

THE JOURNEY

Words For The Way



A Devotional Guide For The Difficult Paths Of Life

By Patricia Hulsey

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DEDICATION

To my husband
Argis Daniel Hulsey

And my Dad
Ellis Pat Murphy

I was blessed to travel part of my journey on earth
with these two amazing men of God

Patricia Hulsey

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INTRODUCTION

You are on a spiritual journey of life. You may be a new Believer just starting your journey, or you may be a seasoned traveler nearing the end of your time here on earth. Regardless of where you are along the road of life, like Israel, you have not passed this way before (Joshua 3:4). Also, like Israel, you will encounter many challenges along the road to your destiny. There will be spiritual detours, dead ends, lonely valleys, and harsh deserts along the way.

This devotional guide is written for those traversing the difficult paths of life. It is designed to bring encouragement from God's Word. It is not to disseminate information, but to effect transformation in your life through revelation from the Word. Revelation without transformation results in stagnation.

This guide is written by a fellow-traveler who is no stranger to adversity. Following this introduction you can read details of my difficult journey at the time this book was birthed. During this season of adversity, God gave me special words. Not a theological discourse. Not an extended study. Just single words of encouragement to which I could cling or words of correction which I needed. Like the prophet Isaiah, every morning I waited for new words from God (Isaiah 50:4). This book contains some of these special words which I now share with you.

Sometimes we don't know what to say in the face of life's challenges, so God tells us exactly how to provide comfort: *"Therefore, comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18)*. What words? The words of God. The psalmist declared: *"This is my comfort and consolation in my affliction: that Your word has revived me and given me life" (Psalm 119:50)*.

Deuteronomy 8:3 declares: *"... man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."* Proverbs 16:24 confirms that *"pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the mind and healing to the body"* and Proverbs 15:23 states: *"...a word spoken in due season, how good is it!"*

We are entrusted with the power of words, and specifically the power of His Word. Each daily word in this devotional guide is based on a word from God and the written Word of God. Sometimes God would lead me to a poem, song, or quotation reinforcing the word. If you have access to the internet, I encourage you to listen to the lyrics of songs mentioned via U-Tube.

The format of this book lists these special words in alphabetical order so you can easily find a specific word. The words are also numbered so you can use this book as a devotional guide and read a single word each day during the coming year.

The Bible is not another self-help book. Its precepts are life changing. Its promises are guaranteed, no disclaimers and no exceptions. If you are not yet a born-again Believer in Jesus Christ, the first step in your journey is to make this commitment. Turn to Appendix One for guidelines on how to do this.

MY JOURNEY

I am no stranger to adversity. My parents were divorced when I was just a baby. Custody was given to my mother who was married and divorced three times and I grew up in an abusive environment. I left home when I was 17 years old and eventually worked my way through college by doing custodial work, house and pet sitting, and driving junk cars from auction for an auto restoration company. Eventually, I graduated with highest honors from California State University in Long Beach. I went on to earn a master's degree and eventually a doctorate.

I almost died from a serious illness when I was 18 years old, losing 15 pounds in one week and most of my hair. God miraculously raised me up, healed me, and--in the midst of the suffering--confirmed my calling to the nations.

My maternal grandfather and grandmother were strong influences in my life for God, but grandpa died with a stroke when I was nine years old and my grandmother died from cancer when I was 17 years old. I had one half-sister with whom I was raised who died of a brain aneurysm. Her daughter, who was like a daughter to me since I had no children, was killed in a shooting incident shortly after her 18th birthday. My biological Dad remained a godly and stabilizing influence throughout my life, for which I am eternally grateful.

In ministry over the years, I survived a coup in Kenya, a near plane wreck, and arrest by the Communists. I walked out of a totaled car after being hit by a drunk driver. I once attended a great church where our beloved pastor fell into horrible sin and was forced to resign. Just when our church was recovering from that, a crazed shooter walked on to our church campus one Sunday morning, wounded three people, and killed two beautiful young ladies.

I had experienced my share of adversities, but the circumstances which led to this book occurred during a dark time when both my Dad and my husband suffered and passed away from dementia. Then, after losing my husband in November 2022, I had a routine medical exam a few months later. All of my tests came back good except I had a slight bladder infection for which my primary care doctor prescribed an antibiotic. Midway through the course of antibiotics I had a slight seizure. It lasted only a few seconds and I did not lose consciousness. I immediately checked my blood pressure and it was normal. I checked strength on both sides of my body and my speech to see if perhaps it was a stroke. No problems. The only weird after-effect I had was that for a short time I could see written words but could not read them. I reasoned that the only thing I had done different recently was to take the antibiotic, so I thought I must be allergic to it.

When I notified my doctor about this, she immediately ordered an MRI. I was expecting either nothing to show up, which would mean it was an allergic reaction, or perhaps evidence of a small TIA which sometimes occurs as one grows older. Instead, the next day my primary doctor notified me that they found a brain tumor about an inch and a half in growth. Other than the one small jerking event of my head, I had no evidence of a brain tumor: No coordination problems, no fatigue, headaches, nausea, vomiting, vision problems, speech issues, confusion, memory problems, dizziness, etc. Nothing!

After the MRI, I was referred for a CAT scan of the chest and abdomen to search for any other tumors that might be present. Thanks be to God, all was clear from the neck down! I was then referred to a neurological surgeon. A brain biopsy was scheduled and the tumor was found to be a stage 2 Oligodendroglioma. The tumor showed signs of malignant aggression, but because of its location and my age it was inoperable. I initially went through six weeks of daily radiation and chemo, followed by six months of more intensive chemo.

I had no physical side effects during this time other than hair loss, some tiredness, and a suppressed appetite. I refused the dire predictions of what I would experience during chemo, and I refused any negative opinions and/or negative people around me. I also had very strong support from Christian friends, my church, and many prayer groups that were walking with me on this journey. At one point my oncologist examined me and said: “If I didn’t know better I would think the lab is giving you sugar pills.”

It was during these extended times of adversity--walking through dementia with my husband and Dad and facing a brain tumor--that God gave me specific words of encouragement. This book records these words with prayers that you will be blessed by them also.

I share this summary of my personal journey so that you will know I have walked where you are walking. Although the circumstances of individual suffering always differs, the journey through adversity is similar in terms of its painful challenges. That makes us fellow-travelers.

And how blessed all those in whom you live, whose lives become roads you travel; They wind through lonesome valleys, come upon brooks, discover cool springs and pools brimming with rain! God-traveled, these roads curve up the mountain, and at the last turn—Zion! God in full view! (Psalms 84:5-7-5-7, MSG).

THE JOURNEY

WORDS FOR THE WAY



A

1 ABIDE

In this modern era we stay connected with those we love through personal contact, cell phones, texting, the Internet, and social networking sites. Intimacy develops from staying connected. To develop intimacy with God, you must also stay connected. You must learn to abide in Him.

You do not develop intimacy by plugging in like a cell phone during your morning devotions and then disconnecting to live life on your own for the rest of the day. John chapter 15 uses the natural example of a vine and its branches to illustrate the concept of staying connected to God (John 15:1-7). In this analogy, Jesus is the vine and true Believers are the branches. A branch that is cut off from the vine does not last long and definitely does not bear fruit. You must stay connected to Jesus as branches are to a vine in order for supernatural life to continue to flow into you and produce spiritual growth.

Abiding in Jesus means that a person has accepted Christ as Savior and is allowing the Word of God to abide in his life (1 John 2:24). It means experiencing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:13) and living a holy and fruitful life (Ephesians 1:4; John 15:5). You do not want to continue in deliberate sin (1 John 3:6), and you will endeavor to do God's will (1 John 2:17). All this is encompassed in the word "abide".

Jesus wants you to abide in Him and He wants to abide in you. The song *Abide With Me* was written by Henry Francis Lyte as he lay dying from tuberculosis. He survived only three weeks after its completion. The first verse is drawn from Luke 24:29 where the disciples appealed to the Lord: "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."

*Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

*I need Thy presence every passing hour.
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.*

*I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.*

*Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

The Lord's word to today you is "Abide with me." In the midst of your present conflict, in spite of your adversities, in the face of extreme chaos: Just abide.

2 ABLE

You do not serve an impotent God. Whatever your need is today, He is able and willing.

He is able to save to the uttermost:

*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,
seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)*

He is able to help you in times of temptation, testing, and suffering:

*For because He Himself [in His humanity] has suffered in being tempted (tested and tried), He is able [immediately] to run to the cry of (assist, relieve) those who are being tempted and tested and tried [and who therefore are being exposed to suffering].
(Hebrews 2:18, TAB)*

He is able to make grace abound toward you, resulting in sufficiency in all things:

*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all
sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8)*

He is able to keep everything you commit to His care:

*For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know
whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have
committed unto him against that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)*

He is able to do above all you ask or think:

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

He is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless before God:

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24)

Christ's question to you is the same as He asked two blind men who came to him for healing: "Do you believe I am able to do this?" Their answer was, "Yes Lord." Then touched he their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:28-29).

Be like the aged Abraham who "...staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20-21).

Be absolutely persuaded that He is able!

3 ABUNDANT

You will know no lack today. You walk in spiritual abundance. As a Believer you are the recipient of:

Abundant kindness:

But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)

Abundant mercy:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

Abundant grace:

For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 4:15)

Abundant truth and goodness:

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. (Exodus 34:6)

Abundance above all that you can ask and think:

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Abundant life: Jesus said:

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

An abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of God:

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:11)

Take heart and journey on!

4 ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance is a basic biblical principle that involves recognizing the worth of an individual regardless of their flaws, differences, or past mistakes. It signifies embracing others as they are and offering love, forgiveness, and grace. It is not approval of ungodly lifestyles.

Acceptance is rooted in the Bible, reflects God's unending love for humanity, and is essential for nurturing healthy relationships and fostering unity within the Church. Acceptance also means surrendering to God's sovereignty which is sometimes not so easy to do when times are tough.

The Old Testament patriarch Job is a tremendous example of acceptance. He lost his children, his home, and his livelihood in sequential devastating tragedies (Job 1). Look at his response:

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. (Job 1:20-22)

Job realized that nothing could touch him had it not first passed through the hands of God. He declared: *"Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (Job 2:10, NIV)*

How are you responding in the midst of your difficulties? Are you yielding to the sovereignty of God? Are you worshipping instead of complaining?

5 ACCIDENTS

Your difficult journey may have been the result of what the world calls an accident, but as a Believer in Jesus Christ, nothing happens to you by chance. In the Old Testament before the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, guidance was often determined by the casting of lots, but the Bible declares that even in this practice God was sovereign:

The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly of the Lord [even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him]. (Proverbs 16:33, TAB)

We often deny the sovereignty of God by our very words. “Tough luck,” we say. “How unfortunate. What a tragic accident.” These terms all imply that we are victims of circumstance. But there are no accidents in the lives of Believers. Our world is not out of control. Our God is the sovereign Lord over every circumstance.

If God is truly sovereign, and the Bible confirms that He is, it means He is in total control. There is no luck, no fortune, and no accidents. He directs your life and limits all that touches you. You may not understand why things occur that are disruptive in your life, but there is always a purpose:

“When everything seems out of control, random, without purpose...every out of control event is turned around to accomplish the purposes of God...As long as free will exists and evil exists, there will exist in the world the principle of randomness, that which seems to be without purpose of meaning, the rolling of the dice. Yet above and beyond the dice is the will and hand of God.” - Jonathan Cahn

6 ACHOR

In Joshua chapter 7, Israel was soundly defeated in a valley which became known as the Valley of Achor, which means the valley of trouble. For many years, that valley served as a reminder of Israel’s sin and God’s judgment.

Years later, at the time of Isaiah the prophet, God promised:

And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me. (Isaiah 65:9-10)

That seed to come was the Lord Jesus Christ who would redeem the world from sin. He would turn the valley of Achor into a place of peace where people and their livestock could safely dwell. He promised to give His people “*the valley of Achor for a door of hope*” and said that they would rejoice there as when God brought them out of Egypt (Hosea 2:15).

God will redeem every valley of trouble you have gone through in the past. He will redeem the situation you are going through in the present and turn your valley of trouble into a door of hope.

What new door of hope might God be opening to you now, right where you are, there in your valley of trouble?

7 ACT

The wise person will choose to act rather than react to circumstances.

To **react** is to impulsively respond to external events or conditions which have occurred.

To **act** involves initiating preemptive action guided by the Holy Spirit. The wise will act calmly, not out of negative emotions like fear and anger.

There is a time in every adversity when one must take action instead of continuing to react. Think about your current situation: Have you been proactive in faith or reacting in fear, anger, bitterness, etc.?

Make a decision to be proactive under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

8 ADONAI

The names of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit reflect who they are and what they do. Praying the specific names of God relevant to your circumstances is a powerful spiritual weapon against the onslaughts of the enemy. Let's look at just one name:

And Abram said, Lord God (Adonai), what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? (Genesis 15:2)

In this passage, God is referred to the "Lord God", combining the name Jehovah with that of Adonai in Hebrew. The two names often appear together in the Bible. Lord (Adonai) is a name that implies relationship, and God (Jehovah) means your Lord and Master. Adonai actually means "my Lord".

The cultural background of the name "Lord and Master" is associated with masters in Bible times who owned servants and took responsibility for their care and wellbeing. They provided for, protected, and guided them. The relationship between a servant and a godly master in those times was one of love and allegiance, not that of a slave owner abusing his servants.

The name Adonai assures that your Master loves you and has the resources and abilities to care for you, even in the most difficult times of life. Right now, lift your burdens and requests in the name of Adonai, your Lord and Master.

If you want to pray other names of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit relevant to your current needs, download a copy of "*The Names*" available free at <http://www.harvestime.org>

9 ADVERSITY

Adversity. You can spend your time wishing it hadn't occurred, blaming God, and growing bitter, or you can trust God as you take this difficult yet awesome journey of divine purpose.

And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide Himself any more, but your eyes will constantly behold your Teacher. And your ears will hear a word behind you, saying, This is the way; walk in it, when you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left. (Isaiah 30:20-21, TAB)

Dr. David Jeremiah notes:

"We have a theology for prosperity down pat, but sooner or later our prosperity will give way to adversity. If you don't have your theology finely tuned for that part of your life, you won't do well. Unexpected, unannounced, uncharted, unplanned—adversity comes to everyone." -Dr. David Jeremiah

What can be learned as one travels through adversity? James addresses this subject:

Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations. Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience. But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4, TAB)

Proving your faith, endurance, steadfastness, and patience are all the results of responding to adversity properly. The promises are that you will be perfectly and fully developed, lacking in nothing.

"I still believe that a day of understanding will come for each of us, however far away it may be. We will understand as we see the tragedies that today darken and dampen the presence of heaven for us take their proper place in God's great plan...a plan so overwhelming, magnificent, and joyful that we will laugh with wonder and delight." -Arthur C. Bacon

10 ADVICE

You will have many people giving advice when you are navigating difficult times of life. You must learn to distinguish between good and bad advice, between the voice of God and the voice of man.

Sometimes people are well-meaning but they give bad advice because they don't know what to say in difficult times, so they often say the wrong things. People like Mrs. Job and Job's comforters are not the ones from whom to take advice.

Before you act upon any advice you receive, make sure it lines up with God's Word and what He is directing you to do. Pray about it. Consult Believers who have been victorious in situations similar to what you are facing and let them speak into your life. Do not act upon any advice until you know that you know it is good and Godly guidance.

11 ADVOCATE

Many medical teams assign a patient advocate to those affected by extended illnesses, and a legal advocate is often assigned for victims of violent crimes. A lawyer is an advocate who represents you in a court of law. Your advocate is an intercessor who defends you and secures justice on your behalf.

Jesus Christ is your spiritual advocate before God and ministers in your behalf in all of these capacities. Whether you are a victim of crime or injustice, experiencing extended illness, a tragedy, or you are a litigant in a court of law, Jesus advocates your cause before God against the accuser of the brethren, Satan (Revelation 12:10; Job 1 and 2).

Christ's representation in your behalf includes the fact that you are a sinner, guilty as charged, deserving of conviction which is spiritual death through separation from God: *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). But He also brings the good news that He died for your sin:

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8)

Because of what Jesus did in your behalf, you are justified before God when you accept Him as Savior:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)

Although you were once alienated from God, you are now His child:

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. (Romans 5:10-11)

You are no longer a condemned prisoner of sin:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2).

You are declared righteous and given the gift of eternal life: *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).*

Christ’s ministry of advocacy and intercession in your behalf is continuous:

But this man (Jesus), because he continues ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:24-25)

No matter what you are going through, your past is forgiven and you are represented by the Divine Advocate, Jesus Christ.

12 AFFLICTION

The Bible says:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

You might think the person who wrote this only had minor problems as he refers to afflictions as “light”, but these words were written by the Apostle Paul. Here is an account of some of his challenges:

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

Paul calls these “light” afflictions compared to the glory to be revealed. Affliction accomplishes great purposes when you respond properly to it. The psalmist David said: *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes” (Psalm 119:71).*

Have you prayed to be used of God? Affliction is part of the process: *“Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried and chosen you in the furnace of affliction” (Isaiah 48:10, TAB).* Through affliction you are equipped to minister to and comfort others in need:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of sympathy (pity and mercy) and the God [Who is the Source] of every comfort (consolation and encouragement), Who comforts (consoles and encourages) us in every trouble (calamity

and affliction), so that we may also be able to comfort (console and encourage) those who are in any kind of trouble or distress, with the comfort (consolation and encouragement) with which we ourselves are comforted (consoled and encouraged) by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, TAB)

God comforts you in every situation so you can comfort others in trouble. “Every” and “any” are all inclusive of anything you can possibly face along the journey of life.

You are comforted, renewed, and able to comfort others by the Word of God: *“This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me” (Psalm 119:50).* He declared: *“Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction” (Psalm 119:92).*

Isaiah 63:9 states regarding God and His people that *“In all their affliction he was afflicted.”* God’s presence is revealed in the midst of your affliction, not proven by the absence of affliction. No one is exempt. We are all in this together:

Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation. (2 Corinthians 1:6-7)

13 AGAIN

It is okay to pray repeatedly for the same request. That is not a lack of faith, nor is it vain repetition. Jesus prayed twice for the blind man:

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. (Mark 8:22-25)

Jesus also told the parable of the woman who continued to ask until her request was granted (Luke 18:1-8). She came before an unjust judge repeatedly until at last he granted her request.

Asking, seeking, and knocking, represent different levels of intensity and frequency of prayer (Matthew 7:7). What do you need to pray for again?

14 AGE

Many people fret about age. They try to deny it. Some try to defer it by facelifts, tummy tucks, and the use of beauty products. Do not let your age hinder you from what God wants you to do. The psalmist declared: *“Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee” ... (Psalm 39:5).*

Consider the words of Caleb, one of the original spies in the Promised Land:

And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spoke this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain...(Joshua 14:9-12)

You may not be as strong physically as Caleb was, but you have the same Spirit of life dwelling within you. If you aren't dead, you aren't done. Something remains for you to do, and you are not too old, too sick, or too physically or mentally challenged to do it.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing... (Psalm 92:12-14)

You only grow old by not growing. God has promised:

Even to your old age and grey hairs, I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you. I will sustain and I will rescue you. (Isaiah 46:4)

15 AGENDA

An agenda is defined as a list of items to be discussed at a meeting, a plan of things to be done, or problems to be addressed. During difficult times of life you may have a long list of issues on your agenda. It is a great blessing to be able to bring these concerns to the Lord in prayer.

Unfortunately, life doesn't always go according to your agenda. Insisting on your agenda can mean that you think there is no solution but your own. You come to the Lord with your plans, your ideas, and what you think should happen. Instead of seeking God's will, you seek a confirmation of your agenda.

Today, when you come into His presence in prayer, set aside your own agenda and ask Him to reveal His agenda. Pray in the prayer language of the Holy Spirit who makes intercession according to God's will. Pray according to God's will rather than your own agenda. Pray as Jesus did...

And He was saying, Abba, [which means] Father, everything is possible for You. Take away this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You [will]. (Mark 14:36, TAB)

16 ALIVE

If you are reading this word, you are still alive. You haven't died because of the pain, sickness, or sorrow you are experiencing although at times it seemed you might! You may have even wished you could die, but you are still here. And since you are, heed the call of the psalmist who declared:

While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. (Psalm 146:2)

Praise Him because...

Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God. The best invitation we ever received! (2 Peter 1:3)

You can look back over your life and see times when God delivered you. Praise God that, despite these adversities of life, He has kept you alive!

You brought me back from the brink of the grave, from death itself, and here I am alive! Oh, sing to him you saints of his; give thanks to his holy name. (Psalm 30:3-4, TLB)

17 ALL

The word “all” means “all”—the whole quantity, everything. No matter what you are going through today, you can have assurance that all is working for your good:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

The Bible says God's people are destroyed because of lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). Emotions won't help you in times of crises because they are undependable. Friends may fail you. Resources may dry up. But you can have assurance that all is working for your good. If all things, both bad and good, are working in your behalf, then even the bad times in God's plan are ultimately good.

