to walk across the lake?

The answer is simple...

*Jesus always walked in faith and faith never looks at the circumstances.*

Peter, on the other hand, also stepped out in faith and walked on the water. He was operating successfully until he began to consider the natural circumstances that were round about him. He took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at that which was contrary to what he was believing for. He looked at the wind instead of the water beneath him, which was by faith holding him up. It was at this moment when fear

and doubt entered in and immediately the impulsive Peter began to sink. Moments later, after being rescued by Jesus, Peter's faith returned and he walked back to the boat cling desperately to his Lord.

Here in this story is the contrast between being a winner and a loser.

***Winners always look to where they're going "to," whereas losers always look at what they're going "through."***

Jesus was looking at His destination on the other side of the lake, while Peter looked at the stormy conditions which he thought was able to prevent him from accomplishing what he set out to do.

***Jesus faced His storm, and Peter did not.***

Peter can be commended, however, for his desire to be with the Lord and knowing where to turn for help when the need arose. If only more of us would learn this lesson. Even more important, to be sure, is the lesson Jesus wants us to learn from what He did. Jesus wants us to get out of the boat and walk in His plan for our lives, while not considering the contrary circumstances that the storms of life are sure to bring.

Remember, in the midst of the storm is where Jesus was, and He is looking for followers who will step out of the security of their boat and follow Him.

Do not be terrified when the odds seem to be against you, and don't give up the first time a door is slammed in your face. Become like David who, with bold confidence, ran toward the giant Goliath. When the storms of life come your way, you need to get stirred up, get out of your boat, and use your faith. This only happens when you have the courage to rise up and face your storm. If a herd of cattle in Montana can do it, surely you can to.

Paul faced his storm and yes, he finished his race. He wrote in 2 Tim. 4:6,

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

The Message© Bible says,

“You take over. I’m about to die, my life an offering on God’s altar. This is the only race worth running. I’ve run hard right to the finish, believed all the way. All that’s left now is the shouting - God’s applause!”

What a great way to end a life!





# 10 MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**G**od “has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began” <sup>2</sup> Tim. 1:9.

To become all you were meant to be, to be promoted from a nobody to a somebody, you must listen to God and discover the divine calling on your life. Get alone with God and He will reveal to you specifically that work which He wants you to perform.

***You have a destiny! You were born for such a time as this.***

Never forget, true success is fulfilling the purpose for which God made you. God has made each of us unique and different from anybody else who has ever been born. There is no other person alive quite like you. In the eyes of God you are special. You are the only “you” that God has. You are truly one of a kind. This means that there are certain things you can do for the kingdom of God

that nobody else can do. Even in your mother’s womb you were given special talents and abilities by God that only a person with your personality can develop and perform to the degree God wants them done. Paul encouraged Timothy to,

“Not neglect the gift that is in you” <sup>1</sup> Tim. 4:14.

Develop your gift and the skills that go with it, and then turn yourself over to God to be used by Him to fulfill His purpose on planet earth.

A lifestyle of reaching out to others will come as a result of your willingness to be used by



God. Prov. 3:27 says,

“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do it.”

A noted evangelist once said, “Everything God has made is a solution to a problem.” Your worth and significance is determined by the kinds of problems you are solving for someone. There is something in you and about you that someone else needs. Realize that you may be God’s answer to somebody’s prayer. Daily be diligent and look for problems to solve. Think and look for extra ways to benefit others. Go the extra mile. Jesus said,

**“And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two”**

Matt. 5:41

If you are sincere and willing, God will cause you to cross paths with someone in need. When that happens, do whatever it takes to get that person on the straight and narrow path to victory. It is only when we turn our eyes off of ourselves and begin to focus on others, that we will be able to experience the true, genuine God-given joy that being a blessing to others brings. As this becomes our lifestyle, when we say to the Lord, “Here I am.

Send me” <sup>Is. 6:8</sup> over and over again, it will be proven that indeed it is better to give than receive.

Jer. 29:11 tells us,

“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.”

People everywhere are craving for a reason to live, and this is why God wants to give you a future and a hope. God has a specific plan for your life that is consistent with your giftings and God-given desires.

***A lot of people, however, don't understand how to get their assignment from God.***

They think all believers line up in front of the throne of God and He passes out lifetime callings and assignments to each person as He pleases.

- To the first person He says, “I want you to go to Africa.”
- To the second person, “I want you to be a praise leader.”
- To the third He says, “I want you to work in the church nursery.”

**WHAT IS MY CALLING?**

## WHAT IS MY CALLING? continued

People believe that God decides what you're supposed to do, and it's their responsibility to adapt to those plans. Thankfully, this is not how heavenly callings are bestowed on committed servants. For instance,

- What if you don't want to go to Africa?
- What if you can't carry a tune if your life depended on it?
- What if you don't have the stomach to change dirty diapers?
- Will God make you do the very thing you don't want to do?
- Will God make you serve Him if you're going to be miserable doing it?

No, God does not work that way. His will and your desire work hand-in-hand.

***What you enjoy doing the most is a clue to what God wants you to do with your life.***

God wants you happy, and whatever brings you the most fulfillment can be used for the kingdom of God. Eccl. 3:22 says,

“Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than

that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his heritage...”

We are living in the last days, and laborers are needed in the kingdom of God like never before. Laboring for God is not a burden as some would think. Yes, you do enter into a war zone, but at the same time it can be the most joyful thing you do with your life. Eccl. 5:20 assures us that,

“God keeps every man busy with the joy of his heart.”

What actually happens in the realm of the spirit is that a line of people with the heart of a servant stands in front of the throne of God and He asks them,

***“What would you like to do for Me?”***

When they tell Him what their heart's desire is He responds,

***“Granted! I will anoint you to do so. Go, fulfill your call.”***

God will use you in whatever area brings you the most joy. Take your gifts, talents, and desires and place them in the hands of God to be used according to His perfect will.

There is power in desire and this is why God will give you the desires of your heart. If you don't

want to go to Africa, then that is a sign that God probably doesn't want you to go to Africa. If you instead have a heart for children, He'll bless you and give you the anointing to be a children's minister.

So many people sit around and do nothing as they wait for God to tell them what to do. This is not how it works. Instead, they should look within their own heart and see what their desires are. This, in turn, will give them direction for their life.

It is God's will that there should not be anybody working for Him, who doesn't want to do what they're doing. If they don't, they're in the wrong call. Why? Because,

***There is power in desire.  
Desire breeds excitement, and  
excitement produces energy.***

Your desire will stir up your passion and the anointing to fulfill your call. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Many are called but few are chosen, because people lack desire. If you want to serve God then you're on your way to an exciting life.

Know what your desires are, and dream about them all the time. God will give you the desires

of your heart, but you must know what those desires are. And don't forget, the call of God and your desires go hand-in-hand. Eccl. 9:1 says,

“For I considered all this in my heart, so that I could declare it all that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God.”

When you go to work for God, don't go at it half-heartedly. In the kingdom of God, servanthood is a promotion and you must give it everything you've got, and then some. Paul says in Rom. 12:11 to be,

“Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

To be “fervent in spirit” means to be aglow and burning with the Spirit of God in your heart. We are to maintain that spiritual glow in our work for the Lord and have the attitude that,

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might”  
Eccl. 9:10

Paul says,

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” Phil. 3:14.

If we will do that, then we

are promised in Rom. 8:28a a victorious life,

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

When you give your all to God, God will give His all to you. Paul said to “press toward the goal.” Your vision and its fulfillment won’t just come running up to you and jump in your lap. No, you’ve got to *go to it*. Press on toward your call and run to it the same way David ran toward the giant. Dispel all gloom, sorrow and fear, and cast down evil imaginations. Infuse life into yourself and shout unto God with a voice of triumph.

In the book of Job we read that he was a very blessed man. He then entered a season of his life where he lost everything he had. He suffered hardship after devastating hardship, and then afterward he miraculously experienced a turnaround. His life was going in one direction, and then the path he was on shifted and he began going in another direction. Eventually he received twice as much as he had before, and Job 42:12 says,

“God blessed the latter days

of Job more than at the beginning.”

Job died old and full of days, and this all came about because the “Lord of the breakthrough” gave him a turnaround. What is a turnaround? Ps. 30:5b says,

“Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning.”

That’s a turnaround. God will give you beauty for ashes. The father of the prodigal son said,

“For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found...” Luke 15:24

That is what it means to have a turnaround.

***It’s a condition of the heart and our circumstances have absolutely nothing to do with it.***

Life is not always peaches and cream, but we can still cling to our call and do that which the Lord has anointed us to do. Remember, change comes from the inside out. When you change on the inside, God steps in and will change your circumstances on the outside. This is the key to having a turnaround in your life.