This promise states that “all things” are working for your good. No exceptions. No disclaimers. There may be difficult days, but there are no bad days because God is working all things for good. Taken individually random events of life may not make sense, but taken together they are all working for good. It is like the components of biscuits. Flour, oil, raw eggs, baking powder—none of these individually are appealing. But working together, they produce a delicious product. He does not promise that you won't experience bad things, but He assures that ultimately He works all things for your good.

To whom is this promise made? To those who love Him and who are called for His purposes. If that is you, then you can be assured “all things” are busy working in your behalf.

18 ALLIANCES

First Samuel 22 finds David hiding in a cave in his flight from King Saul. The caves in the hill country of Adullam were a natural refuge for him and his band of misfits. During this time, one of the darkest periods of David's life, God gave him a ministry to help 600 men who were in distress, in debt, and discontented.

God often uses the wilderness experiences to launch new ministries and new relationships. During difficult times you form alliances with people you wouldn't ordinarily encounter or choose to be with, but God creates these bonds for future purpose. Some of these people will be a help to you, and some of them you will be called to encourage and mentor.

Right there, in the midst of your current wilderness, new alliances will be formed. Watch for them!

19 ALONE

Are you feeling alone today? You are in good company. Many people in the Bible experienced extended times of being alone:

- Abraham was "called alone" to become the father of nations.
- Moses was alone in the wilderness when he received his call to destiny.
- Paul was alone in the Arabian desert when he received instructions for a lifetime of ministry.
- Mary was alone when the angel brought the message that she would give birth to Jesus.
- Isaiah was alone when he received his commission as a prophet.
- John was alone on the Isle of Patmos when he received the revelation of the end-times.
- Daniel was alone in the lion's den where he experienced a great deliverance.
- Jacob was alone when he wrestled with the angel and his life was changed.
- Joseph, separated from his family and alone in Egypt, saved the then-known world.

God never does anything without purpose, and the fact that you are alone right now is no exception. Instead of focusing on your aloneness, consider what great things God may have in store for you that can only be birthed in this time that you are set apart.

20 ALTAR

Altars in the Bible were places of communion between God and mankind. They were used for prayer, sacrifice, and worship. They were also a visible reminder of God's presence among His people and the redemptive work of God through sacrifices made for sin.

Your spiritual journey began at the altar when you asked forgiveness for your sin and committed your life to God. You may have not actually knelt at a church altar, but when you made this commitment you were at a spiritual altar.

The altar is not a one-time experience in your life. Your altar is the time you regularly spend with God in prayer, study of the Word, and worship. It is a reminder of His presence and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ in your behalf.

When people experienced times of great difficulty in the Bible, they always returned to the altar. Return to your spiritual altar today. Worship, pray, read the promises in God's Word, and leave every burden, problem, and sorrow on that altar. Meditate on the words of this song, "*Is Your All On The Altar*":

*You have longed for sweet peace,
And for faith to increase,
And have earnestly, fervently prayed;
But you cannot have rest,
Or be perfectly blest,
Until all on the altar is laid.*

*Chorus:
Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?
Your heart does the Spirit control?
You can only be blest,
And have peace and sweet rest,
As you yield Him your body and soul.*

*Would you walk with the Lord,
In the light of His word,
And have peace and contentment alway?
You must do His sweet will,
To be free from all ill,
On the altar your all you must lay.*

-Elisha Hoffman

21 AM

A burning bush that was not consumed. It was there that God's servant, Moses, was mandated by God to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage. Let's listen in "...*And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?*" (Exodus 3:13).

Moses asked, "What is His name?" In answer to his question, God revealed one of His many names. He said "... *I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you*" (Exodus 3:14).

The word "am" means that He is always what you need in the present. He is not "I was" or "I will be". He is I Am. Right now. Today. Just as God revealed to Moses the name I AM, He is saying to you today: "I am _____", and you can fill in the blank with the name that is relevant to the current problem or challenge in your life.

Reflect on the I Am statements of Jesus which encompass every need in life:

- "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst*" (John 6:35).
- "*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life*" (John 8:12).
- "*I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture*" (John 10:7-9).
- "*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd; and I know my sheep, and am known by My own*" (John 10:11,14).
- "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live*" (John 11:25).
- "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6),
- "*I am the true vine and My Father is the vinedresser... 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*" (John 15:1-5).

22 ANCHOR

Without an anchor, a boat will drift away into turbulent waters. The Bible says that hope is an anchor for your soul in difficult times:

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. (Hebrews 6:17-19)

Biblical hope is anchored in God and based upon the promises in His Word: *“I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope” (Psalm 130:5)*. This hope is generated by the power of the Holy Spirit: *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Romans 15:13)*. The Word of God fosters hope: *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4)*.

Proverbs 10:25 in The Passion Translation declares *“The wicked are blown away by every stormy wind. But when a catastrophe comes, the lovers of God have a secure anchor.”* If you are a lover of God, you are securely anchored to the hope we have in Christ.

Meditate on the words of this song, *“The Anchor Holds”*:

*I have journeyed
Through the long, dark night
Out on the open sea
By faith alone
Sight unknown
And yet His eyes were watching me*

*I've had visions
I've had dreams
I've even held them in my hand
But I never knew
They would slip right through
Like they were only grains of sand*

*I have been young
But I am older now
And there has been beauty
That these eyes have seen
But it was in the night
Through the storms of my life
Oh, that's where God proved
His love to me*

*Chorus:
The anchor holds
Though the ship is battered
The anchor holds
Though the sails are torn
I have fallen on my knees
As I faced the raging seas*

*The anchor holds
In spite of the storm*

-Ray Boltz, Lawrence Mendel Jr.

23 ANGUISH

Although you walk by faith and not by feelings, this does not mean you will not be immune from emotional responses during difficult times. Jesus prayed in agony in the garden (Luke 22:44), comparing it to death (Matthew 26:38, NIV); He wept (John 11:35); and the Word says that He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3).

The Psalmist David experienced a wide range of emotions, but he knew where to go to resolve them. No matter what emotions he expressed, his Psalms always conclude with him calling on God for help and/or praising Him for deliverance. Here is an example:

*Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God...I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.
(Psalm 69:1-3, 30)*

You will experience varied emotions during adversity. Don't be afraid to express these feelings to God, as David did. Then turn your emotions over to Him, ask for the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and continue your journey of faith.

24 ANNIVERSARIES

Anniversaries are difficult times when you have experienced loss. A birthday or wedding anniversary. The anniversary of a death. The anniversary of a tragedy. Christmas and other holidays.

On the first anniversary of our wedding after my husband's death, I was opening the door to the cancer center to begin radiation for a brain tumor. Believe me when I say, anniversaries can be difficult. That one was for sure!

On the anniversary of a loss, focus on what you were privileged to enjoy. You had a friend, a child, a dear relative, or a spouse in your life for a season. The fact that you miss them so intensely confirms that you were blessed to have had them. On the anniversary of a tragedy, reflect on how God has helped you to this point in time and continues to do so.

Find a special way to honor that anniversary instead of bemoaning it. Release a balloon in memory of your loved one. Bake a cake and celebrate. Spend time with friends. Start new traditions.

25 ANSWERS

My 18 year old niece, who was like a daughter to me, was shot and killed by her finance a few days before her high school graduation. No answers are good enough in the face of such tragedies. May the words of the song, "*When Answers Aren't Enough*", minister to you as it did to me in that difficult time.

*You have faced the mountains of desperation,
You have climbed you have fought you have won,
But this valley that lies coldly before you,
Casts a shadow you cannot overcome...*

*And just when you thought you had it all together,
You knew every verse to get you through,
But this time the sorrow broke more
than just your heart,
And reciting all those verses just won't do...*

*Instead of asking why did it happen,
Think of where it could lead you from here
And as your pain is slowly easin',
You can find a greater reason,
To live your life triumphant through the years.*

*When answers aren't enough there is Jesus,
He's more than just an answer to your prayer,
Then your heart will find a safe and peaceful refuge,
When answers aren't enough, He's there.*

*-When Answers Aren't Enough."
From the album "Somebody's Brother" by Scott Wesley Brown*

I didn't have the answers to the death of my niece, but I had the Answerer. I had Jesus. In times of unexplainable adversity, your need for God must be greater than your need to know. I had been asking repeatedly, "Why did it happen?" I was dwelling on the past. Never once had I focused on the future.

This song led me to think about where my suffering could lead. It eventually resulted in a book about Michelle entitled "*Bitter Waters*" which has spanned the globe in the years since her death and changed many lives. You can get your free digital copy at: <http://www.harvestime.org>

26 ANXIETY

Anxiety is described as feeling nervous, restless, or tense and having a sense of impending danger, panic, or doom. It can affect you mentally and physically. You may experience an increased heart rate, hyperventilation, trembling, and trouble concentrating. Perhaps the best definition of anxiety is imagining a future without God in it. The Bible admonishes:

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7)*

When Paul says to be anxious for nothing, the word for “anxious” which he uses means choking or strangling. That is what anxiety does spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

The Bible says you are to cast all of your anxiety on Jesus (1 Peter 5:7). The word “casting” refers to repeatedly throwing a fishing net or a line into the water. It indicates continuous action, which means that anxieties may return and you must repeatedly cast them on the Lord.

You may be anxious today about a health procedure, finances, a court case, or an impending confrontation. Meditate on these verses as you cast your anxious thoughts on the Lord.

*When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.
(Psalm 94:19)*

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up. (Proverbs 12:25)

Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. (Luke 21:34)

You can throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon him, for you are his personal concern. (1 Peter 5:6, Philipps)

27 APPOINTED

Speaking of Jonah the prophet, Jonathan Cahn explains how in the original Hebrew it doesn't say God “caused” a fish to swallow Jonah. It says that God “appointed” the fish to do so. The same word is used later in the text when it says God appointed a plant, a worm, and the east wind.

The fish, the plant, the worm, and the wind were all sent by God to minister to Jonah in different ways.

“You probably never thought of your problems as being appointed, but for the child of God everything—the good, the bad, the joys, the sorrows, the problems, the victories and defeats, the wounds, the rejections, the past, the worms and the winds—all things are appointed. In fact, each is an appointed minister ordained to bring about God's

purposes, God's blessings, God's calling and destiny in your life...For in the end what you thought were your problems were actually holy ministers appointed to bring you to the appointed fulfillment of God's calling on your life." -Jonathan Cahn

28 ARISE

Repeatedly in the Bible, God commanded people to arise.

- Abraham was told to arise and walk through the land God was giving him.
- Lot was told to arise and leave Sodom and he would be saved from judgment.
- Jacob was told to arise and go to Bethel where his life was changed.
- Joshua was told to arise and lay claim to the Promised Land.
- David arose from the ruins of Ziklag and reclaimed all the enemy had stolen.
- Old Testament prophets were frequently admonished to rise and go forth with a message from the Lord.
- Jesus repeatedly told the lame He healed to arise.
- Saul (Paul) was told to rise up because God had appeared to him for a divine purpose.

You may be feeling cast down today, but God's Word to you is:

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. (Isaiah 60:1-2)

As a Believer, the glory of the Lord rests upon you and you can rise up victoriously even in the midst of your dire circumstances. God's Word for today is: Arise!

29 ARMS

You are not depending on your own strength today because *"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"* (Deuteronomy 33:27). If you should stumble, He will catch you in your arms when you fall. If you are tired, you can rest in His arms.

The people of Israel declared: *"So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey"* (Deuteronomy 26:8).

You may not see it right now, but God is directing your every step through adversity with His hand. His outstretched arms are your safety net. You are not wandering aimlessly on this

difficult journey. He has a destiny for you, and you will reach it. His arm is revealed to all those who believe, so that includes you (Isaiah 53:1).

30 ARMED

The battle you are facing in the natural world must be won in the spiritual world. You are ready equipped for this battle because God has armed you with spiritual weapons. So He commands...

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Ephesians 6:11-18)

You are armed with...

- The girdle or belt of truth which protects from the deception of Satan.
- The breastplate of righteousness which protects from unrighteousness.
- Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.
- The shield of faith which protects against unbelief.
- The helmet of salvation.
- The sword of the spirit, the Word of God, as an offensive and defensive weapon.
- Prayer.

You are ready for whatever you may be facing today!

31 ASHES

Psalm 10 is subtitled as a prayer of the afflicted when they are overwhelmed. In verse 9, the psalmist declares *"For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping..."* In Old Testament times, people sat in ashes as a sign of mourning. The Amplified Version clarifies this verse saying: *"For I have eaten the ashes [in which I sat] as if they were bread and have mingled my drink with weeping."*

Right now you may be feeling that everything around you is in ashes. Your loss or challenge is great and it seems as if your weeping will never stop. The good news is that Jesus has a great exchange ready for you. He came...

To grant [consolation and joy] to those who mourn in Zion — to give them an ornament (a garland or diadem) of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the

garment [expressive] of praise instead of a heavy, burdened, and failing spirit — that they may be called oaks of righteousness [lofty, strong, and magnificent, distinguished for uprightness, justice, and right standing with God], the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. (Isaiah 61:3, TAB)

Jesus will give you beauty for ashes and the oil of joy instead of mourning. He wants to clothe you with the garment of praise instead of a heavy, downcast spirit. He wants to raise you up in power and strength so that He might be glorified. Don't wait another minute. Make this great exchange right now, today!

32 ASK

James 4:2 states: “...*You have not because you ask not.*” How many blessings have you missed simply because you did not ask? How many decisions have you made when you did not take time to pray? Have you asked specifically for wisdom regarding your present circumstances?

Ephesians 3:20 states that God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that you ask or think. That means that when you take time to ask, He responds abundantly by doing exceedingly and abundantly above what you have requested and even what you may have thought.

“Above all” and “abundantly” is all inclusive meaning everything!

The key is to ask. So just ask!

33 ASSURANCE

Assurance means to be convinced of something and have absolute faith in it.

Biblically, a lack of assurance is doubt and is generated by Satan. Satan will try to make you think you have committed unpardonable sins and that is why you are suffering. But God's Word says that if you come to Him, you will be received and forgiven (John 6:37). You also can be assured that:

-Jesus paid your entire sin debt and obtained your full pardon (Colossians 2:13-14).

-Your pardon is based on God's grace, which always exceeds your transgressions (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:20).

-God does not hold your sins against you as long as you ask forgiveness (Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:19).

-Forgiveness is extended to all who believe in Jesus (Acts 10:43).

Assurance is not a matter of applying human logic. It is a matter of faith. You simply believe God's Word and rely on it rather than your own logic or opinions (Proverbs 3:5). You are

assured that God is with you in every situation of life. You do not turn back. You do not give up.

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. (Hebrews 10:35)

Jesus gave this promise of assurance:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (John 5:24)

34 ATTITUDE

Don't spend time and effort fretting over what cannot be changed. Focus your attention on what can be changed: Your attitude! Aging, tragedies, relationship crises, difficult circumstances, health problems, and death are inevitable, but your responses to these challenges are a choice.

There were three men on crosses on the hill when Christ was crucified. Each had a different attitude. One man was repentant and changed his eternal destination. One man was unrepentant, died, and went to hell. One Man was compliant in the midst of His suffering, doing the will of the Father and declaring "Not my will, but Yours be done." His death affected the destiny of the entire world. Three attitudes. Three destinies.

There is one thing that is not beyond your control: Your attitude. When you are no longer able to change your circumstances, you can focus on changing your attitude. You cannot choose what you may face today, but you can choose your attitude towards it. The proper attitude lifts you out of the problem to a higher level: *"Attitude determines the altitude of life"* (Dr. Edwin Cole).

A key to changing your attitude is to foster a spirit of thankfulness. Start a gratitude journal. Write down at least one thing each day for which you are thankful and watch your attitude be transformed.

"If you are in the greatest trial of your life, take it with both hands. Resolve now to dignify this trial. Refuse to complain, murmur, or grumble. Hold still and watch: God has a plan!" -R.T. Kendall

35 AUTHOR

You are not the author of your story. God is.

The way you might be feeling today or the circumstances you are experiencing are not the way your story ends. As long as you are still living, your journey is not yet completed. Your story is not finished. The Bible states that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

You may feel your story isn't important because you do not have a great audience or you are not a well-known speaker, teacher, or writer. But your story is unique and is designed by God to be a blessing to others.

The story of your journey of faith isn't finished yet. You are in the middle of your story, not at the end. Wait for the next chapter and look forward in anticipation to the perfect ending He has planned for the story of your life.

36 AUTHORITY

In military service, a person who holds the rank of private is under the authority of their captain. They only have the power to act on behalf of the captain when sent on a mission by him. As Believers, we have the authority and power to act in behalf of our Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, because we have been commissioned by Him:

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. (Luke 9:1-2)

Your identity as a Believer gives you the authority to speak and act in behalf of your Captain:

Behold! I have given you authority and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you. (Luke 10:19, TAB)

What actions will you take today to address your own suffering and that of others in the power and authority of your Captain?

37 AWARE

While you should live above your circumstances and not let them drag you down, you should also be aware of the fact that God works through circumstances to get you where you need to be. There are many biblical examples of this. Here are a few:

-Pharaoh's daughter just happened to bathe in the Nile and found baby Moses which resulted in him being raised in the palace of Egypt.

-A young relative just happened to overhear a plot against Paul's life, shared what he heard, and Paul was able to escape.

-The runaway prophet Jonah ended up in the belly of a great fish. Unusual circumstances, but in they got Jonah to where he was destined to be.

-A young slave girl whose circumstances ripped her from her home and family put her in a strategic position to initiate the sequence of events that led to Naaman's healing.

-Esther's circumstances, which took her from the loving home of Mordecai, resulted in the deliverance and preservation of the nation of Israel.

In every circumstance of life Believers should question: "What is the Lord showing me through this?" Guidance comes through the Word, prayer, and wise counsel, but it also comes through circumstances that God orchestrates to get us where we need to be. Sometimes good and sometimes bad, but in the end we get there. Be aware! Your circumstances are working in your behalf.

38 AWE

The days between the Feast of Trumpets and Yom Kippur are known as the Days of Awe during which Jews make things right with others, forgive, and seek God's forgiveness. These days conclude with Yom Kipper, the day of judgment.

You are living in the Days of Awe spiritually. This is not only the time to determine your eternal destiny by making things right with God, but it is also time to make things right with others.

Look at your remaining days, whether many or few, as Days of Awe. It is a period of time God has given you to forgive and be forgiven, and to prepare you stand faultless before the throne of God on judgment day (Jude 24).



B

39 BED

Bed. The Lord impressed me with this word one morning as I was making my bed. A strange word to meditate on for the day. As I reflected on this word however, I realized that my bed is a gift from God, and not only in the sense that I have a bed to sleep in when so many are homeless in this world.

My bed is a present that I wrap every morning when I make it and unwrap every night at bedtime. It is a gift because it represents the fact that God has given me one more day of life. One more day to worship and serve Him. One more day with friends and family.

And each night as I open my present (my bed), I realize that I am one day closer to going home to be with the Lord. One day I will unwrap this present for the last time and wake in His presence.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. (Psalm 17:15)

40 BEGINNING

When faced with adversity, not everyone responds with worship as Job did, nor do they count it all joy as James admonishes:

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (James 1:2-4)

When your difficult time began, you may not have responded properly. Welcome to the human family! You may have complained. You may have been angry. You may have thrown a pity-party. You may have blamed God.

The good news is that you can ask forgiveness for your past responses and start fresh today. His mercies are renewed each morning (Lamentations 3:23). Yesterday ended last night.

“You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.” -C.S. Lewis

41 BELIEVE

His nickname is “Doubting Thomas.” He is the disciple of Jesus who said “I won’t believe that He is alive until I see and touch Him for myself!” Jesus granted Thomas’ request, and declared: “...*Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*” (John 20:29).

If you are a born-again Christian, you are blessed because even though you have not physically seen the Lord, you have believed. Jesus promised: “...*Everything is possible to him that believes*” (Mark 9:23, NIV). He declared: “...*I am telling you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe (trust and be confident) that it is granted to you, and you will [get it]*” (Mark 11:24, TAB). As a Believer praying in harmony with God’s will, nothing is impossible.

No matter how difficult your circumstances now or in the future, you have this hope and this promise:

Do not let your hearts be troubled (distressed, agitated). You believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely on God; believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely also on Me. In My Father's house there are many dwelling places (homes). If it were not so, I would have told you; for I am going away to prepare a place for you. And when (if) I go and make ready a place for you, I will come back again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And [to the place] where I am going, you know the way.
(John 14:1-4, TAB)

If you have not yet been born again, all you must do is confess your sins and believe:

Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses (declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) and confirms [his] salvation. The Scripture says, No man who believes in Him [who adheres to, relies on, and trusts in Him] will [ever] be put to shame or be disappointed.
(Romans 10:9-11, TAB)

42 BENEFITS

God has extended many glorious benefits to you as a Believer. Sometimes we forget these benefits when our journey takes us through difficult terrain mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Take time today to thank the Lord for His benefits using this passage from Psalm 103:

Bless (affectionately, gratefully praise) the Lord, O my soul; and all that is [deepest] within me, bless His holy name! Bless (affectionately, gratefully praise) the Lord, O my soul, and forget not [one of] all His benefits, Who forgives [every one of] all your

iniquities, Who heals [each one of] all your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit and corruption, Who beautifies, dignifies, and crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercy; Who satisfies your mouth [your necessity and desire at your personal age and situation] with good so that your youth, renewed, is like the eagle's [strong, overcoming, soaring]! (Psalm 103:1-5, TAB)

Using just this one passage from the Word, look at the list of things God has done for you. You are:

-Forgiven	-Healed
-Redeemed	-Beautified
-Dignified	-A recipient of loving-kindness and tender mercy
-Satisfied	-Renewed

This all from five verses! Now, take time to explore all of the other benefits listed in God's Word.

43 BITTERNESS

Bitterness is characterized by an unforgiving spirit that fosters accompanying negative and critical attitudes. It begins when you harbor offences by others, allow disappointments to germinate in your heart, and permit resentment to grow.

Your bitterness affects others around you.

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of man; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. (Hebrews 12:14- 15)

Bitterness is sin. Peter told a man named Simon: "You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin" (Acts 8:20-23).

Repent and ask forgiveness for bitterness and the unforgiveness and anger that caused it. You may need to ask forgiveness of others who have been affected by your bitter spirit. You may also need to forgive someone who hurt or failed you which led to your bitterness. The Bible commands: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

"You may have suffered a hurt or offense in the past that harmed you terribly. In fact, it may have robbed you of something that can never be returned or restored. But if you refuse to forgive--to let go of anger, animosity, and bitterness--that offense will continue to work its destruction in your life. A past-tense problem will become a present-tense issue when you refuse to let go of your bitterness. If you don't get over that past offense,

you will give it the power to damage and destroy your future as you drag it along like a bag of garbage or toxic waste. At some point, you just have to let it go and get over it for your own benefit and for the benefit of those around you.” -Rick Renner

You will either become bitter or better as you travel the difficult parts of your journey. Choose better.

44 BLAME

From the time of the Garden of Eden, mankind has sought to place blame for his sin. Adam blamed Eve, the woman God gave him. Eve blamed the serpent who God created. When affected by tragedy, people often blame God for their circumstances. Sometimes troubles are a result of your sin and if so, deliverance will not occur until you take responsibility for it and stop blaming others.

But what about situations that are not your fault? The Bible is clear about the source of troubles which are not a result of your own sin. Jesus said:

The thief's purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness. (John 10:10, TLB)

You live in a broken world and your enemy, Satan, is responsible for all that is stolen, destroyed, or taken from you. Don't blame God. Every good thing in your life comes from God. James warns us not to mistakenly think otherwise:

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:16-17)

It is quite simple: Every good thing is from God. That which kills, steals, or destroys something in your life is from Satan.

45 BLOOD

The Bible says that the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11,14; Deuteronomy 12:23). Blood is so sacred before God that the blood of animals was used in offerings for sin under the Mosaic law until the atonement by blood was made permanent by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible declares: “...without the shedding of blood there is neither release from sin and its guilt nor the remission of the due and merited punishment for sins” (Hebrews 9:22, TAB).

The power of the blood is not in any symbol of the cross which we wear or put on our church buildings. The power of the cross is in what happened on that cross. It is in the blood of Jesus which was shed on the cross for the sins of all mankind.

The blood not only covers your sin, but it has the inherent power to enable you to overcome all the power of the enemy. No matter what you are facing, you can overcome by the applied blood

of Jesus Christ: “...And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11). You are covered by the blood! Confess and give testimony to that each day.

46 BREAD

Part of the Lord’s prayer is: “Give us this day our daily bread.” Unless you are living in poverty, you most likely know that you have food in your pantry or money in your pocket to provide your meals today. So why pray for what you already have?

Because when you ask God for daily bread, you are humbly acknowledging Him as the provider of everything you need and that goes way beyond your next meal. Through the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, you are sustained physically, mentally, financially, and spiritually. When you pray for God to supply your daily bread, you are asking Him to meet every need.

Whatever your need is today, the Bread of Life is sufficient. Jesus said: “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Simply pray: “Give me this day my daily bread.”

47 BREAKER

There is a title for Christ that is used only once in Scripture. It occurs in context after God described the judgment that would fall upon His errant people for their rebellious sins of which they refused to repent. When it seemed all hope was gone and that God had deserted them, He promised that when they repented the Breaker would go before them to break down all opposition and clear the road for them to escape out of captivity:

The Breaker [the Messiah] will go up before them. They will break through, pass in through the gate and go out through it, and their King will pass on before them, the Lord at their head. (Micah 2:13, TAB)

If you have repented of sin, you are no long under judgment so the Breaker goes before you to deliver you from every plot of the enemy. The word Breaker means “to break, burst out, or break open.” He is the Breaker who delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery, opened the Red Sea, and repeatedly delivered His people from the enemy.

Jesus came to earth to destroy the works of the Devil: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). When Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple that concealed the Most Holy Place was ripped open. This was symbolic of Jesus breaking through the barrier that separated sinful man from a righteous God.

Through His death on the cross, the Breaker removed sin out of the way, nailing it to the cross:

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way,

nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:13-15)

Jesus is the Breaker of the chains of sin, addictions, and oppression. His Word declares: *“For sin shall not have dominion over you...” (Romans 6:14)*. He is also your healer, breaking through the physical, emotional, and mental barriers that have taken you captive.

Are you needing a breakthrough in your life? Call upon the Breaker. When the Breaker comes on the scene, chains are broken (Acts 12:7). You can be assured that the Breaker, Jesus Christ, goes before you today. He will break through every opposition or problem you may encounter. He will get you to where you need to be!

48 BREAKTHROUGH

In Genesis 32, Jacob is left alone at Jabbok. The name "Jabbok" means a place of change, passing over, and breakthrough. Whenever you are left alone, it is for a purpose. God is getting ready to do something in your life. God puts you in isolation to birth revelation.

When Jacob was left alone at Jabbok, Uncle Laban was behind him and Brother Esau ahead of him. Both were men he had deceived. When you are between a rock and hard place, that is when God can move in your life. Obstacles become God's opportunities to work. God will wrestle with you--your attitudes, flesh, and sin--until He accomplishes His purposes. He will be there through the darkness of the night of your struggles until dawn breaks, just as he was for Jacob.

Jacob had run from his home and from Uncle Laban, but after his experience at Jabbok he was no longer running physically or spiritually. God touched him at the point of his greatest natural strength in order to deal with his flesh. He will do the same in your life. God knows how to touch you so you will stop running and start clinging. Jacob learned that you don't enter into the blessing by wrestling with God, but by clinging. There is a time to transition from wrestling prayer to clinging prayer, holding on to the promises of God and ceasing to wrestle. When you are at your breaking point, that is the time your breakthrough comes.

When Jacob left Peniel, he had a new relationship with God, a new name, and a new walk--both spiritually and physically. He was limping physically, a reminder of the inadequacy of self and of his need for the power of God. When you stop wrestling and start clinging you, too, will experience spiritual breakthrough and you will never again be the same.

49 BROKENHEARTED

George Matheson was born in Glasgow in 1842. He was the eldest of eight children in the family, excelled at school, and eventually entered Glasgow University. He graduated with first-class honors when he was 19 years old but a tragedy was revealed as he completed his studies. He was rapidly going blind. He had an incurable condition that would eventually result in total blindness and there was nothing that could be done to help him.

While studying at the university, George fell in love with a young lady who was a fellow student and they were planning to get married. When he broke the news of his impending blindness to her she responded, “I do not want to be the wife of a blind man.”

Years later, the memory of that heartbreak came flooding back on the evening of his sister’s wedding. He relates how it was on that occasion that he penned his most famous hymn.

“The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression of having it dictated to me by some inward voice rather than of working it out myself. I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or correction.”

If you are brokenhearted today, let the words of this hymn by George Matheson minister to you:

*O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.*

*O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine’s blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.*

*O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.*

*O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life’s glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.*

Remember God’s promise: “He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds” (Psalm 147:3).

50 BROKENNESS

There is beauty in brokenness. This is demonstrated by the beautiful Nozomi jewelry which was made from pieces of broken pottery after a devastating tsunami in Japan. Nozomi, which means hope in Japanese, is a faith-based enterprise bringing sustainable income, community, dignity

and hope to the women involved in the project by training them to craft high-quality jewelry products.

The beauty of brokenness is also illustrated by Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken pottery with gold dust mixed with resin and using it to fill in cracks or reattach broken pieces. Instead of trying to hide the repair, it makes the product unique and more valuable.

My own brokenness through my extended time as a caregiver and subsequent health challenges enabled me to more effectively embrace those who were broken and understand their suffering in a deeper dimension. People going through difficult times, caregivers, and those experiencing extended illnesses, turned to me for counsel and prayer because they knew I understood. I was walking a similar journey.

I learned that going through something is a greater miracle than being delivered from it. I learned to:

- View obstacles as opportunities.
- Barriers as bridges.
- Mountains as molehills.
- Setbacks as opportunities for comebacks.
- Brokenness as a blessing.

No matter how broken your life is today, God can turn it into a blessing.

51 BROOKS

In 1 Kings 17 the prophet Elijah was directed to go to the brook Cherith where God supernaturally provided for him in a time of famine and drought. One day, however, the brook began to run dry. Whether by natural processes of the drought or supernatural intervention, it was the outworking of a sovereign God. The circumstances that affect you, whether natural or supernatural, are not always about you but are about God's purposes.

Perhaps God has directed you to a "Brook Cherith" in your life and ministry. You know you heard His voice, you obeyed, and at first He greatly blessed you at this brook. Your needs were met and you rejoiced in God's abundance. But now, the brook is running dry. Maybe you no longer experience the flow of God's power. Perhaps people have turned against you. For whatever reason, your beautiful brook is dry. When the brook runs dry, you can do one of two things:

- You can sit on the bank spiritually speaking and complain about your fate. You can spend the rest of your life wondering why it happened and weeping over the dry creek bed. You can question the leading of God. If He knew the brook was going to run dry, why did He bring you here? Did you miss God's will?

Or. . .

-You can realize that as surely as God brought you to this brook, He is now ready to move you on to a new dimension of His will.

Drying brooks prepare you for the next move of God. If brooks never dried up--if God never let difficult times or changes occur--we would settle right where we are and never move on to new things. We would never stray beyond the banks of security of our little brook.

Elijah had not missed the will of God when he went to Cherith. The Lord led him there and for some time, Elijah enjoyed its waters. His needs were provided and he was blessed of God. But when it was time to move on, God allowed the brook to dry up. Difficulties do not mean that you missed God's will. They often indicate a new move of God in your life.

52 BROOM-TREE

Are you having a broom-tree day? Elijah had one:

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." (1 Kings 19:1-4, NIV)

After a miraculous demonstration of God's power on Mt. Carmel and the elimination of the false prophets, Elijah ran for his life from the evil Queen Jezebel. Be careful after great victories, for times of testing often follow. David fell into sin at the height of his military career when he had known no defeats. Jonah fell into despondency after one of the greatest revivals in history where the whole city repented. Peter denied Christ after his powerful declaration of loyalty.

Elijah went into the wilderness and sat under a broom-tree and asked God to let him die! If he really wanted to die, he could have just stayed where he was and Jezebel would have taken care of that! Aren't you glad God doesn't answer all of your prayers?

One problem that plunged Elijah into depression was that he became preoccupied with his own survival. His focus was no longer on God, but it was on self. The minute you get your eyes off God and onto self, you are in trouble. In difficult times, you must remember that it is not about you and your problems. It is about God and His purposes. Elijah got his eyes on his circumstances and focused on his feelings and fears.

A broom-tree (also called a juniper) is a desert shrub which can grow up to ten feet high, but gives poor protection from the hot desert sun. Every "broom-tree" of this world provides poor protection in times of trouble. Only God provides adequate shelter. David declared:

For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah. (Psalm 61:34)

Elijah poured out his heart to God and then fell asleep. While he slept, an angel was dispatched to minister to him and he awoke with renewed strength and returned to finish his mission, anoint his successor, and to be supernaturally transported to Heaven.

Time to get out from under that broom-tree! God isn't finished with you yet.

53 BURDENS

Hagar wandered in the wilderness carrying her son and a container of water. When the water was gone and she was exhausted from her burden, she laid her son down, wept, and prepared for his death.

When you finally lay your burdens down and stop trying to carry them on your own, then God takes note and acts in your behalf. In Hagar's case, God made promises regarding her son, opened her eyes to see a well of water, and gave direction as to what she was to do next (Genesis 21).

Note that God opened her eyes to see a well that was already there. Sometimes you are so distressed by your circumstances that you fail to realize the solution that God has already provided.

When Moses returned to Egypt and spoke of deliverance to the Hebrews, the Bible says “...*they refused to listen because of their impatience and anguish of spirit and because of their cruel bondage*” (Exodus 6:9, TAB). The people were carrying such a heavy burden that they did not realize a deliverer stood in their midst.

When Mary Magdalene wept at the tomb of Jesus, she saw two angels who questioned, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said unto them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Mary was so deep in grief that she didn't even react to seeing angels! Sorrow can be so deep at times that you miss supernatural revelations that are meant to comfort you.

It is time to take your burdens, anguish, bondage, and difficult circumstances and lay them down before the Lord. Then take a good look around. Like Hagar, Mary, and the Hebrew slaves, your spiritual eyes will be opened and you will see that your deliverance is right in front of you.

54 BUT

When Joseph's brothers who had betrayed him finally stood before him in Egypt, Joseph declared:

"Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." (Genesis 45:4-8)

Joseph realized that all of the painful events of his past were not just "tough luck" or "unfortunate circumstances." The betrayal by his brothers, unjust accusations, incarceration, and all of the trials he endured were part of God's plan. Thus, Joseph declared, *"It was not you that sent me here, but God!"* You sold me, but God sent me!

Here is a powerful key for successfully handling adversity: Realize that whatever the enemy intends for evil, God intends it for good. God's intentions are to accomplish His purposes in you and through you.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

Nearing the time of his death, Joseph died confident that God would fulfill His promises to bring Israel back to their land:

And Joseph said to his brethren, I am going to die. But God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land to the land He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob [to give you]. (Genesis 50:24, TAB)

Even in death, Joseph was still living by these words "But God!" To confirm his declaration of faith, he had his bones placed in a coffin to be carried to the Promised Land upon Israel's return years later.

These two words can change your world: But God! The pain of both your past and the present can be greatly used by God if you understand these words and ingest them into your spirit. He has a plan and purpose for the difficult times. Someday you will look back on the hard times in your journey and declare: "But God!"



C

55 CALL

Jeremiah 33:3 declares: *“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”* This promises was spoken to God’s people who were entering into 70 years of exile.

God answered Israel’s call and did mighty works among them despite the fact that the adversity they were facing was a result of their own sin. He will also do so for you in the midst of your trying circumstances, whether or not they are your fault.

Just call and He will answer. You won’t be put on hold or sent to voicemail.

*...call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.
(Psalm 50:15)*

56 CALLING

When we think of God’s calling in our lives, we usually focus on His call for salvation or our call to ministry. But sometimes we are called to walk a difficult path of suffering that we do not understand. You may be there today.

Most people know that author Elizabeth Elliot lost her husband, Jim, when he was martyred in a South American jungle. Perhaps not as well known is that she lost her second husband to cancer. She certainly was no stranger to the pain of suffering. She writes:

“Who can compare sufferings? They are as unique as each sufferer is unique... We respond according to our temperaments. Some cast about for solutions, stew, fret, rage, deny the facts. Some sink into an oblivion of self-recrimination or pity. Some chalk it all up to somebody else’s fault. Some pray. But all of us may be tempted sometime to conclude that because He doesn’t fix it, He doesn’t love us. There are many things that God does not fix precisely because He does love us. Instead of extracting us from the problem, He calls us. In our sorrow or loneliness or pain He calls: ‘This is a necessary part of the journey. Even if it is the roughest part, remember it is only a part and it will not last the whole long way. Remember where I am leading you. Remember that you will find at the end a home and a haven in heaven.’”

Your present circumstances are just for a season, part of your calling and journey that lead to your eternal home.

57 CALM

“Keep calm and carry on”. So goes the popular slogan. Not so easy to do when you hold in your hand a negative health report, divorce papers, foreclosure demands, or other such life-changing documents.

But actually, the slogan is not so far off. Keeping calm and being able to continue on your journey begins with a choice. The psalmist declared:

Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with his mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me [ceased from fretting]. (Psalm 131:2, TAB)

No matter what you are facing on your journey today, make the decision to calm and quiet your soul. Cease from fretting. The one who calmed the stormy sea is on board with you. Even the wind and waves obey Him. You have nothing to fear.

58 CANDLE

The candle flickered in the fading light. As darkness had fallen, the candle seemed to change, but actually it had not changed. It was the environment around the candle that had changed as darkness had encroached on the light.

A candle in the daylight is beautiful, but a candle in the night time is vital. The ensuing darkness of your adversity is the time for your light to shine. Do not fear the darkness. The flame within you has not gone out. It is time to shine!

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. (Isaiah 60:1-2)

If you were able to inspect the moon closely, you would see only imperfections, darkness, and scars. But as the moon looks into the face of the sun, it shines with beauty. The light of the sun is the secret of the moon's beauty. The moon is beautiful only as it reflects the light of the sun.

As you focus on Jesus as the light of the world instead of your dark circumstances, His glory will be reflected in you. No matter the scars of your past, the darkness that surrounds you right now, or your sins and imperfections. As you face another day, reflect the light of His glory to the world. Shine brightly as the candle of the Lord in the midst of the darkness around you.

Do all things without grumbling and faultfinding and complaining [against God] and questioning and doubting [among yourselves], That you may show yourselves to be blameless and guileless, innocent and uncontaminated, children of God without blemish (faultless, unrebukable) in the midst of a crooked and wicked generation [spiritually

pervverted and perverse], among whom you are seen as bright lights (stars or beacons shining out clearly) in the [dark] world, (Philippians 2:14-15, TAB)

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

59 CAPSTONE

In the midst of the challenges of building the temple, the Word of the Lord came to Zerubbabel saying:

This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty. 'What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!' Then the word of the Lord came to me: 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it.' (Zechariah 4:6-9, NIV)

The mountain is symbolic of an obstacle and the capstone is a stone put on top of a building to complete a project. Both the obstacle to God's purposes (symbolized by the mountain) and the fulfillment of His plan (symbolized by the capstone) were of the same material. Both were made of stone. Regarding this passage, Jonathan Cahn notes:

"He will use every obstacle in your life to bring to fulfillment the very purposes He has planned for your life. Every problem, every crisis, every adversity, every setback, and every sorrow will be turned around to bring breakthrough, blessing, and triumph...Every mountain, every obstacle that has hindered God's purposes in your life, will in the end be turned around and become a capstone to bring about the complete completion of those very purposes."

God will use every obstacle you faced in the past, every challenge you are now facing, and every issue you will confront in the future to bring His purposes in your life to completion. And it will not be accomplished by your own wisdom, might, or power, but by His Holy Spirit.

60 CARING

Part of the challenges along your journey may involve being a caregiver for someone who is suffering. Perhaps you are doing this right now—caring for someone who is terminally ill, suffering from dementia, or facing other long-term health challenges.

This can be difficult for you in terms of mental and physical exhaustion. While the Bible clearly calls for you to care for others, it also details how to be wise in doing it. For example, Galatians 6:1 directs:

Brethren, if any person is overtaken in misconduct or sin of any sort, you who are spiritual [who are responsive to and controlled by the Spirit] should set him right and restore and reinstate him, without any sense of superiority and with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also.
(Galatians 6:1, TAB)

This verse is applicable beyond dealing with sin. In any difficult situation, do not become so overly involved and exhausted that it affects you. When the disciples were surrounded by people with physical and spiritual needs to the point that they didn't even have time to eat, Jesus took them apart to rest awhile:

And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.
(Mark 6:31)

You must care for yourself properly in order to continue to care for others. Don't hesitate to ask for help. Take time to enjoy a meal with a friend. Rest awhile. Take a long bath. Go for a walk. Heed Jesus' call and take some time today to care for yourself. Most importantly, spend time in God's presence each day for that is from whom your help and strength comes.

61 CARRIED

Feeling like you just cannot face another day? If you are so tired you think that you can't take another step in this difficult journey, then let God carry you. He declares:

I will be your God throughout your lifetime—until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you. (Isaiah 46:4, NLT)

The Message version states it this way: “...I'll keep on carrying you when you're old. I'll be there, bearing you when you're old and gray. I've done it and will keep on doing it, carrying you on my back, saving you.”