Job 42:12 did not say Job blessed himself. No, Job changed his attitude and God blessed him.

Job had a turnaround and his life got twice as good as it was before. It's time for everybody in the kingdom of God to wake up and smell the roses. Yes, all roses have thorns but so what? Winners focus on the flower, whereas losers focus on the thorns. The Bible says in Prov. 23:7,

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”

Get up every morning and picture yourself succeeding in everything you set out to do. If you'll keep the right image in front of you, and always submit yourself to the Lord through prayer and thanksgiving, God promises that nothing will be impossible to you.

Sometimes the circumstances of life can make us feel like we're in a dead-end situation, but keep going forward and never give up. What may look like a dead-end situation, may in reality be the beginning of a fresh, supernatural flow of God's divine power and favor into your life. This is why you need to learn to not trust in yourself, but in God Who raises the dead.

Think about it. When your hopes seem buried and you've got no where to turn, isn't that when God's power begins to operate in your life to the greatest measure?

As long as you've got a loving Father you can call on, a Word from the Lord to stand on, and faith to activate all His promises, you have got reason to rejoice. You can have a turnaround that will give you a bright future. How bright? Gloriously bright! So call on your Heavenly Father today and do it in faith. Expect Him to release His power on your behalf and watch Him begin to turn your dead-end situation around.

Helen Keller said the one thing worse than being blind was having no vision. Those who are successful in life are motivated by vision. It is imperative for believers to understand that they can spend their life any way they want to, but they can only spend it once.

Too many people walk away from the call of God on their life and end up settling for too little too soon. They take the path of least resistance and don't realize that it's not what happens to them that matters, it's how they respond to what happens that matters.

It is Satan's plan that you be defeated, but you have God's personal guarantee that you will win through Him. You draw your life and strength from Him and He draws His fulfillment from you.

It's true, you only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.

In order to fulfill the call of God on your life you must rise up above the tests and trials that come your way. As long as you live, you will never outgrow fighting the enemy, so you better learn to lean on Jesus and fight the good fight of faith. The enemy's goal is to frustrate God's purpose in your life, because you can't be a blessing to others if you're bogged down with your own problems. You are the subject of the warfare, because the enemy knows you're only as big as your dreams or as small as your fears.

The choice is yours and yours alone as to whether or not you will stand your ground in the face of adversity. To go forward and fulfill your holy calling you must face your giant, cut his stupid head off, and then go forward and be a blessing to somebody else.

This is what the Christian life is all about. The result of doing this on a daily basis is a blessed life. No, it's not about how much money you have or how many "toys" you accumulate. It's about making your life count. It's about making a positive difference in the lives of other people.

Michael Jordan was a great basketball player, not only because of his own personal abilities, but because he made his teammates better. Playing alongside him made the other players step up their commitment to the game, and this increased their skill level. They came through in tough times and won games that other teams would have lost. Likewise, hook up with Jesus and be a team player.

***Let the primary desire of your heart be to influence other people in a positive way,***

...and encourage them to rise up and win the game of life. Life is what you make it and in order for it to count, you must step forward and be all that you can be. You can't let trials and hardship stop you and get you down. You must be bigger than that! Take your mind off your problems and look at the big picture. Our God is a big God and He's still in control. In a million years your problems won't mean a thing, but rest assured, God will still be on the throne.

Don't give your problems credit for being bigger than they are. God is bigger than your problems and so are you. Cast your care on Jesus and make your life count. Do something for some-

body else. Make their lives better just by them being around you but for a few moments. Their victory will be your victory. Their joy will be your joy.

So press on! Look beyond yourself and be a blessing to others. Let your light shine! Make your life count. Make a difference in the life of someone else.

You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough. To God be the glory!







All of us at **Randall Brewer Ministries, Inc.** hope you are enjoying and growing from our publications. It is a blessing for us to provide you with the enrichment of God's Word and His teachings that help you grow into a mature Believer, triumphant in Christ Jesus.

Our future plans on the drawing board for 2015 include teaching videos, a monthly multi-lingual magazine, and so much more.

Using our magazine and videos, it is our objective to reach a greater multitude of US cities and foreign countries that daily request our presence.

These are very exciting times we live in, and your faithful donations are making it possible for us to get the job done.

*Thank you!*

*–Randall J. Brewer*

# THROUGH THE FIRE

**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 go and teach 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.



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