God told the people of Israel that “...the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place” (Deuteronomy 1:31). He carried Israel through the wilderness as a loving father carries his son.

He will carry you from the womb through your old age and until you arrive safely at your destination in eternity with Him (Isaiah 46:3). And when you close your eyes for the last time, His arms will embrace you and carry you from the wilderness of this world to your Promised Land.

*There is no problem too big
God cannot solve it
There is no mountain too tall
God cannot move it*

*There is no storm too dark
God cannot calm it
There is no sorrow too deep
He cannot soothe it*

*Oh, if He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders
I know, my brother, that He will carry you
Oh, if He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders
I know, my sister, that He will carry you.*

-The Gather Band

Let the Lord carry you today.

"Some situations sap every drop of energy we have and demand still more. When we can't take another step, Christ will carry us through." -Dr. Charles Stanley

62 CAVE

A "cave" is anything which limits you spiritually. Difficulties of life sometimes drive you into caves of isolation. You may be hiding in the "cave" of limited resources, negative circumstances, bad relationships, lost dreams, or discouragement. You may have withdrawn from everyday life and ministry because of poor health.

Several people in the Bible retreated to caves. Elijah hid in a cave from the wicked Queen Jezebel. David hid in a cave from King Saul. Lazarus was entombed in a cave of death. God called all of these men out of their caves to accomplish His purposes.

God also called Daniel out of the lion's den and the Hebrew men out of the fiery furnace. He supernaturally delivered Joseph, Peter, Paul, and Silas out of prison and He took the Prophet Jeremiah out of the slimy pit. Lazarus had been in the tomb so long he was stinking

And now, it is time for YOU to come out. It is time for you to leave your cave mentality behind you. God wants to deliver you from anything that is keeping you isolated. Don't look to the circumstances of your tomb. Anything that keeps you bound in a cave of despair, bondage, or defeat stinks! Jesus is coming to the entrance of your cave today and is calling you forth from despair to deliverance. It is time to come out. Your life still has purpose even if you cannot function as you did in the previous season.

63 CELEBRATE

God believes in celebrating. He celebrated His finished work by taking a day of rest. He established numerous celebrations and feasts for the people of Israel. Jesus launched His public ministry at a wedding celebration.

The Bible says that the day of death is better than the day of one's birth (Ecclesiastes 7:1).

Psalm 116:15 says “*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*” When facing death, we should celebrate the joy of a life well lived and the promise of eternal life. Celebrate your loved one home!

*When the time comes and I am standing at the river
That separates the two worlds that I love
Torn between my precious friends and my family
And the place of peace that's waiting up above
Hold my hand and stay there by my side
And when I finally step into the tide*

*Celebrate me home!
Celebrate me there
Celebrate me in that land of wonder where nothing can compare
Celebrate me in that place
Celebrate me saved by grace
Don't just sit and weep because I'm gone
Celebrate me Home*

*I have spent most of my life on earth preparing
To take the trip from here to Heaven's throne
With the Shield and Word of God to guide me
It's a comfort knowing I am not alone
So when I take my final fleeting breath
And fade into the gentle sleep of death;
Celebrate me home!
Celebrate me there
Celebrate me in that land of wonder where nothing can compare
Celebrate me in that place
Celebrate me saved by grace
Don't just sit and weep because I'm gone
Celebrate me Home*

*No more broken dreams
No more tears to cry
Into my Father's arms I'll fly
Celebrate me home!
Celebrate me there
Celebrate me in that land of wonder where nothing can compare
Celebrate me in that place
Celebrate me saved by grace
Don't just sit and weep because I'm gone
Celebrate me Home
Celebrate me Home!*

-Joel Lindsey, Wayne Haun

64 CHANGE

Change is never easy, and there are many changes forced upon you in times of adversity. Some changes will be temporary, while others will be permanent. There will be both positive and negative changes. Difficult changes are hard, but even good changes can cause stressful reactions.

In this time of transition, one truth remains: God does not change. He declares: “*For I am the Lord, I change not...*” (Malachi 3:6). Everything in this transitory world is subject to change but rest assured that “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8, TLB). When all is changing around you, cling to the One who never changes.

If you need a change in your attitude and actions during times of transition, you can do so through the promises in the Word of God.

By means of these He has bestowed on us His precious and exceedingly great promises, so that through them you may escape [by flight] from the moral decay (rottenness and corruption) that is in the world because of covetousness (lust and greed), and become sharers (partakers) of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4, TAB)

The Biblical goal of spiritual change is transformation:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

This type of change is not self-effort. It is profound change accomplished in your Spirit by God:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

65 CHARACTER

From the pen of Helen Keller, who was both blind and deaf:

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened; vision cleared; ambition inspired; and success achieved.” -Helen Keller

The world seeks men of talent and tries to develop character. God seeks men and women of character and then develops in them specific talents and spiritual gifts equal to their tasks.

God is more concerned about your character than your natural talents, and He is building character through your present circumstances. Don't fight the process.

66 CHARGED

“Charged to 100%.” That was the message on the screen of my phone this morning when I finished charging it. Then God’s word for this day came to me: Charged!

Most people plug in their cell phone into an electrical outlet first thing each morning to charge it for the day. Without a charge the phone will drain its power reserve before the day is finished.

Here is the question: Are you as faithful to plugging into your spiritual power source as you are to plugging in your phone?

Take time to get plugged in to God this morning because if you don’t, you may run out of spiritual energy before the day is done. Choose to enter the challenges of this day 100% spiritually charged.

67 CHECKMATE

Checkmate. An interesting word for the Lord to bring to mind, especially since I don’t play chess. This word was a reminder of a book I wrote entitled *“Checkmate: The King Has One More Move.”*

The book begins with a story of a painting hung in an obscure corner of an old museum. The unusual painting depicts two people with a chess board set up between them. Playing pieces were lined up: The king, queen, pawn, bishops, knights, and rook.

Legend has it that one person represents the devil and the other a young man, who is obviously not doing well in the game. With a smirk on his face, the devil believes he has the man cornered. The painting is entitled “Checkmate” because the young man seemingly has no moves left. The game is over, and the devil is waiting for an admission of defeat.

One day, an international chess champion visited the art museum, stood in front of the painting, and studied it thoughtfully for a long time. Finally, he called the museum curator over and said to him, “Sir, you need to contact the artist of this painting immediately!” “Why? Whatever for?” questioned the curator. “Because the title of the painting is incorrect. It isn’t checkmate, because the king has one more move!”

Are you facing what seems to be a checkmate in life? God wants you to know that things are not as dark as they seem. It isn’t over yet. You are not defeated, because the King has one more move! You can get a free digital copy of *“Checkmate: The King Has One More Move”* at <http://www.harvestime.org>

68 CHOICE

Choice is a gift from God. From the beginning in the Garden of Eden, God gave mankind the privilege and responsibility of choice. You have the power of choice over your eternal destiny, and you have the power to function each day spiritually in death or life. You function in death when you think and speak negative words. You choose life when you think and speak positive words of faith.

Each day, death and life are in the power of your own tongue (Proverbs 18:21). You have a choice each day to do good or evil. God says: *"See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil... I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:"* (Deuteronomy 30:15,19). A choice must be made between faith and fear every day. Will you dwell on your situation or dwell on your God? Do you choose to fellowship with your problems or with the Lord?

Just to make sure you make the right choice, God commands: *"...therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live"* (Deuteronomy 30:19). What will be your choice today?

"In the story of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3, they did not shut God out. The fire was not a limitation. They were shut in with him. Their faith had prepared them to die or be delivered—the choice was God's, and they were fine with that. Has your faith prepared you to be fine with the choices God is making in your life today?"

-Dr. David Jeremiah

69 CHOSEN

If you are a true Believer in Jesus Christ, then you are among the chosen of God:

Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love. (Ephesians 1:4, TAB)

You are a chosen witness (Acts 10:41); chosen for salvation (2Thessalonians 2:13); and a chosen soldier of God (2 Timothy 2:4). You are part of a...

...chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

As one of God's chosen, you can claim this promise as you face today:

Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isaiah 41:9-10)

70 CIRCUMSTANCES

It has been said that 10% of life is what happens and 90% of life is your response to what happens.

“Your circumstances are an opportunity for you to draw near to God and for God to reveal Himself to you through those circumstances in a greater way than He ever has before.” -Dr. Morris Cerullo

Do not let your circumstances define you. Whatever situations you are facing in this part of your spiritual journey, you have the power resident within you to overcome them.

Through the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit you can stand toe-to-toe with your spiritual enemy and declare, “Someone is going to move and it is not going to be me!”

“Don’t look to the bigness of your need, look to the bigness of your God. Your circumstances are hindrances to seeing my abilities. If you keep your eyes on your circumstances, the devil will use your circumstances to defeat you and accuse the Word of God, the written and living Word. Your victory is in keeping your eyes on the bigness of your God and His ability. He has promised to take you step, by step, by step, not all at once, but step by step, and each step will be a miracle!” -Morris Cerullo

71 CLOTHING

Jesus was clothed with the Spirit (Luke 4:18), and He said that His followers would be endued (clothed) with power from on high. Thus, the New Testament empowerment of the Holy Spirit is compared to the natural act of being clothed. This clothing of the Spirit covers and protects you spiritually, just as clothing covers and protects your physical body.

You wear clothing to keep cool or warm, depending on the weather. Some clothing is designed to prevent physical injury such as safety vests, military clothing, and the gear worn by firemen and other first responders.

In the spiritual world, the clothing of the Spirit will keep you warm when you feel cold and cool you down when you are emotionally hot and agitated—a great wardrobe for challenging times.

Your clothing protects you from harm and gives you strength to complete your tasks. But your spiritual clothing goes far beyond the function of clothing in the natural world. The Spirit endues you, literally clothes you, with power to accomplish your God-given destiny.

In this season of your journey, ask God to clothe you with:

The garment of salvation:	Isaiah 61:20; 2 Chronicles 6:41
The garment of praise:	Isaiah 61:3
The robe of righteousness:	Isaiah 61:10
The garment of humility:	1 Peter 5:5

The garment of power:	Luke 24:49
The garment of love:	Colossians 3:14
Your spiritual armor:	Ephesians 6:11-18
The nature of God:	Colossians 3:12
The new man:	Ephesians 4:24
Jesus Christ:	Romans 13:14

72 COME

The appeal of God is to come:

Wait and listen, everyone who is thirsty! Come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Yes, come, buy [priceless, spiritual] wine and milk without money and without price [simply for the self-surrender that accepts the blessing]. (Isaiah 55:1, TAB)

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

The appeal of Jesus is to come:

...Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. (Mark 6:3)I

Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest... (Matthew 11:28)

All you need today is provided if you will only come.

73 COMFORT

During a crisis on an airplane you must put on your own oxygen mask before you endeavor to assist others. You must reach up, pull it down, and put it on and then you will be prepared to help those around you. The spiritual analogy of this is that you comfort others with the same comfort you have received in your time of adversity through your own intimate relationship with God:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of sympathy (pity and mercy) and the God [Who is the Source] of every comfort (consolation and encouragement), Who comforts (consoles and encourages) us in every trouble (calamity and affliction), so that we may also be able to comfort (console and encourage) those who are in any kind of trouble or distress, with the comfort (consolation and encouragement) with which we ourselves are comforted (consoled and encouraged) by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, TAB)

God comforts you through His Word, by His loving presence, and by others around you. God comforts you so you can comfort others on this journey with the same comfort you have

received. The Message Translation expresses it this way: *“He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us.”* Being a comforter is actually a ministry that, in the natural world, no one wants to have because in order to comfort others with the comfort we received it means we had to go through adversity.

Sometimes you don't know what to say in the face of tragedy. So God tells us exactly how to provide comfort: *“Therefore, comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:18).* What words? The Words of God. The psalmist declared: *“This is my comfort and consolation in my affliction: that Your word has revived me and given me life” (Psalm 119:50).*

While on earth, Jesus made His ministry headquarters in Capernaum. It was here that people came to Him from all over Galilee. The sick, sinful, condemned, and outcast. The Hebrew word for this village of Capernaum can be translated “the village of comfort and consolation”. That is where you will still find Him: In the place of comfort and consolation.

“If you have ever experienced an unexpected darkness, a silence and stillness you aren't used to, know that these hard times, these devastating disappointments, these seasons of suffering are not for nothing. They will grow you. They will shape you. They will soften you. They will allow you to experience God's comfort and compassion. But you will find life-giving purpose and meaning when you allow God to take your painful experiences and comfort others. You will be able to share a unique hope because you know exactly what it feels like to be them.” -Lysa Terkeurst

74 COMFORTER

The Greek word for comforter means "called alongside with another." The AMPC translation of the key verse states: *“And I will ask of the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, and Standby), that He may remain with you forever.”*

The other Comforter, referred to by Jesus as "another Comforter", means "one of the same kind" as Jesus. This Comforter, the Holy Spirit, was sent to dwell in Believers when Christ returned to Heaven. Jesus said, *"I will not leave you comfortless"...(John 14:18).*

The word for comfortless means “desolate, deserted, and empty.” Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to comfort you in desolate times of life. In difficult times, He brings to your remembrance the promises of God, assures you of the Father's love, and verifies the truth of the Word (John 14:26;16:26.) Believers are advised to walk in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, which means to live perpetually relying on His comfort:

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. (Acts 9:31).

As a true Believer, you are never alone. The Holy Spirit has come to abide with you forever. If you are in need of comfort today, ask the Holy Spirit to come and do His job. And He will.

75 COMMITMENT

William Carey is known as the father of modern missions. He was born to parents who were weavers and he became a cobbler while teaching himself Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. After many years, Carey realized his dream of becoming a missionary to India. Sadly, his child died, his wife had mental health problems, and for many years there was a lack of response from those he served. He ministered over seven years in India without the first convert to Christ.

What kept Carey going amid these difficulties as he translated the entire Bible into six languages, parts of it into 29 others, and earned the title of a pioneer of modern-day missions? He committed to serving God no matter what trials he encountered. His commitment paved the way for missions in India and other nations of the world.

Difficult times will test your commitment. Stand strong in the Lord. Stay committed no matter what tests and trials come your way. Commit your circumstances and all of the challenges that lie ahead to the Lord.

76 COMMUNION

Communion, or the Lord's Supper as it is also called, is the observance of the Lord's final night with His disciples and His last supper with them. During the meal, Jesus shared bread and wine with them and spoke of His body and blood which was to be shed for the remission of sin (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:17-25; Luke 22:7-22; John 13:21-30).

The Apostle Paul gave the spiritual protocol for this sacred observance:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

The body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, symbolized by the bread and wine, provides salvation, healing, deliverance, and provision for every need you may have. Communion is the meal that heals every area of your life.

The Lord's Supper does not have to be administered by clergy. You can do it right now, right where you are. You can do it as often as you desire. Take a piece of bread and some grape juice and do it in remembrance of His death. Thank Him for your healing, salvation, deliverance, and provision.

77 COMMUNITY

God did not create you to live in isolation. He said: *“It is not good that man be alone.”* In difficult times, it is easier to press through to victory when you are in community because...

Two are better than one...For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Advantages of community listed in this passage include a good return for their labors, one helping the other in times of difficulty, defending against assailants, sticking together when times are dark and cold, and the strength of unbroken bonds.

David learned the importance of community in his friendship with Jonathan. King Saul's jealousy caused David to fear for his life but Jonathan, Saul's son, stood by his friend. Their God-ordained friendship saved David's life, helped him through a difficult time, and enabled him to transition into his destiny as King of Israel.

You need faithful friends and a church community to stand with you in hard times. It is best to create this community before you experience a crisis so they will be there to walk through difficult times with you.

You create community by meeting together with other born-again, Spirit-filled Believers. The Bible admonishes:

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
(Hebrews 10:25, NIV)

The importance of community is emphasized by Jesus who declared His presence when two or more are gathered together :

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.
(Matthew 18:19)

This principle of community is illustrated in nature by a bird called a starling that is about six inches long and weighs less than an ounce. The little creatures are easy prey for a hawk, but there is a phenomena that occurs when hundreds of these little birds move across the sky is what is like a swirling wave overhead. Called “starling murmuration”, these huge groups enable these little birds to exchange information, keep warm in winter, and avoid predators. When a hawk threatens, these tiny creatures enter tight formation and beat back the predator that would easily defeat them if they were alone.

When you experience crisis, the devil tries to isolate you and make you easy prey for discouragement, depression, and loneliness. Refuse to comply. Instead, fly high in the midst of community.

78 COMPARISON

Jesus had just extended forgiveness and restoration to Peter and told him he would glorify God by dying a martyr's death. Instead of responding to Christ's revelation, Peter asked Him, "What about John?" (John 21:15-22). The Lord's response was: "...*What is that to you? [What concern is it of yours?] You follow Me!*" (John 21:22, TAB).

The Apostle Paul warns against comparing yourself to others: "*For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise*" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Do not compare yourself to someone else who is traveling the same road of life that you are walking. No two people walk through crises in a similar manner, and no two people respond to sorrow and difficulties in the same way.

In your darkest times you are sometimes tempted to look at others in similar circumstances and draw comparisons:

- “You healed her and she did not have to go through surgery. Why not me?”
- “His son was restored to him. Why is mine still alienated from me?”
- “Her child lived. Mine died. Why?”

Such comparisons lead to despair and unjust accusations of a sovereign God. There was a plan for Peter, and a different plan for John. Both were plans of the sovereign God. God has a plan for you also. Stop the comparisons and embrace the unique plan of God for your life.

79 COMPLAINING

In Exodus chapter 16 we find God's people complaining because of lack of food. Just two months earlier they were crying out for deliverance from the cruel slave drivers. Here they are idolizing the past and talking about the food they had in Egypt. They had left Egypt physically, but their hearts were still there.

Moses warned the people that their complaints were not against their leaders, but against the Lord. Ultimately, all grumbling and complaining is against God, because He is sovereign over your circumstances. Complaining does not solve anything, nor does retreating or looking back to the old life. Instead of asking *how* you can get out of your present situation, ask *what* you can get learn from it spiritually.

Just as God provided all the need for Israel in the wilderness, He will provide your need. Stop complaining and transform your would-be complaints into prayer and praise for God's provision.

80 CONFESSION

You may stumble at times along this difficult journey. When you do, know that God has given you the beautiful gift of confession:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:9-10)

When you confess your sins, God not only forgives those but He cleanses you from all sin, meaning even sins of which you are unaware.

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. (Proverbs 28:13, ESV)

81 CONFIDENCE

Circumstances may cause you to lose confidence in friends, family, leadership, and even professionals like doctors, lawyers, etc. The Bible is clear that you should not put confidence in man (Psalm 118:8-9) but that "...the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken" (Proverbs 3:26). You are not even to put confidence in yourself (Philippians 3:3).

The Bible explains that "*In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge*" (Proverbs 14:26). Through your relationship with Jesus you can be confident that you have access to God as a refuge (Ephesians 3:12). You can also have confidence in your salvation and the promise of eternity (Hebrews 3:6).

Isaiah 30:15 declares "*...thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*" Confidence in God and resting in Him gives you strength for the battles you are facing.

Another great assurance is: "*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us*" (1 John 5:14).

No matter what you are facing now or in the future, the Bible warns: "*Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward*" (Hebrews 10:35). Hold on to your confidence in God and you will be rewarded in this life and for all eternity.

82 CONFUSION

In times of difficulty, you may receive an abundance of unsolicited advice. While some advice may be good, other suggestions may leave you in confusion. If you are experiencing a health crisis, you may even experience different diagnoses from various doctors which can cause major confusion.

Confusion is a lack of clarity or a misunderstanding of the truth or facts in a given situation. The Bible says that God does not cause confusion. If He does not cause it, then it is obvious that it is a strategy of Satan (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Confusion may also be caused by looking to man instead of God, by lack of knowledge of the truth of God's Word, and an inability to hear God's voice and know His will. Your inability to hear God's voice often arises from neglecting prayer and study of the Word. You have not remained in His presence long enough to receive His direction and wisdom.

You need never be confused. You can ask for wisdom from God for every situation in life and you will receive it (James 3:14-17). If you are a born-again, Spirit-filled Believer, then the Holy Spirit is resident within you. One of His purposes is to guide you into all truth so that you need never be confused.

Anytime confusion starts to manifest in your circumstances, stop and rebuke it immediately! Satan causes confusion, so submit yourself to God, resist Satan, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

Ask God for wisdom. The Bible says: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"* (James 1:5). Never make an important decision until you have assurance from God—you know that you know—that what you are doing is right. Pray this prayer each day: *"In thee, oh Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion"* (Psalm 71:1).

83 CONTENTMENT

Biblical contentment is an inner sense of rest and peace that results from being right with God and knowing that He is control of all that happens to you. Contentment means you are not complaining about the present, worrying over the future, or regretting the past.

-The effort of contentment: Contentment does not come naturally. We must learn it. The Apostle Paul declared: *"I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need"* (Philippians 4:11-12).

-The extent of contentment: He was content in every circumstance. Paul's journey in life was difficult. He was stoned, abandoned by friends, shipwrecked, mobbed and run out of several cities, beaten, falsely accused, imprisoned, and suffered hunger and cold, in

addition to having the care of all the churches which he oversaw. If he could learn contentment despite these circumstances, what is your excuse for not being content?

-The empowerment for contentment: How did Paul learn contentment? He learned it by declaring: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me "* (Philippians 4:13).

If Paul did it, so can you!

84 CONTROL

When you are going through adversity, whether it be a great loss, health issues, relationship problems, or legal matters, it seems that things are spiraling downward and you feel you have lost control of your life.

The truth is, you were never really in control in the first place. You may have thought you were, but the Scriptures reveal otherwise. God is sovereign. He was sovereign over the good times when you thought you were in control, and He is still in control during the bad times.

The fact that God is sovereign means that He has the power, wisdom, and authority over every situation in your life. Reflect on the following verses.

*The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.
(Psalm 103:19,TAB)*

But our God is in the heavens: he has done whatsoever he hath pleased. (Psalm 115:3)

The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths. (Psalm 135:6, NIV)

A man's heart devises his way: but the Lord directs his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

Since you were never really in control, be can be assured that you have not lost control.

85 CORNERSTONE

In Bible times, stones were used for building altars, homes, temples, and palaces. The terms "cornerstone" or "head of the corner", as used in the King James Version, refers to an important stone which stabilized the structure at the foundation (Acts 4:11-12). In order to hold the building together, the cornerstone had to be perfectly fit, be exceedingly strong, and be properly shaped. A flawed cornerstone would compromise the integrity of the building.

The Bible declares that Jesus is the cornerstone of your faith:

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:11-12)

The New Testament portrays the community of true Believers as a spiritual temple in which God dwells. Jesus is the Cornerstone to which we are joined together as living stones:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Peter adds that “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

You are a living stone joined with brothers and sisters around the world who are building a habitation for God through the Spirit. Your spiritual house will stand strong in the face of adversity. You have Christ, the Cornerstone, and the “lively stones” of a multitude of Believers to support you in every situation.

86 COUNTENANCE

The Word “countenance” refers to your facial expressions. What does your face reflect to those around you? Do you reflect anger? Worry? Grief? Sorrow? Peace? Joy?

People are observing not only your actions as you travel difficult parts of your journey, but they are watching your non-verbal communication as well. Does your countenance reflect your Lord or your problem?

Meditate on these verses:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace...(Numbers 6:26)

Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O Lord. (Psalm 4:6)

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. (Psalm 42:5)

A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken. (Proverbs 15:13, TAB)

87 COVENANT

The term "covenant" is of Latin origin (*con venire*), and means the coming together of two or more parties who make a contract agreeing on promises, stipulations, privileges, and responsibilities. The point of a covenant is commitment, a word that is not so popular in this modern environment of quick divorces, broken contracts, and legal wrangling.

In Old Testament times, God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. In the New Testament, Jesus established the New Covenant in His blood for the forgiveness of sins. He is the guarantor and mediator of this new and better covenant:

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. (Hebrews 9:15-16)

Now people from every nation, tribe, and language who accept Jesus as Savior become part of God's covenant family. When you accepted Christ, He made a covenant with you that He would never leave or forsake you. Never means forever. For all eternity. Be assured, He is right by your side, walking in covenant relationship with you during your journey of life. He is totally committed to you in an everlasting covenant relationship, in good times and bad, in the valleys and on the mountain tops.

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. (Jeremiah 32:40-41)

88 CRISIS

A crisis is defined as a "time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger." You may experience many seasons of crisis over the course of your spiritual journey.

The beginning of the crisis that led to this devotional guide was marked by a seizure. I was alone, having just lost my husband a few months earlier. During the seizure and not understanding what was happening, I heard my spirit cry out audibly: "Jesus, I need you right now. You are all I have."

From that first moment through all that was to come--the tests, biopsy, the MRIs, CT scans, the diagnosis, radiation, and chemo--I knew that cry from my spirit was being answered. I called, and he answered. He was right there each step of the way. After a devastating crisis, diagnosis, or tragedy, what you do next reflects what you believe.

Where do you turn in times of crisis? What is your first response? If you have not cried out to Jesus, it is not too late to do so.

89 CROSS

Have you ever seen buildings with a hanging gallows decorating the roof top? Have you ever known anyone to wear a necklace depicting a hanging gallows? Yet we often see the cross, an instrument of death, atop places of worship and used in beautiful pieces of jewelry.

The fact that this instrument of execution has been transformed into something beautiful illustrates the power of the cross. One of the most evil instruments of judgment in ancient times

has been transformed into a symbol of life and hope, salvation, healing, and deliverance. That is why we treasure this emblem of our faith.

As you reflect on the power of the cross, realize that God will also take all that is ugly in your life and transform it into something beautiful. As you allow Him to do so, what you thought would bring death will result in new life and hope.

90 CROSSROADS

In the natural world, a crossroad is an intersection of two or more roads where you must make a choice of which route to take. In the spiritual world, crossroads are a point where a decision with far-reaching consequences must be made.

Every difficult time in life involves crossroads that will have far-reaching consequences, important decisions regarding health, finances, relationships, and your future. God's advice is to *"...Stand by the roads and look; and ask for the eternal paths, where the good, old way is; then walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls..."* (Jeremiah 6:16, TAB).

The Lord has promised: *"...thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left"* (Isaiah 30:21).

If you are facing a crossroads, then *"...Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths"* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

91 CURSE

The crown of thorns which Jesus wore was representative of the curse brought on this world by sin (Matthew 27:29). Jesus bore the curse of your sin, your shame, your grief and everything associated with the curse. So if Jesus bore these things, then why are you still living in sorrow, shame, and grief as if you are still under the curse?

The crown of thorns represented the curse of sin and every negative response associated with it.

Christ redeemed us from that self-defeating, cursed life by absorbing it completely into himself. Do you remember the Scripture that says, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"? That is what happened when Jesus was nailed to the Cross: He became a curse, and at the same time dissolved the curse. (Galatians 3:13, MSG)

The prophet Isaiah declared:

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are

*healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;
and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:3-6)*

Because He bore it all, you need not bear it



D

92 DAILY

To travel successfully on this journey of life requires an intimate experience with God. You need wisdom daily and that comes from time spent in His presence. The Proverbs declare:

Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord. (Proverbs 8:33-35)

You need spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, and material provision each day. That is why part of the Lord's prayer is requesting daily bread which means asking for provision for your needs in every area of life (Matthew 6:11).

You need to continue daily in fellowship with the people of God:

And all that believed were together...And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (Portions of Acts 2:44-47)

In difficult times, whether you feel like it or not, you must take up your cross daily and walk the path set before you:

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. (Luke 9:23-24)

Every day is a new adventure along this road of life. Some days are beautiful, some tragic. The discipline of daily fellowship with the Lord prepares you for both.

93 DARKNESS

Are you going through a dark time in your life? Dark circumstances? Dismal days? Be assured that God's presence is still with you.

The psalmist declared: *"If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me and the night shall be [the only] light about me, Even the darkness hides nothing from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You" (Psalm 139:11-12, TAB).* You are not alone in the dark times of life, and you need not fear the danger that lurks in darkness (Psalm 91:6).

God is at work, even in these dark times. He declares: *"And I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, Who calls you by your name" (Isaiah 45:3, TAB).* What treasures and riches does God want to reveal to you in dark times?

God initially brought you out of the darkness of sin for a purpose:

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:10-14)

You are no longer a child of darkness: *"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8).* You have been chosen to walk out of darkness into light for divine purpose: *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).* Praise the One who calls you out of darkness and you will find that the darkness will quickly flee. Darkness cannot linger in the presence of light:

And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. (Isaiah 42:16)

Corrie Ten Boom notes: *"When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer."*

Diamonds form under pressure. Grapes must be crushed to make wine. Olives are pressed to release oil. Seeds grow in the darkness of the earth. Whenever you are feeling under pressure, crushed by your circumstances, pressed by your responsibilities, or in absolute darkness, know that you are in a place of transformation. Relax and trust God with the process.

“Are you in the dark just now in your circumstances or in your life with God? Then remain quiet. When you are in the dark, listen and God will give you a very precious message for someone else when you get into the light.” -Oswald Chambers.

The darkness will pass. The eclipse will conclude. The night will end. No matter how dark the clouds or how black the nights, or even in the midst of a total eclipse, the sun still shines.

God’s Word to you today is “...Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you” (Isaiah 60:1).

“In the darkest night He is composing your song. In the valley He is tuning your voice. In the storm clouds He is deepening your range. In the rain showers He is sweetening your melody. In the cold He is giving your notes expression. And as you pass at times from hope to fear, He is perfecting the message of your lyrics.” - George Matheson

“No pit is so deep that He is not deeper still; with Jesus, even in our darkest moments the best remains, and the very best is yet to be.” -Corrie Ten Boom

94 DAWN

The world marks time beginning in the morning and ending at night. The world moves from light to darkness, dawn to dusk. The world starts in the natural strength of the morning and concludes in weakness.

Evening and morning are God’s way of marking time. God moves from darkness to light. One starts the day at nighttime, acknowledging weakness that depends on His strength for the coming day. The symbolism of this is that for Believers every nighttime of life, including the night of death, will lead to a dawn. It may seem dark today, but God’s Word declares: “...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

In the natural world, it becomes dark when the earth rotates away from the light of the sun. Spiritual darkness occurs when the world turns away from the Son. You can embrace a new dawn in your life by turning back to the light of the Word of God and developing an intimate relationship with Jesus, the Light of the World.

One of the names of Jesus is Morning Star “...And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. (2 Peter 1:19, NIV). Hold steady in the dark times and wait for the light of the Morning Star who indicates that the dawn is coming.

95 DAYS

The Psalmist says, *“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom”* (Psalm 90:12). The Message translation reads *“...that we may live wisely and well.”*

Author Mark Batterson expresses a similar thought:

“Make each day count. Live as if there is no tomorrow. Do things that will live on after you die.” -Mark Batterson

None of us know the exact number of our days on earth, but Believers can be assured that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives and we will dwell with the Lord forever (Psalm 23:6). We can rest in the knowledge that *“The Lord knows the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever”* (Psalm 37:18).

Despite the circumstances you are going through right now, you can make each day count. Pray for someone. Reach out to comfort someone who is experiencing difficulties in their spiritual journey. Do something that will live on after you die.

“We have difficulty taking our days separately. We must learn however to put all our days together and not to look at one day crowned with success and another shadowed with trial and failure. Sublime victory is ours when we realize that all our days, with all their changes, have resulted in our likeness to the unchangeable One.”
-Herbert Lockyear

96 DEATH

Death is the end of life on earth and the doorway to eternity. For the Believer, death is the beginning of life in eternity with God. For the unbeliever, death is the end of life in this world and the start of an eternity without God which is called the "second death".

The Bible says a time to die is appointed to everyone (Hebrews 9:27). Even the great prophet Elisha, who did many miracles of healing, eventually became sick and died (2 Kings 13:14). Death, bereavement, and loss are part of life. You have no control over how or when you will die, but you do have a choice in how you live. If you live as a follower of Christ, when you die you can declare that you have finished your course but not your life.

Death is an enemy, and it is the last enemy that will be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26). Through His resurrection, Jesus was the living evidence that proves that death is conquered although not yet destroyed. It is the terror and permanency of death that is disarmed for the Believer (1 Corinthians 15:55).

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

After death, the spirit of a Believer goes directly into the presence of the Lord. At the return of the Lord, the Believer's body is reunited with the spirit to dwell forever in the presence of the Lord. That is why "...Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. (Psalm 116:15).

You need not fear death, because all your days are already written in God's book:

Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:16, TAB)

Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed. (Job 14:5)

You are invincible until your work is done on earth.

Believers can claim these promises in the face of death:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. (John 11:25-26)

97 DECISIONS

During challenging times you are called upon to make numerous decisions. People will express differing opinions about what you should do. Doctors may not agree in their diagnosis and treatment plans. Family and friends may not agree in the advice they give. And if that wasn't enough, you have the information highway and artificial intelligence weighing in on many subjects.

Each day, ask God for wisdom to make decisions:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. (James 1:5-6)

No decision is actually a decision in itself. You must make decisions in faith, with no regrets. Do not make decisions in fear. Move in faith with God directed, well-reasoned action and don't look back.

Pray this prayer each morning:

Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. (Psalm 143:8)

Claim this promise each day:

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. (Psalm 32:8)

98 DECOMPRESS

Decompression means to release from pressure. Adversity brings stress and many life-changing decisions that must be made immediately. People who do not know the Lord often turn to harmful things to decompress. It may be drugs, alcohol, pornography, illicit sex, etc.

God's plan for decompression is the Sabbath, one day out of the seven to rest and worship. Some people observe the Old Testament Sabbath on the seventh day. Others observe the New Testament celebration on the first day of each week. Paul says to let no one judge you concerning holy days (Colossians 2:16).

You can decompress by focusing on your Creator. This is not a time for spiritual warfare or intercessory prayer, but a time to rest in His presence and reflect on His faithfulness. Listen to Christian music. Take a leisurely walk and observe the beauty of God's creation around you. If you are unable to take a walk because of your physical condition, invest in some nature DVD's depicting oceans, waterfalls, and rivers. You will return to your tasks and the difficulties of life decompressed, refreshed, and with strength to face another day.

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Psalm 16:11)

99 DELAY

Are you experiencing an unexpected delay in your spiritual journey? If so, it may be a divine delay. A divine delay is not the result of procrastination or laziness. It is an unexpected hindrance or unanswered prayer for which there seems to be no explanation. You may or may not understand the reason, but there is always a spiritual purpose in a divine delay that is orchestrated by God.

Jesus delayed going to His ailing friend Lazarus until in the natural it was too late. When Lazarus died, his sisters did not understand the Lord's delay in coming. They told Jesus. "If you

had been here he would not have died.” But this divine delay resulted in a greater miracle when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

You may not understand every delay in life, but know that delay is not necessarily denial and you can be assured that there is always purpose in a divine delay.

100 DEPARTURES

Many times along this journey of life you will experience departures. A dear friend or family member may relocate or pass away. A spouse may leave you through divorce or death, or you may be required to depart from a home or job you love and leave friends and family behind.

Part of your spiritual journey involves learning how to leave and/or deal with the departure of others properly. When you move at God’s, direction move in faith and don’t look back. When others depart, don’t continue to grieve for them even if you feel their move was wrong.

When King Saul departed from the faith and the Prophet Samuel was grieving...

...the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. (1 Samuel 16:1)

Whether it is your departure or the pain of the departure of others, rise up from your grief, be refilled with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and move on to the new things in God. God has a plan!

101 DEPRESSION

Depression is an emotional condition characterized by feelings of continued hopelessness, inadequacy, gloom, dejection, sadness, and difficulty in thinking, concentration, and action, loss of interest, and in some cases thoughts of suicide.

A great loss, death of a loved one, losing a job, traumatic experiences, divorce, imprisonment, financial problems, and other negative circumstances can result in depression. Guilt is another trigger for it, and repeated struggles with addictions can cause it.

Depression is not sin. It is common when going through traumatic experiences. It is a signal that a change, a healing, or a deliverance is needed in your life.

Here are some guidelines for dealing with depression:

Identify the root cause. How did the depression begin? When did it begin? What is the main issue causing it? *“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God” (Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5).*

Have a medical examination. If your health is affecting your mood, then you can pray for physical healing rather than misdirecting your efforts by thinking you are fighting a battle of the mind over depression.

If unconfessed sin is the problem, ask God for forgiveness. David said that day and night, God's hand was heavy on him until he asked for forgiveness. If you are harboring unforgiveness towards others, forgive!

Bind the spirit of depression that is operating in your life. Jesus gave you power over all the power of the enemy, and that includes depression no matter what the cause (Luke 10:19). Have others join you in prayer for deliverance.

Cultivate friendships with positive people. Satan wants to isolate you through depression. Deliberately spend time with Believers who are positive and uplifting. Do not hang out with negative, critical, judgmental people, as this can contribute to your depressed state.

Reprogram your thinking by immersing yourself in God's Word, praise, and worship. Program your mind to think on good things rather than the negative:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

102 DESERT

A desert. Dry. Lonely. Barren in the natural world. There are also deserts along your journey in the spiritual world. Charles Swindoll notes regarding these:

“Your desert experience might involve caring for an ailing family member or an elderly parent over an extended time, with no help at hand and no relief in sight. Your sojourn in the drylands might be a stubborn physical condition that keeps you confined. It could be that deep soul ache that comes with an unfaithful spouse or a rebellious teenager...”
-Charles Swindoll

If your journey is taking you through a spiritual desert, know that new things are being birthed in your life:

-Moses, on the backside of the desert, received his call to deliver Israel.

-Paul, in the Arabian desert, was trained by the Lord for his ministry.

-Philip left a thriving revival to go to the desert and minister to one man who most likely took the Gospel to his nation and the African continent.

-John Baptist ministered in the desert preparing the way for the Lord Jesus Christ.

-The Apostle John, on a desert island, received the end-time revelation.

-Jesus returned from His desert experience filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

The desert is an unlikely place for spiritual revelation that is transformed by God's presence through the obedience of those who journey there. What will be birthed in your spiritual desert?

103 DESIRE

What are you desiring today? Deliverance? Peace? Healing? Restored relationships? Finances? Whatever your desire, the Word of God gives the key to receiving it:

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. (Psalm 37:4-5)

Change your focus from your issues to focus on the Lord. Delight yourself in Him, commit your way to Him, trust Him, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

God can make this promise because when you are committed to Him and delighting in Him, then your heart's desires will be in unison with the desires of His heart.

104 DESPAIR

Despair means that you have lost hope. It is a dark feeling that there is no way out of your present circumstances, no way to improve the situation.

Perhaps you are feeling that way today. If so, reflect on these words of the Apostle Paul:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Corinthians 4:7-10, NASB)

Like Paul, you are an earthen vessel. You will experience perplexing afflictions, but you do not have to despair when you know that there is purpose in your suffering.

One great purpose is that people will recognize that your response to adversity is not due to your own strength, but it flows from the power of God within you. Cast aside despair and let the power of God be manifested in you and through you today.

105 DESTINATION

This life is not your destination. It is the road to your destination. The circumstances which surround you are not where you will remain forever. This world is not your home. You are just passing through. You are on a spiritual journey to your Heavenly home and an eternity spent with your Lord. Sometimes the road is rough, but if you have chosen Jesus as the Way you will arrive safely at your destination.

Focus on your destination instead of the perils of the road which you are traveling. When you keep your eyes on Jesus and the Promised Land of Heaven, no trial is too great and no road is too steep along life's journey. Joshua and Caleb endured 40 long years in the wilderness enroute to their destiny.

Your present situation is not your final destination. Focusing on your destination prevents detours along the way and will ultimately bring you into His presence to stand faultless before Him.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 24-25)

106 DETOURS

You had your route all mapped out, but all of a sudden you hit a detour. A barricade. A washed out bridge. Big boulders blocking the highway. You will also encounter spiritual detours in life. You thought you were traveling the best route, but a spiritual blockade or landslide occurred.

When Israel left Egypt and entered the desert, there was a good road leading directly to Palestine by a seacoast route, but this path would have taken them past enemy fortresses and required them to do battle for which they were not prepared so taking the longer route was best. This also made Pharaoh think they were lost, convincing him to pursue them so God could totally eliminate the threat of the enemy at the Red Sea crossing.

Often, the way that seems logical to your natural reasoning is not the best way. You may not always understand the way God chooses, but it is always the right and best way. God's detours always have divine purpose.

And your ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. (Isaiah 30:21)

107 DEW

The process that produces dew starts as the sun begins to set and night falls. As an exposed object cools, atmospheric moisture condenses at a rate greater than that at which it can evaporate. This results in the formation of the water droplets known as dew.

In the natural world, as dew covers a plant it absorbs the life-giving substance through its leaves, giving it what it needs to survive another day. Without this daily source of water, plants will not endure until the rains come.

Likewise, the dew of the Holy Spirit comes quietly in the night-times of your life to renew and refresh you. The moisture of the Spirit quickens your spiritual dryness. You are refreshed by His presence and receive what you need in order to survive another day.

God's promise to His people is *"I will be as the dew..." (Hosea 14:5)*. Thank God for the refreshing dew of the Holy Spirit which is falling fresh upon your life today.

108 DIFFERENT

The book *"Who Moved My Cheese?"* tells the story of some mice who found a block of cheese and thought they could feed on it forever. One day however, they found it was gone. Some of the mice refused to accept the fact that the cheese was gone and they waited around for it to reappear. Other mice went in search of new cheese to eat.

The moral of the story is that if you want something different to happen, you must do something different. You cannot remain in the same place spiritually hoping things will change and yearning for things of the past. Jesus said:

No man puts a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runs out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. (Matthew 9:17)

If the "cheese" you were previously feeding on has disappeared, it is time to do something different. You got to where you are today by doing what you did. If you want things to change, you must do something different. New attitudes. New plans. New responses. New relationships. New ministries.

109 DISASTERS

Psalms 91:9-10 declares: *"Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling..."* A plague is a disaster which causes significant damage, loss, or destruction. This includes natural catastrophes like earthquakes, floods, accidents, and other tragic events like sickness and disease.

The promises in Psalm 91 regarding negative conditions are dependent upon making the Lord your dwelling place. It is *because* you have made Him your refuge and dwelling place that no evil shall befall you, nor shall plagues come near your spiritual dwelling.

When someone goes through adversity it does not mean they have abandoned their secret place of intimate fellowship with God. Your physical house might collapse in a hurricane or tornado just like the house of the sinner living next door to you. Your physical house is gone, but it does not affect your true dwelling place. Psalm 91 reveals that your true dwelling is the secret place of intimate fellowship with the Lord. As long as you remain in intimate fellowship with God, your true spiritual dwelling is not affected. Even if your material house collapses or the physical house of your body is afflicted, your true dwelling remains secure.

When Jesus revealed details of His forthcoming death, the Scriptures record that many of His disciples turned back from following Him. They did not want to experience suffering:

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. (John 6:66-69)

Disasters will either drive you closer to the Lord or farther away from Him. Through these difficult times you are experiencing, will you turn away from God or will you remain secure in your secret place?

110 DISCONTENT

In the temptation in the Garden of Eden, Satan appealed to Eve's pride when he enticed her to sin. He planted the seed of discontent in her spirit when he told her that if she would eat the fruit of the forbidden tree she would become like God and know all things (Genesis 3). Eve lived in a perfect environment and she was already like God because she was created in His image, yet she was entrapped by the spirit of discontent.

Discontent leads to sin. For example, unhappiness with finances leads people to rob, steal, and cheat. Discontent in marriage leads some people to adulterous relationships. Discontent with your present circumstances may lead you to blame God.

The spirit of discontent is conquered by fostering a spirit of gratitude. Whatever you are going through that is breeding discontent in your life, refocus your attention on the many things for which you can be grateful.

If you are reading this right now, you can thank God for your eyesight. You can thank Him that you woke up again this morning. You can thank Him that somehow, this devotional guide came to you to help you through your difficult times.

Now it is time for you continue the list of things to be thankful for and soon you will realize your discontent has vanished.

111 DISTRESS

Stress is difficult, but being in distress is even worse. Distress is extreme anguish, suffering, or pain. The Bible records that Jacob was greatly distressed by fear (Genesis 32:7). Judges 2:15 and 10:9 indicate that all Israel was greatly and severely distressed. King Saul suffered from a distressing spirit in 1 Samuel 16:14, and Job expressed distress in Job 36:16. The Apostle Paul spoke of his personal distress in 2 Corinthians 12:10.

Mark 14:33 shows Jesus being troubled and distressed in the Garden of Gethsemane as He prayed prior to His death for the sins of mankind. *“And He said to them, My soul is exceedingly sad (overwhelmed with grief) so that it almost kills Me! Remain here and keep awake and be watching” (TAB).*

Whenever you are distressed remember that Jesus came through victoriously facing the most dire circumstances ever: Execution on a cross. He knows what distress is and stands ready to help you in your time of need.

112 DOUBT

Doubt is a lack of assurance that causes one to question their salvation as well as other works of God in their lives. It is a feeling of uncertainty and mistrust. Doubt often results from disappointed with God. Perhaps He did not answer a prayer as you desired, or you feel He did not intervene in your circumstances as you had hoped.

John the Baptist expressed doubt when he sent word to Jesus asking if He was truly the Messiah. Jesus did not condemn him for his doubts, and He does not condemn you for yours. Instead, He sent word back to John confirming His identity by the works of God which were being manifested (Matthew 11:2-6).

Doubt is a feeling, but we are not saved by feelings. We are saved by faith. Satan can tamper with your feelings, especially in difficult times, but he cannot void the work of God in your life. Faith is the opposite of doubt. Faith is belief or trust in someone or something without overt proof. Biblically, faith is *“being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).*

The basic tenets of our faith are the Word of God and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Assurance that eliminates doubt is not a matter of applying human logic. It is found in the Word of God and is a matter of believing and acting in faith. You simply believe God's Word and refuse to rely on your own thinking (Proverbs 3:5).

Faith--the remedy for doubt--is increased through hearing, reading, and studying God's Word (Romans 10:17). Refuse to allow the spirit of unbelief to operate in your life. Doubt is a tool of the enemy, so when the enemy brings doubts address these with the Word of God, rebuke Satan, and cast doubt out in the name of Jesus.

113 DRIFTING

It is not the big waves on the ocean that cause a boat to drift. Drifting results from not paying attention to the normal currents. All of a sudden you look back to shore and the life-guard tower seems to have moved. Actually, the tower is stable. It is your boat that has drifted.

This is true in the spiritual world as well. It is not always the big calamities of life that cause you to drift spiritually, but it is the normal currents of life. Facing the same difficulties day after day. The same sorrow. The same pain. All of a sudden you realize you are off course. You are drifting in your commitment to the Lord. You are neglecting the study of the Word, prayer, and worship. Spiritual drifting is like a boat without oars or a motor drifting into uncharted waters.

The only way to be sure a boat isn't drifting is to keep your eyes fixed on something stable on the shore like the life-guard tower. The only way to prevent drifting spiritually is to fix your eyes on Jesus as your spiritual life guard.

You may be in troubled waters right now, and if so you can't afford to drift. Stay on course. The guard tower has not moved. You have.

*"I've watched many a captain guide his cruise ship through a narrow channel. The crew members are intensely focused on their tasks because drifting means disaster. Life is full of narrow channels to navigate. We can't afford to drift away from God and His Word."
-Dr. Charles Stanley*



E

114 EBENEZER

The Bible is full of powerful words that, if you dig deep enough into their meanings, will change your life. The power with which God clothed each word of His book is amazing. One such word is Ebenezer which means “stone of help.”

Ebenezer is a place mentioned in the Bible which is believed to have been located near the city of Aphek (1 Samuel 4:1). This was the spot where the Israelites camped out before battle with the Philistines. The Israelites had previously been defeated twice, so we can surmise that the morale of the soldiers was down. But this time as the battle began, Scripture says *“The Lord thundered loudly against the Philistines that day and threw them into such confusion that they were defeated by the Israelites.”*

In 1 Samuel 7:12 we read that *“Afterward, Samuel took a stone and set it upright between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, explaining ‘The Lord has helped us to this point.’”* This stone was to remind the Israelites of what God had done for them in the past and to assure that God would bless them in the future.

The Expositor’s Bible states that this stone *“...was no doubt a testimony to a special help obtained in that time of trouble; it was a grateful recognition of that help; and it was an enduring monument to perpetuate the memory of it.”*

Ebenezer moments are times when you know without a doubt that God is intervening in your life. You realize that only God could have helped you through to this point in time. Perhaps it is time to raise your own “Ebenezer” of praise to the Lord.

115 EMBRACE

After being healed of a terminal illness, King Hezekiah declared:

But what can I say? He has spoken to me, and he himself has done this. I will walk humbly all my years because of this anguish of my soul. Lord, by such things men live; and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to health and let me live. Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back. (Isaiah 38:15-17)

Hezekiah knew his life would never again be the same and that he would walk carefully all of his years because of “this anguish of my soul”. He would never forget what he learned through suffering and facing death.

King David also embraced the benefits of suffering. He realized that no suffering came into his life without passing through the hands of God and that there are always lessons to be learned. In Psalm 119 he declared:

Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. (Psalm 119:65)

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. (Psalm 119:71)

I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. (Psalm 119:75)

Unless Your law had been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget Your precepts, [how can I?] for it is by them You have quickened me (granted me life). (Psalm 119:92-93, TAB)

As you embrace suffering within the will of God, what lessons are you learning?

116 EMMANUEL

Jesus was called Emmanuel, meaning “God with us”. He was the visible manifestation of the fact that God is always with you. He is right there with you in that storm of life. He is with you on that sickbed. He is with you when the days seem long and your strength is gone. He was there in the midnight hour. God was there in times past. He is there today and He will be there for all of your tomorrows.

Emmanuel, God with us, is a name that confirms that a personal relationship with God is possible. The intimacy that was lost through sin in the Garden of Eden was restored through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Because Jesus made the blood sacrifice for sin, you can have a relationship with God the Father and can boldly enter into His presence:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19-20)

The name Emmanuel confirms that Jesus knows how you feel. Because God is with you, He knows the circumstances, trials, and heartaches you are facing. He knows, because when He was here on earth He experienced every emotion known to man:

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

The name Emmanuel means that you are never alone. Jesus said, "...I will never leave you or forsake you." Because of this, you can boldly say: "*The Lord is my helper, I will not fear...*" (Hebrews 13:5-6). Others may abandon you, but Emmanuel is always with you.

117 EMOTIONS

You will experience many different emotions during difficult times. You may experience anger, questioning, depression, loneliness, and other negative responses. Trust God and express what He already knows that you feel.

The psalmist trusted God with his emotions, crying out:

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. (Psalm 22:1-2)

Job trusted God with his emotions over the tragedies he experienced:

And Job spake, and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. (Job 3:2-4)

It is okay to express your emotions to God as long you conclude as these two men did. David always expressed his confidence in God after relating his struggles:

Deep calls to deep at the [thundering] sound of Your waterfalls; All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me. Yet the Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song will be with me. (Psalm 42:7-8)

Job did likewise. Here is a classic example:

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. (Job 19:25-26)

Your emotions cannot lead you on this journey. Emotions like fear, despair, discouragement, depression will try to seize control. Reject these the moment they surface in your thoughts. Negative emotions are spirits, and must be dealt with as such: Through spiritual warfare. We are to live by faith, not by the fluctuating feelings of emotions. Express negative emotions in a way that redeems situations by boldly proclaiming your faith and trust in God.

118 EMPTY

Do you feel like you are running on empty today? Empty emotionally, spiritually, mentally, or physically? Take time to wait in the Master's presence for a refilling. He is the One who filled empty jars with oil in the midst of a famine. He filled empty stomachs with food in the wilderness. He filled empty vessels with spiritual water from the well of life.

Claim His promises today:

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:13-14)

From songwriter William Blanchard comes these lyrics for the song, "Fill My Cup". Make them your prayer today.

*Like the woman at the well I was seeking
For things that could not satisfy;
And then I heard my Savior speaking:
"Draw from my well that never shall run dry".*

*Chorus:
Fill my cup Lord, I lift it up, Lord!
Come and quench this thirsting of my soul;
Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more--
Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!*

*There are millions in this world who are craving
The pleasures earthly things afford;
But none can match the wondrous treasure
That I find in Jesus Christ my Lord.*

*So, my brother, if the things this world gave you
Leave hungers that won't pass away,
My blessed Lord will come and save you,
If you kneel to Him and humbly pray.*

119 ENCOURAGEMENT

It is wonderful to have friends and family to encourage you when you are going through difficult times. but sometimes, there may be no one nearby to do this. That was the case in 1 Samuel 30:1-6 when David returned from battle to find his home at Ziklag invaded, burned, and the women and children carried away. His own men talked of stoning him. He had no one to turn to, so the Scriptures say that *“David encouraged himself in the Lord his God” (1 Samuel 30:6).*

How do you encourage yourself in the Lord? Here are some scriptural guidelines:

Remember God’s Faithfulness. Remember the times when it looked hopeless but God made a way. Recall the promises that God gave you that have already been fulfilled. Rehearse the times when God showed up in your darkest hour. Focus on the faithfulness of God, not the problem.

Consult the Word of God. One of the first things David did was to call for the ephod, a breastplate that the priests wore through which God communicated in Old Testament times. For us, this would be comparable to Biblical counsel which encourages and empowers us to know what to do. When you need encouragement, the best place to turn is to the Word of God.

Pray, because prayer is vital in any situation and especially when you need encouragement. Pray in your heavenly language so the Holy Spirit can intercede for exactly what you need (1 Corinthians 14:4).

Worship is one of the best ways to change your perspective. Worship changes your focus from the problem to God. Even when you don’t feel like it, begin to worship and your emotions will soon follow.

Surround yourself with people of faith. Spend time with positive people of faith who will encourage you in the Lord.

Speak life into your situation. In Psalm 103, David instructed his soul to bless the Lord. In Psalm 62, he commands his soul to rest in God. You can speak to your own soul, your mind, will, and emotions. Life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). Speak words of life over yourself.

At Ziklag, David chose to encourage himself in the Lord instead of giving in to defeat and despair and within forty-eight hours he became King of Israel. What destiny does God have for you as you choose to encourage yourself in the Lord?

120 END

There is no sunrise without a sunset. There can be no new beginning without an end. Every beginning has an end, and every end precedes a new beginning.

The Biblical feast of Tabernacles is held in autumn and is the final feast of the Lord for the year, the conclusion of another season. It is a time of great celebration. The command for this final feast is, "You shall be joyful."

"In the world...the greatest things come at the beginning. Everything starts out young, and then gets older...In the world, the celebration comes at the beginning. Then it fades away, ultimately ending in death. But the Feast of Tabernacles reveals that in the Kingdom of God, it is the opposite. The greatest celebration comes at the end. So if you live in God's power, you don't move from life to death, but from death to life."
-Jonathan Cahn

No matter how your current situation ends, God has a new beginning for you. New relationships. New ministries. New dreams and visions. And in the end a new Kingdom where there will be no more sickness, pain, sorrow, and death.

You cannot judge a book by its beginning or the middle. Only at the end can you understand all of the twists and turns of the plot which led to the conclusion. The same is true for your spiritual journey, the story of your life.

During this lifetime, you know God by faith through the Word, salvation, prayer, and His blessings. Now you see through a glass darkly, but you will understand all when you come to the end of your journey. Wait until the end when you see Him face-to-face.

121 ESCORT

Abraham's servant is a type of the Holy Spirit as he was sent to escort the bride, Rebekah, from a far country to her spouse (Genesis 24). The servant brought Rebekah through the difficult dry and barren paths in the wilderness and safely delivered her into the arms of her waiting bridegroom, Isaac.

As a Believer, you are part of the Bride of Christ and Jesus is your spiritual Bridegroom. The Holy Spirit who abides in you will teach you all things about Jesus. He will guide you through the wilderness of this world into the arms of your waiting Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not fear that the adversities you are experiencing will cause you to fall by the wayside. The Holy Spirit is your escort and He will safely deliver you to your Bridegroom.

Now to Him Who is able to keep you without stumbling or slipping or falling, and to present [you] unblemished (blameless and faultless) before the presence of His glory in triumphant joy and exultation [with unspeakable, ecstatic delight] — To the one only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory (splendor), majesty, might and

dominion, and power and authority, before all time and now and forever (unto all the ages of eternity). Amen (so be it). (Jude 24-25, TAB)

122 ESTABLISHED

When something is established it means it is on a firm and stable basis. The Bible says “*Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established*” (Proverbs 16:3, ESV). Nothing can thwart God’s purpose in your life because as a Believer you are established in God.

All the attacks of the enemy you are experiencing will not undermine your stability. You are built on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ. The storm will not move you. Stay strong, knowing that your life, your future, and all eternity is secure. You are established in God.

123 EVERLASTING

In difficult times when it seems nothing around you is stable and everything is in an upheaval, reflect on these truths regarding the everlasting God:

- He is from everlasting to everlasting. He always has been and always will be (Psalm 90:2).
- His everlasting arms are supporting you (Deuteronomy 33:27).
- His mercy and truth are everlasting (Psalms 100:5).
- His righteousness is everlasting (Psalms 119:142).
- His Kingdom and dominion are everlasting (Psalms 145:13).
- He is the everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6).
- He provides everlasting strength, all you need to face the challenges of life (Isaiah 26:4).
- He gives everlasting joy (Isaiah 51:11).
- He provides everlasting salvation (Isaiah 45:17).
- His kindness is everlasting (Isaiah 54:8).
- He loves you with everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3).
- His covenant with you is everlasting (Hebrews 13:20).
- He gives everlasting life (John 3:16).

124 EVERYTHING

The Bible declares that there is a set season and time for every purpose under heaven:

*A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)*

We rejoice at a birth and during happy times, but there also is a time to die and a time to weep and mourn. Not so pleasant, but part of our journey. We enjoy getting and keeping, but there also is a time to relinquish and cast away. There is a time to speak, and a time to keep silence. Also part of the journey.

If you are in a time of life where you are experiencing loss, death, or other difficulties, know that this is just for a season. This means as surely as it began, it will have an end. You may not understand all the ramifications of this season, but rest in the assurance that...

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He also has planted eternity in men's hearts and minds [a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy], yet so that men cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11, TAB)

125 EXPERIENCE

God never calls or uses anyone for His purposes without first giving them an experience. For example, if you are to preach salvation you must first experience it yourself. If you are to teach forgiveness, then you must learn to forgive.

After you emerge from a difficult season of life, you will be able to help others because of your experiences. You will know that God is able to help a person's sickness, financial issues, divorce, loss of a loved one, etc., because you have experienced it. People will turn to you for help because they know that you have been where they are.

When you have an experience, you are never the mercy of someone who only has an opinion or an argument. You know that you know because you have experienced it.

"You learn to cook by cooking. You learn to read by reading. You learn to play an instrument by practicing it. You only learn endurance by enduring. Tribulation results in patience...Patient endurance can be developed only through hardship...Ask Me to take this dark, ugly thing and transform it into something lovely. " -Sarah Young



F

126 FAILED

Do you feel you have failed somewhere along your journey of life? For a Believer, failure is not permanent. The Bible records the stories of great men of God who failed miserably at one point in their lives but were able to finish strong.

-Jacob was a swindler and manipulator who became a prince with power with God.

-Moses returned to Egypt after 40 years to finish in the spirit what he had failed to do in the flesh.

-David repented of murder and adultery and became a man after God's own heart.

-Samson rebounded from failure in a final desperate act when God strengthened him once again to take vengeance on the enemy.

-Jonah, who initially rebelled against his commission from the Lord, successfully called a whole city to repentance.

-Peter, who denied the Lord three times, became a key leader in the early church. He refused to live under the shadow of his failure

-John Mark, who failed in his first missionary venture, was later asked by Paul to join the team because he had become a profitable servant of God.

If you have failed, it is time to repent and then get up and keep pressing on in your journey. Know that even when you experience failure, it is not permanent and that God's grace covers every sin. Know also that the Lord will never fail you despite your failures.

*... not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.
(Joshua 23:14)*

Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

127 FAINT

Are you going through difficulties? Proverbs declares: *“If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small”* (Proverbs 24:10, TAB). It is one thing to serve God in the good times and another to stay strong during seasons of adversity.

Some difficult circumstances last for an extended period of time. God’s question to you is: *“If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?”* (Jeremiah 12:5, NIV). In other words, if you are fainting spiritually during what you are now experiencing, how will you respond in even more difficult times?

The good news is that God does not condemn you for fainting spiritually, but He provides strength in the face of your weakness:

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.
(Isaiah 40:29-31, N)

So, *“...let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not”* (Galatians 6:9).

128 FAITH

Your commitment to fight illness through both prayer and medical intervention is a declaration of faith. You don’t know the outcome, but you are committed to the battle believing that whether healing comes through natural or spiritual means, all healing comes from God.

“Faith does not ignore a doctor’s diagnosis. It does, however, seek a second opinion from the great physician.” -Mark Batterson

Victory is not just about being cured of an illness or going into remission. It is how you live during the process. You will either turn to others or to God in a time of crisis. Put your faith in God for *“... as it is written, The just shall live by faith”* (Romans 1:17). Do not look at your negative circumstances. Do not worry if you cannot see the path ahead of you: *“...For we walk by faith, not by sight”* (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Hebrews chapter 11 lists some who experienced miraculous deliverances and others who died in faith. Perhaps the greatest faith is that which sustains when you aren’t delivered. Your faith may be weak, but He will hold you fast. Elisabeth Elloitt notes: *“Faith does not eliminate questions but known where to take them.”*

Towards the end of his life and his battle with dementia, my Dad’s favorite song was *“He Will Hold Me Fast”*.

*When I fear my faith will fail
Christ will hold me fast
When the tempter would prevail
He will hold me fast*

*I could never keep my hold
Through life's fearful path
For my love is often cold
He will hold me fast*

*Those He saves are His delight
Christ will hold me fast
Precious in His holy sight
He will hold me fast*

*Raised with Him to endless life
He will hold me fast
'Til our faith is turned to sight
When He comes at last!*

-Ada R. Habershon

129 FAITHFUL

I was standing alone outside of the emergency room watching the sunrise that cold November morning after my husband of almost 47 years had just passed on into Heaven. I prayed, “Lord, I don’t know how to do this, but if you will show me then I will return to this spot on the anniversary of my husband’s death each year to worship you.” God has been faithful, and I have returned to this spot every year to give Him thanks.

“There are times when life is not easy, when it is hard to believe in the faithfulness of God. We try to hold on and find out what God is up to, and sometimes He seems to have disappeared. And we listen to the words of the enemy, who tries to pull us away from what we know and cause us to operate on how we feel. God is faithful whether you feel like He is or not, whether you think He is or not, where you observe His faithfulness or not. God, who cannot lie, is faithful.” -Dr. David Jeremiah

When I got into my car that morning to return back to my empty home, this was the song that came over the car radio and became my theme song from that day on: “The Goodness Of God”.

*I love You, Lord
For Your mercy never fails me
All my days, I've been held in Your hands
From the moment that I wake up*

*Until I lay my head
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God*

*And all my life You have been faithful
And all my life You have been so, so good
With every breath that I am able
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God*

*I love Your voice
You have led me through the fire
In the darkest night
You are close like no other
I've known You as a Father
I've known You as a Friend
And I have lived in the goodness of God*

*And all my life You have been faithful
And all my life You have been so, so good
With every breath that I am able
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God
'Cause Your goodness is running after, it's running after me
Your goodness is running after, it's running after me*

*With my life laid down, I'm surrendered now, I give You everything
'Cause Your goodness is running after, it's running after me (oh)
Your goodness is running after, it's running after me
Your goodness is running after, it's running after me
With my life laid down, I'm surrendered now, I give You everything
'Cause Your goodness is running after, It keeps running after me*

-Songwriters: Jason David Ingram, Brian Johnson, Edmond Martin Cash, Benjamin David Fielding, Jenn Johnson. For non-commercial use only.

130 FEAR

There are three types of fear:

-The fear of God: The fear of God is a deep sense of awe and reverence toward God. It is a feeling of profound devotion and respect for God's power and authority over all aspects of life.

-Legitimate fear: This is a survival-based emotional response that triggers a "fight or flight" response. This type of fear is a natural instinct that empowers you to resist or retreat from danger.

-The spirit of fear: Second Timothy 1:7 declares: *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”* The type of fear spoken of in this passage is not legitimate caution or the fear of God, but it is a negative fear that is caused by a demonic spirit.

Positive emotions like joy, peace, and love are generated by the Holy Spirit, so it stands to reason that negative emotions are generated by an evil spirit. The spirit of fear results in irrational fears. It is the constant expectation of evil causing one to always anticipate the worst. This fear is based on faulty perceptions and deception by the enemy.

Wrestling with a spirit of fear does not mean you are demon possessed. It means that this specific demonic spirit is attacking you. When you are living in fear, you are not functioning in faith. Fear paralyzes, while faith energizes. Fear steals today by making you worry about tomorrow. You may have legitimate reasons to fear, but you have greater reasons not to fear because God is on your side.

As you face this difficult time in your journey, will you retreat and give in to fear, or will you advance by faith?

“The weight and binding power of fear can drag a person down like a prisoner's shackles. But Scripture contains truths, promises, and principles that break those chains.” - Dr. Charles Stanley

God has given you His power, His love, and a sound mind which is the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Receive this, believe it, act upon it and you can conquer fear!

131 FINISHED

Do not worry that you will die before your work is finished and your God-given destiny completed. In Genesis chapters 48-49 as Jacob was nearing death, he called together his sons and spoke prophetically over each one of them. Charles H. Spurgeon notes regarding this passage:

“Jacob did not yield to death until he had delivered his last sentence of admonition and benediction to his sons. He was immortal until his work was done. So long as God had another sentence to speak by him, death could not paralyze his tongue.”

Every day of your life is already written in His book:

Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them.
(Psalm 139:16, TAB)

You are immortal until your work is done. You will finish well and fulfill your destiny.

132 FINISHER

Towards the end of his life and ministry, the Apostle Paul declared: "...I have finished my course." The spirit of a finisher is characterized by determination, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to completing what they start. "I give up" is not in the vocabulary of a finisher. They may stumble or be temporarily diverted along the way, but a finisher persists to finish their course in victory.

Life has a beginning and an end, birth and death. Everything we undertake between these two bookends of life has a beginning and an end. Most people are excited at the beginning of a new challenge, a new opportunity, relationship, or adventure. There is also great joy when we have completed something well and fulfilled a dream or achieved a goal.

Between the beginning and the end however, there is the sometimes lengthy expanse called the middle. This is where we often become discouraged and give up. The spirit of a finisher is the attitude of determination to see things through to the finish. Satan wants you to quit or to stop short of what God has for you.

God is a finisher. He completes what He starts, including the work that He has started in your life: *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 1:6).

This portion of your spiritual journey may be rough, uneven, and untried terrain. Don't give up:

*So here's what I think: The best thing you can do right now is to finish what you started last year and not let those good intentions grow stale. Your heart's been in the right place all along. You've got what it takes to finish it up, so go to it. Once the commitment is clear, you do what you can, not what you can't. The heart regulates the hands.
(2 Corinthians 8:10-12, MSG)*

Dr. David Jeremiah admonishes...

*"Read Jesus' statement in John 17:4 carefully: 'I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.' ...Not all the work there is, but all the work that is mine...My goal is not to find out how much work there is to do; my goal is to find out the work God has given me to do. Lock onto that. When at the end of his most fruitful life the apostle Paul wrote: I have finished my course...He meant that he had finished the work God gave him to do."
-Dr. David Jeremiah.*

133 FIRE

Do you feel like you are going through the fire? The positive purposes of fire in the natural world parallel those in the spiritual world:

Warmth. Fire gives warmth, as does the Holy Spirit whose fire warms cold hearts.

Purification. As fire purifies precious metals, so the Holy Spirit purifies you. He is described as a Refiner's Fire (Malachi 3:2; Isaiah 6:1-8). God's judgment is symbolized by fire (Hebrews 12:29) and a spirit of burning (Isaiah 4:4).

Consummation. In the natural world, fire consumes what is combustible and reveals what is enduring. Likewise, the fire of the Spirit burns up spiritual stubble in your life:

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

Light. Fire provides light in the natural world, and the Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual illumination for Believers (Ephesians 1:17-19). The light of that fire provides protection and guidance. When Israel traveled through the wilderness the Lord went before them in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to protect them and guide them in the way (Exodus 13:21). The light is a symbol of God's presence (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29) and of His approval (Leviticus 9:24). Tongues like fire marked the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:3-4).

Power. Fire generates steam which powers industrial equipment. The Holy Spirit is the driving power in your life, functioning as spiritual steam. The fire of persecution had no power over the three Hebrew men because the Son of God was with them in the midst of the flame. Only the cords that bound them were destroyed and they came forth without the smell of smoke upon them. What will God do in the midst of your own fiery furnace of life?

134 FIRSTFRUITS

When Israel first surveyed their Promised Land, the grape clusters they brought back were evidence that the promises of God were real. The grapes were the firstfruits that confirmed the reality of what was to come. Sadly, Israel allowed fear and unbelief to rule over faith and they ended up spending another 40 years wandering in the wilderness.

Throughout your journey in this world, God will frequently provide "grapes" from your heavenly Promised Land. Every provision, every answer to your prayers, every word of comfort you receive, and each miracle you experience are sent to encourage you not to yield to fear but to

continue on in your walk of faith. These blessings are the firstfruits of what is to come and confirm the promises of God regarding your eternal home.

Do not become fearful, unbelieving, and turn back into the wilderness as Israel did. You are on the border of your Promised Land and these firstfruits of God's blessing confirm it. Keep on advancing by faith.

135 FLOOD

Going through difficult circumstances of divorce, great loss, health challenges, etc., can sometimes make you feel like you are caught in a raging flood. That is how I felt spiritually when going through radiation and chemo for a brain tumor.

It was during that year also that in the natural world wave after wave of atmospheric rivers flooded several communities in the central valley region of California where I was living. Twelve of them. One storm after another. The weather seemed to mirror what I was experiencing physically and mentally.

The patriarch Job probably felt like he was caught in a flood of atmospheric rivers when he lost his children, material possessions, and health (Job 1-2). Perhaps you are experiencing similar feelings today in the midst your challenging circumstances.

Here is God's promise to those caught in the swirling floods of difficulties:

...When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. (Isaiah 59:19)

The punctuation of this verse shows the enemy coming in like a flood and the Lord lifting up a standard of protection again him. But if one moves the comma, a different thought is revealed:

...When the enemy shall come in, like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. (Isaiah 59:19)

This punctuation shows the enemy coming in, but like a flood the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him. No matter which punctuation is used, God is with you lifting up a standard of protection against the spiritual floods of the dire circumstances of life.

136 FOG

In the Central Valley of California as well as the beach communities where I have been privileged to live over the years, dense fog is sometimes a major issue. Multi-vehicle accidents often occur because people drive too fast for visibility. My husband, a highway patrol officer, was once the lead in a 100 car crash that occurred due to fog.

You can easily lose your sense of direction in fog. The fog obscures dangers that may lie ahead. In extreme conditions, people are advised to pull their vehicles to safety, stop, and wait until the fog lifts.

This is an analogy of spiritual fog where you have lost vision or become disoriented. Sometimes, due to adversity, you can only see a few yards ahead spiritually. If you are experiencing a spiritual fog, the advice for dealing with it is similar to that in the natural world. Don't continue your journey at break-neck speed. It is time to slow down, pull to safety, and stop until your spiritual vision clears.

As in the natural world, spiritual fog sometimes obscures everything. But, as is also true in the natural world, the fog will eventually lift. Corrie Ten Boom said that *"Faith is the radar that sees through the fog."*

137 FOLLOW

Jesus passed by and called a young tax collector to follow Him. He wandered down to the sea shore and challenged several fishermen to follow. There was no career path outlined. He didn't say, "Follow Me, give it a try, and see if it works for you." He simply challenged them to commit all to follow Him into an unknown future.

As a Believer, you have responded to the call to follow. If you have been on this spiritual journey for a while, you may have come to know some of what that call means to you personally, but there remains many uncharted paths ahead. Your spiritual journey will sometimes wind through beautiful meadows and forests, while other trails will lead through difficult terrain.

No matter where you are on your journey today, the call remains the same: Follow. And the one who called you remains right beside you each step of the way. Whether it be beautiful pathways or treacherous roads of life, the call is simple. Just follow.

138 FOOTPRINTS

There are places in life where others cannot walk with us. It is just too difficult. It seems we must take that path alone. Mary Stevenson wrote these beautiful words:

"One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord, 'You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there have only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?'

The Lord replied, 'The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, is when I carried you.'"

God wants to carry you through the difficult paths of life. Submit to His sovereignty. Do not leave behind drag marks where God had to drag you kicking and screaming into the next portion of your journey.

139 FORGIVENESS

Perhaps your present difficulties have resulted from actions of those around you and you are struggling to forgive.

"You may have suffered a hurt or offense in the past that harmed you terribly. In fact, it may have robbed you of something that can never be returned or restored. But if you refuse to forgive--to let go of anger, animosity, and bitterness--that offense will continue to work its destruction in your life. A past-tense problem will become a present-tense issue when you refuse to let go of your bitterness. If you don't get over that past offense, you will give it the power to damage and destroy your future as you drag it along like a bag of garbage or toxic waste. At some point, you just have to let it go and get over it for your own benefit and for the benefit of those around you." -Rick Renner

Do not be trapped by unforgiveness:

"The biblical word for 'offense' means a trap. Do not be trapped by harboring unforgiveness because of offenses committed against you. Remember that your life is not defined by your critics." -Rick Renner

Forgiveness is not minimizing or dismissing the offence, it does not ignore or excuse wrong. It is an act of your will, not of your emotions. You choose to forgive as you have been forgiven. Be like Jesus who...

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. (1 Peter 2:23, NIV)

Corrie Ten Boon notes: *"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and to discover the prisoner was you."*

Perhaps you are having difficulty forgiving yourself?

"Forgiveness is three-dimensional: Downward to you from God; inward to yourself; and then outward to others. They are all interconnected. What are you saying to God when He forgives you but you cannot forgive yourself? You are saying that you have a higher standard of righteousness than a holy God." -Dr. Dwayne Mercer

When you repent, God removes your sins as far as the east is from the west. In the natural world, if you start traveling east you will never be going west as you circle the globe. You will always be traveling east. There is a north pole and a south pole indicating limits. There is no east pole or west pole. No limits.

140 FOUNDATION

The Bible compares the life of a Believer to the construction of a building: *“You are God’s building” (1 Corinthians 3:9)*. Whenever men erect a building in the natural world, they must first lay a proper foundation. God uses this principal to teach a great spiritual truth. A Believer must have a proper foundation in order to build a good spiritual house. Their foundation must be laid according to the plan of the master builder, Jesus Christ and His Word (2 Timothy 2:19).

Jesus emphasized the need for a good spiritual foundation by a parable about two men who built houses (Matthew 7:24-29 and Luke 6:47-49). The foolish man who built on a wrong foundation heard the Word of God but did not take personal action on what he heard. His house was built on the sand instead of the rock. The wise man built on the rock, Christ Jesus. The wise man’s house withstood the storms, while the foolish man’s house collapsed.

Jesus’ story of these two builders reveals another great truth. It is the nature of life to be stormy. Circumstances of life result in many personal crises. You may face death, disease, or disaster. Jesus said: *“...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)*.

No one escapes the storms of life, but what differs is how people respond to them. If your spiritual life does not have the right foundation it will collapse like the house built on sand. If your life is built on the right foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word, then the storm cannot shake you. When it is all over, your spiritual house will still be standing.

141 FRAGRANCE

You will spread a fragrance as you go about your day today. No, not your perfume, after-shave, or body wash. You will spread a spiritual fragrance to both the saved and the lost:

For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life...(2 Corinthians 2:15)

To the saved, your Christlike life is a sweet savor, but those who are perishing will not be so appreciative because your life convicts them of their sin. The Christ in you rebukes their very lifestyle. If you are experiencing difficulties with some people around you, this might be the reason.

Bearing the fragrance of Christ to the world is a great responsibility, but through His power you are adequate for the task. Another translation of our key verse reads...

To those who are not being saved, we seem a fearful smell of death and doom, while to those who know Christ we are a life-giving perfume. But who is adequate for such a task as this? Only those who, like ourselves, are men of integrity, sent by God, speaking with Christ's power, with God's eye upon us. (2 Corinthians 2:15-16, TLB)

No matter the personal challenges you are facing today, you are Christ's ambassador to spread His fragrance in the world. The Message translation states:

Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation—an aroma redolent with life. But those on the way to destruction treat us more like the stench from a rotting corpse. This is a terrific responsibility... (2 Corinthians 2:15-16, MSG)

142 FRIENDS

You may have many acquaintances, but not all of these should be your close friends. You should choose your friends wisely, especially when you are going through difficult times. You need positive people around you, people of strong faith who will stand with you and walk you through this part of your journey.

"Sometimes we need to do something radical to break through to the next level in life. If people around you don't believe in you, if they don't encourage you, if they drag you down--then you need to find some people who do. Love everybody, but only make close friends of the people who want to see you reach your potential." - John Maxwell

Joe Larson, a professional speaker, once related: *"My friends didn't believe I could become a successful speaker. So I did something about it I went out and found me some new friends."*

If you don't have supportive friends, do something about it. Make new friends who are strong in faith and will help instead of hinder your spiritual journey.

143 FRUITFUL

Hatred by his brothers. Sold into slavery. Falsely accused and imprisoned. Joseph had some extremely difficult experiences, but God was using every circumstance to prepare him for his destiny. After Joseph was elevated to second in command in Egypt, he married and the names he gave his two children were symbolic of his past (Genesis 41:51-52).

The first child was named Manasseh, meaning *"God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house."* Joseph didn't forget his father's house, but he forgot the pain associated with the events that occurred there. You may never forget the difficulties and sorrows of the past, but God wants to heal you of the emotional pain of these experiences.

Joseph's second son was named Ephraim, meaning *"God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."* Joseph was fruitful in affliction because he let God heal him of the pain of his past. You must deal with the pain of your past before you can experience a fruitful future.

Every difficult experience Joseph endured was used by God to prepare him for his destiny. God has a plan for your life also. If you will release your pain to Him then you too will become “fruitful in the land of your affliction”.

144 FUTURE

What does the future hold? A normal question, especially when you are in the midst of testing, trials, and trouble. Corrie Ten Boom notes: *“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”*

You cannot know everything about the future, but you have the assurance that God knows all of your tomorrows. Do not define your future by your current circumstances. Meditate on the words of this old hymn *“I Know Who Holds Tomorrow”*.

*I don't know about tomorrow
I just live for day to day
I don't borrow from the sunshine
For its skies may turn to gray
I don't worry o'er the future
For I know what Jesus said
And today I'll walk beside Him
For He knows what lies ahead*

*Ev'ry step is getting brighter
As the golden stairs I climb
Ev'ry burden's getting lighter
Ev'ry cloud is silver lined
There the sun is always shining
There no tear will dim the eye
At the ending of the rainbow
Where the mountains touch the sky*

*Many things about tomorrow
I don't seem to understand
But I know who holds tomorrow
And I know who holds my hand*

-Ira F. Stanphill.

No matter what you are experiencing today, God holds your hand. He will do so tomorrow and each day of the future. When you face death, He will escort you into your new home where you will abide with Him forever.



G

145 GIANTS

Are you struggling with spiritual giants today? The giant of addiction? Unforgiveness? Health issues? Relationships? Unrequited grief?

Israel was instructed by God to eliminate all of the giants when they entered their Promised Land, but they failed to do so (Joshua 11:22). In Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, Israel allowed a few giants to remain.

It is in these three locations that the nation of Israel later experienced major problems. Samson got in trouble in Gaza; the Philistines dishonored the Ark of God's presence in Ashdod; and Goliath held Israel hostage in Gath until David rose up to defeat him.

The name "Gaza" means "strong"; "Ashdod" means "stronghold"; and "Gath" means "winepress". Giants left unconquered in your life will increase in strength, establish a stronghold, and eventually squeeze all that is good out of your life.

Unconquered spiritual giants give birth to more giants. These giants will return to taunt you and will eventually multiply and increase in strength until you are held hostage spiritually by them. You can have your biblical armor on and be trained in spiritual warfare, but you will be rendered immobile unless you get out on the battlefield and face the giant. As David, you must rise up, face your giants, and secure victory in the name of the Lord.

146 GIFT

"The gift of God is to see another day." These words were written by my 18 year-old niece one Sunday morning during service. Five days later, she died as the result of a gunshot wound.

The past is over and the future uncertain. You only have the promise of today. That is why they call it the "present". Michelle was right. Treat today as a gift and rejoice in the provisions from God with which you are blessed.

Your Heavenly Father is the giver of good gifts: *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"* (James 1:17). Here are some of His wonderful gifts:

-The gift of the Holy Spirit: *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call”* (Acts 2:38-39).

-The gift of the grace of God: *“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many”* (Romans 5:15).

-The unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ: *“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift”* (2 Corinthians 9:15).

-The gift of eternal life: *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

You may be going through a rough time right now, but your Father has not changed. He is the giver of all that is good in your life, and He has given you this day. It is His gift to you. Use it for His glory.

147 GLORIFY

In every situation of life along your spiritual journey, your goal is to glorify God (Romans 15:6). No matter what the trial or heartache, despite your physical, mental, or emotional condition your purpose is to glorify Him. By the way you respond. By the example you set. By the integrity, grace, and compassion you display to others.

Even in the most basic things in life, your goal should be God’s glory: *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”* (1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV).

In John chapter 9, the disciples of Jesus questioned why a man was born blind. They wondered if he or his parents had sinned. People are always seeking an explanation for the unexplainable, always trying to place blame. Jesus replied that the man’s blindness was not the result of sin, but that his condition was for the glory of God. Then, He miraculously healed the man.

When there is no one to blame and no answers to be had, know that God still has a purpose. It is not always about you. It is about His glory to be revealed in you and through you to a lost and dying world.

148 GRACE

Grace is the DNA of scripture. It is like a tapestry woven into the pattern from the opening book of Genesis to the final book of Revelation. Grace is the unmerited favor of God.

A professor at a Christian college in Missouri once gave his students an unforgettable example of grace. A student from his class wrote regarding this experience:

“When I got to class, everybody was doing their last-minute studying. We were responsible for everything the teacher had taught, the study guide, and the textbook. When it was time to take the test, Dr. Tom Huffy instructed, ‘Leave the test face down on the desk until everyone has one and I tell you to start.’

“When we turned the tests over, to my astonishment every answer on the test was filled in. My name was even written on the exam in red ink. The bottom of the page said: ‘This is the end of the exam. All the answers on your test are correct. will receive an A on the final exam. The reason you passed the test is because the creator of the test took it for you. All the work you did in preparation for this did not help you get the A. You have just experienced grace.’

“Then the instructor said, ‘Some things you learn from lectures, some things you research, but some things you can only learn from experience. You’ve just experienced grace. If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, someday you will find that your name is written down in a book, and you have had nothing to do with writing it there. That will be the ultimate grace experience’.”

Have you ever wondered why some people seem to have more grace in difficult situations? It is because they have learned that God’s grace is unlimited and they ask for it to be manifested in their lives:

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

When you rebel against adversity, you are also refusing the grace that accompanies it. Rely on His grace and grace alone to see you through.

“Have you come to a point where you are willing entirely to rely on Him? You will never likely say that God’s grace is all you need until His grace is all you have.”
-Voice of the Martyrs, Extreme Devotions

You don’t even need to ask for grace because He has already promised “*My grace is sufficient for you*”. Not will be or might be. It is.

“All these difficulties are only platforms for the manifestations of His grace, power, and love.” - Hudson Taylor

149 GRAFTED

There is a process in horticulture called “grafting” which involves combining two plants by inserting a wound on one and inserting the other plant so that they can grow together. Grafting combines attributes that do not occur in a single plant.

The Bible says that as a Believer, you have been grafted into the family of God.

But if some of the branches were broken off, while you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among them to share the richness [of the root and sap] of the olive tree, Do not boast over the branches and pride yourself at their expense. If you do boast and feel superior, remember it is not you that support the root, but the root [that supports] you. (Romans 11:17-18, TAB)

Through the wounds Jesus bore on the cross, you have been grafted into Him. He is the root that supports you and provides spiritual attributes that you cannot generate on your own.

You are not making this journey of faith alone. You are grafted into Christ and are part of the universal family of God composed of all true Believers.

150 GREATER

In John chapter 4, the Bible addresses the antichrist spirit that is at work in this world. Perhaps, at this point in time in your spiritual journey, you are battling this spirit. If not, you will eventually encounter it.

The antichrist spirit is at work through false prophets, the anti-God philosophies of this world, evil rulers, and in everyone that refuses submission to Jesus Christ. Sometimes the difficulties you have with unsaved people result because the antichrist spirit within them is coming against the Christlike spirit within you.

If you are under attack by this spirit, today's word is for you, be assured of this...

Little children, you are of God [you belong to Him] and have [already] defeated and overcome them [the agents of the antichrist], because He Who lives in you is greater (mightier) than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4, TAB)

151 GRIEF

God never intended grief, bereavement, and sorrow. These all came into the world because of the original sin of Adam and Eve in the garden (Acts 3). All the losses you experience are due to sin, not necessarily your personal sin but because of the presence of sin in the world.

Psychologists have identified stages of grief to include the initial shock of a grief-causing event; emotional release through weeping; feelings of regret that one should have done something differently; anger because of the loss; and a period of inertia when one doesn't care to go on or thinks they can do so.

But the Bible says that Jesus bore your grief:

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten

of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:3-5)

It may be considered normal by psychology for you to experience the stages of grief, but for a Believer it is not necessary. The Bible says Jesus was not only acquainted and familiar with grief, but that He bore your grief and sorrow. Jesus bore your sin so that you no longer have to bear it. He also bore your grief, so why are you bearing it? He wants you to be healed of it. Grief is a choice, one that Jacob sadly made when he declared that he would go to his grave mourning his son, Joseph (Genesis 37:34-35).

After the death of Lazarus, Mary was weeping when Jesus arrived. When Martha greeted Him, she was confrontational. There are different ways to express sorrow. The good news is that Jesus always meets you at the point of your need.

There is a time to mourn over losses, but extended grief is different than experiencing sorrow for a loss. The Bible says we sorrow, but not as those who have no hope. The Word also says you are blessed if you mourn, not because you remain sad but because the Holy Spirit comforts you: *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted"* (Matthew 5:4).

Jesus carried both your grief and sorrow so that you do not have to do so. He wants to give you the garment of praise for the spirit of mourning (Isaiah 61:3). Right now. Right there in the midst of your sorrow.

"Yesterday you experienced a great sorrow, and now your home seems empty. Your first impulse is to give up and to sit down in despair amid your dashed hopes. Yet you must defy that temptation, for you are on the front line of battle, and the crisis is at hand. Faltering even for one moment would put God's interest at risk. Other lives will be harmed by your hesitation, and His work will suffer if you simply fold your hands. You must not linger at this point, even to indulge your grief." -J.R. Miller

152 GROGGER

This was a new word to me, as it may be to you. A grogger is a noise maker used during the Hebrew Feast of Purim to drown out the name of Haman, the enemy who tried to destroy the Jews. When the book of Esther is read during the feast, this noisy instrument is whirled around to make a loud grinding noise which drowns out Haman's name each time it is mentioned:

"The secret of the grogger is that it deals with the sound of evil by producing its own sound to drown out the sound of evil. So how do you overcome evil in your life? By producing a different sound...You overcome despair by hope. You overcome the negative by bringing forth the positive." -Jonathan Cahn

The Biblical principle is: *"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:21). Whatever evil you encounter today, remember the grogger and drown it out with the opposite. Drown out hatred with love, depression with worship, despair with hope, and pain with praise.

153 GROWTH

In the natural world, there are seasons of rapid growth and seasons of dormancy in the cycle of a plant. Dormancy is a period of rest for a plant and usually occurs right before a period of rapid growth.

In the Central Valley where I live, the grapevines go dormant in the winter. They look like dead sticks in the ground, but they are still alive within. A plant does not have to be blooming to be growing, however, so in the spring we see these fields of dead sticks turn green, blossom, and bear fruit once again.

As in the natural world, spiritual dormancy precedes a period of rapid growth. Dormancy in the plant world can be compared to the difficult time you are going through. You may not be blooming, but you are still growing.

Just as the grapevines put out new growth in the spring, you will bloom again. Wait for it!

...See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. (James 5:7-8, NIV)

154 GUILT

There are two types of guilt: True guilt and false guilt.

True guilt is the conviction of the Holy Spirit and is a positive emotion. Feelings of guilt over doing wrong lead you to repent and confess your sin. Godly sorrow, which is also called guilt, leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

False guilt is a tool of the enemy. Satan will bring up your past sins and failures and try to instill false guilt. But the Bible declares that there is no condemnation to those in Christ who have received Jesus as Savior and have had their sins forgiven (Romans 8:1).

When Satan brings guilt over your past sins, remember that these sins have been forgiven and forgotten by God (Psalm 103:12). Since God does not remember these failures, who are you to do so (Jeremiah 31:34)?

Pray that God will give you a conscience that is clear before God and man (Acts 24:16). Reject all attempts of the enemy to plague you with false guilt.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" - and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32:5)

If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness. (Psalm 130:3-4)

.. as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)



H

155 HAIRS

I had never thought much about hair until mine began falling out from radiation. Thank God for hats and wigs! Yes, the Lord is concerned about details like my hair because He said, “...even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:7).

Thinking about my hair led me to a spiritual revelation. In speaking about God’s people the prophet Hosea declared: “ *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he does not know it. Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he does not know it*” (Hosea 7:9).

This passage uses grey hair as a symbol of declining spiritual strength. God's argument with His people is not that they have grey hairs, it is that they have grey hair and do not know it. Like Samson, their spiritual strength was declining and they didn’t even realize it (Judges 16:20). If they had acknowledged it, He was willing to help them.

A hair crisis in the spiritual world is much more serious than in the natural world. How is your hair doing in the spiritual world? Are there strands of grey hairs of sin like bitterness, hatred, unforgiveness, anger, and resentment that are sapping your strength and with which you need to deal? Take time today to look into the mirror of God’s Word and examine yourself spiritually.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. (James 1:22-25)

156 HALLELUJAH

Hallelujah means “God be praised!” In the King James Version it is spelled “Alleluia”, which is the Greek spelling of the word which is used in repeatedly in the book of Revelation. Hallelujah is a Hebrew word consisting of two parts: *Hallelu* which means “let us praise” and *Jah* which is an abbreviation of the name for God, “Yahweh”.

Set aside your anxieties and worries today and shout Hallelujah. Heed the admonitions of the psalmist and let God be praised!

Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord. (Psalms 135:1)

Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul. (Psalms 146:1)

Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely. (Psalms 147:1)

Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. (Psalms 149:1)

Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. (Psalms 150:1)

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord. (Psalms 150:6)

157 HANDS

Did you know that your name is written on Christ's hands? He declares: "*See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands*" (Isaiah 9:16, *NLB*). That is how much He loves you!

The Bible states that the Lord is holding your hand (Psalm 73:23). His hands are strong (Psalm 89:13) and He opens His hands to satisfy every living thing with favor (Psalm 145:16). There are great pleasures at His right hand (Psalm 16:11), and by His hands He saves those who take refuge in Him (Psalm 17:7).

You are delivered by His hands (Psalm 60:5), held up by His hands (Psalm 18:35), and your times are in His hands (Psalm 31:15). Because He is your Redeemer, you can confidently say in the face of death: "*Into Your hands I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth and faithfulness*" (Psalm 31:5, *TAB*).

As you confront today's challenges, remember the Word of the Lord who declares: "*For I the Lord your God hold your right hand; I am the Lord, Who says to you, Fear not; I will help you!*" (Isaiah 4:13). You are not alone. You are in His hands.

158 HASTE

Jesus was never in a hurry, not even when going to the bedside of His friend Lazarus or in the way to pray for the nobleman's dying daughter. He was late arriving on both occasions, but He was right on time for a miracle.

In difficult times you are tempted to make haste. Everything within you cries out, "Do something! Do anything!" People around you may pressure you to make decisions.

The psalmist experienced this in his time of adversity. Here is his testimony:

For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried out to You. (Psalm 31:22, N)

In the midst of life's challenges, David made a hasty declaration about being cut off from God. But after David cried out to God, his testimony changed. He knew that God had heard his prayers.

When you are living life on the foundation of Christ and His Word, there is no reason to make hasty decisions. Don't panic!

Therefore thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation a Stone, a tested Stone, a precious Cornerstone of sure foundation; he who believes (trusts in, relies on, and adheres to that Stone) will not be ashamed or give way or hasten away [in sudden panic]. (Isaiah 28:16, TAB)

159 HEALING

Healing, as used in a biblical sense, refers to being made whole and restored spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. It is also called divine healing because it is when the one true God reveals His nature, fulfills His promises, and acts upon His provision in the atonement of Christ by making a person whole in body, soul, and spirit.

God never intended for the spiritual sickness of sin or emotional, mental, or physical illness to be part of our world. Sickness entered the world through sin (Genesis 3), but infirmity is not a sign of personal sin (John 9; Job 1-2). God views sickness as captivity (Job 42:10); bondage (Luke 13:16); and oppression (Acts 10:38).

Healing is a gift from God. The psalmist declared: *"Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases"* (Psalms 103:1-3). All true healing comes from God, even when His gifts of natural or medical means are employed.

Spiritual healing, which is salvation from sin, is the greatest healing. It addresses sinful behaviors that need to be corrected. Spiritual "sickness" is anything that adversely affects your spirit. Mental healing is a healing of your mind from hurts, wrong thinking, or actual damage to the brain. Emotional healing is the healing of damaged emotions.

Healing is a benefit of the death of Jesus on the cross. The prophet Isaiah declared: *"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5). No wound is so deep that God cannot heal it.

For further study of healing, obtain the Harvestime International Network course entitled “*Battle For The Body*”, free at <http://www.harvestime.org>

160 HEARTACHE

A heartache is deep sadness that goes beyond normal sorrow over a loss. It is continued emotional anguish, distress, and misery. The Bible declares: “*A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit*” (Proverbs 15:13, NIV).

God does not want your spirit to be crushed. Jesus not only bore your sins on the cross, He also bore your sorrows. If He bore them, why are you still experiencing grief from a broken heart?

Ask God to heal your heart and give you a cheerful countenance so you can reflect to the world that He truly is enough for every heartache of life.

161 HEAVINESS

The spirit of heaviness mentioned in the Bible refers to feelings of deep sadness, hopelessness, and despair that arise from loss, trauma, spiritual warfare, circumstances of life, etc. This heaviness envelopes you like a dark garment that weighs you down and obscures hope and joy.

In this time of heaviness, know that God is at work in your life:

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:6-9)

During a season of heaviness you learn lessons you can never learn elsewhere and you receive comfort to share with others in need.

Part of the divine mission of Jesus is to give you the garment of praise in exchange for the spirit of heaviness:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3)

Claim that exchange right now. Receive the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness by lifting your heavy heart to God in a sacrifice of praise.

162 HELP

In times of adversity, do not be afraid to seek help. Ask for prayer. Let a friend know if you need a ride to a medical appointment. Hire help if you can afford it, but don't be afraid to ask a Christian brother or sister for assistance. By helping you, they will be blessed (Matthew 10:42). Do not rob someone of a blessing because you are too proud to ask for help.

Above all else, you can have assurance that the Lord is always there to help in times of need. Pray this prayer:

Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper. (Psalm 30:10)

Make these declarations of faith:

Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. (Psalm 54:4)

For he shall deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. (Psalm 72:12)

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. (Psalm 124:8)

163 HIDDEN

Job did not have the book of Job so he could not look behind the scenes of the tragedies of his life to grasp the spiritual meaning of his difficult trials (Job 1-2). Job realized this when he finally had an audience with God saying: "Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know" (Job 42:3).

When God finally spoke to Job, he never did get his answers (Job 38-43). Job has no new facts regarding his suffering. It does not matter that he does not receive answers to his questions or whether or not he would be able to understand the answers if he had them. He is in the presence of God, and that experience does not leave room for anything else--no unanswered questions, no disappointment with God, and no bitterness regarding the circumstances of life.

Job knew God at one level of intimacy before his trial: "I have heard of you." After the trial, he knew God in a new level of intimacy: "But now my eyes see you." When you see God as He is, you see yourself as you are and this experience with God does what arguments and discussions cannot do.

You may not comprehend the why of difficulties occurring in your life right now. You may never understand the losses. The questions are:

- Can you trust God when His purposes are hidden without a full explanation?
- Will you continue to worship God and rejoice in Him when the answers are not forthcoming?
- Will you stand in faith until that day when every secret thing will be revealed?

Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. (Matthew 10:26)

164 HOME

For most people, there is no place like home! If you are in a hospital, rehab center, prison, or traveling, you long to go home. But for some, their home is not one to which they wish to return. For some people home may be a place of contention. It may be a lonely place if someone has departed and they are living alone. Home may hold bitter memories. Home may also hold so many precious memories that you disengage from life and live surrounded by the past.

Whether your earthly home is one of peace or conflict or bitter or precious memories, remember that it is not your true home. Jesus died in order that you could join Him in your eternal home:

Christ also suffered. He died once for the sins of all us guilty sinners although he himself was innocent of any sin at any time, that he might bring us safely home to God. But though his body died, his spirit lived on. (1 Peter 3:18, TLB)

Jesus promised:

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:2-3)

This world is not your home. Your house is not your home. Your true home is in Heaven. Home is where God is.

165 HOPE

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Hebrews 12:1). These words are translated from a form of the Greek word "*elpidzo*", which does not mean a "hope-so" kind of hope, but expresses a confident expectation of something. It does not mean, "I hope this will happen," but it means, "I confidently expect this to happen!" The tense of the Hebrew word here is continuous, meaning that it is something continuously being hoped for, even if the manifestation of it has not come yet.

Hebrews 6:19 refers to hope as an "anchor of the soul". As an anchor prevents a boat from drifting off course, hope will do likewise for you spiritually. Hope continually pulls you back to the ways of God. Hope is related to your heart condition because "*hope deferred makes the heart sick*" (Proverbs 13:12). Hope is related to your joy, in that you rejoice in hope (Romans 12:12). Hope is also related to your salvation, as you are saved by hope (Romans 8:24).

In relation to hope, there are three types of people. Unbelievers who have no hope; the deceived who have false hope; and true Believers who have hope that is authentic, abiding, available, and abundant (Romans 15:13).

Hope is not found in looking to the past or looking around to others. Hope is found in looking to God. Biblical hope knows there will be an end of this difficult journey we are on. This hope is not just wishful thinking, but it is based on the anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promises and by "...Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

There are no hopeless situations. There are only people who have grown hopeless about their circumstances. Do not be one of them. Renew your hope in God today by prayer, the Word, and keeping company with hope-filled people. Remain anchored in hope.

"What if hope is deferred? What if you have to endure heartache for longer than you think? Sometimes we think that we should never have any pain or heartache...Sometimes we have to wait patiently for God to work at healing in us, realizing that we may always have that sorrow with us. Jesus was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief...He knows pain and sorrow more than we can ever even think of grasping...We need to remember what He went through. He is the Son of God who took the sins of the past, present, and future on Himself. His own Father had to turn away from Him and He was utterly alone. For us, when we are going through that pain, it can feel like an eternity...But whatever we go through in this life—even if it is a literal Hell—it cannot be compared with the glory that will be revealed when we someday see Jesus face to face. Everything will pale in comparison." -Facebook post by my nephew Jeremy who is now with Jesus experiencing that glory.

166 HUMOR

On the day of the biopsy of my brain tumor, I was completing pre-surgery paperwork at the medical facility. The final question was: "Does anything about your procedure today concern you?" My answer was: "Other than the fact you are drilling a hole in my head? No." I am sure some clerk got a good laugh at that response.

I had previously prayed, "Don't let this tumor destroy my sense of humor," as I had witnessed others going through difficult illnesses who became bitter, angry, and complaining. So I guess my weird sense of humor was still functioning on the day of that procedure.

Medical science has proven what the Bible already revealed centuries ago, that humor can be healing physically, mentally, and spiritually. The Bible declares:

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. (Proverbs 15:13)

*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit dries the bones.
(Proverbs 17:22)*

You cannot choose your circumstances, but you can choose your response. Humor is not a denial of the gravity of the situation, but it is an affirmative response to God's Word which declares that "*...he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast*" (Proverbs 15:15).

167 HYPHEN

A hyphen (-) is a punctuation mark that indicates words that are joined or linked together in some way.

A hyphen will someday appear on your tombstone indicating the date of your birth through the date of your death.

A hyphen is a small symbol with great meaning. That little dash represents all that occurred between your birth and your death. It represents the journey of your life.

You are on that journey now. Make that hyphen count for eternity.



I

168 IF

In the midst of your darkest hour, do not get entangled with the “if” cycle: “What if I had done this? What if this happens? If I could have... What will I do if...” Sentences containing “if” focus on the past which you cannot change or the future of which you have no knowledge.

The word “if” can also challenge the work of God in your life. When the father of the demonized son brought him to Jesus, he said “If you can do anything, help us!” Jesus said: *“If? There are no 'ifs' among Believers. Anything can happen” (Marks 9:23, MSG)*. Then Jesus healed the young man.

Do not focus on “if”, for with God, all things are possible (Luke 1:37).

169 IMMERSE

Ezekiel chapter 47 describes the river of God that brings life wherever it flows. The Prophet is encouraged to go progressively deeper into this healing stream.

To experience the fulness of the spiritual river of God, you must launch out into the deep. Those who stay near the banks will remain in the salty marshes. Like Lot's wife, they will turn into a pillar of salt spiritually by looking back on what they perceive to be the "good old days" instead of moving with the flow of God's river.

Sitting on the banks is not difficult. Wading is not difficult. Take any child to the water and he can wade. But swimming in deep water requires more effort and skill. The same is true in the spiritual world. It is easy to sit on the banks and discuss the previous days and how things were, but how things were are not how things are now. Abandon the banks and immerse yourself spiritually into the saving, delivering, and healing stream of God.

170 IMPOSSIBILITIES

George Dantzig enrolled as a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley studying statistics. At the start of one class session, the professor, Dr. Neyman, wrote two examples of famously unsolvable statistical problems on the blackboard.

George was late to class that day and mistakenly thought the unsolvable problems were a homework assignment. Ultimately he solved them both. “If someone had told me they unsolvable, I wouldn’t have even tried to solve them” he said. George went on to serve in high level government positions, win numerous awards, and leave a tremendous legacy in his field.

People may tell you that your dream is impossible because your present circumstances are unchangeable. But nothing is impossible with God (Matthew 19:26). George Dantzig solved the statistical problems because he didn’t know they were deemed unsolvable.

Will you carry on your work in the face of impossibilities, difficult circumstances, and health challenges? My mentor directed his international ministry from a wheel chair for a period of time until God healed him. One pastor/friend was led onto the platform supported by two elders to preach his final message before leaving for Heaven. His last act of faith: Doing the impossible!

“God does His most magnificent work when the situation seems totally impossible from a human point of view, and we feel absolutely unprepared and unable to do anything about it, yet our eyes are upon Him...That’s when God rolls up His big sleeves and says, ‘Step back out of the way a moment and watch Me work.’ Time after time, He brings us to our absolute end and then proves Himself faithful.” -Charles Swindoll

171 INADEQUACY

Many times along your spiritual journey you will feel inadequate to meet the challenges that lie ahead. And in your own strength you are. You are not up to the crisis, problem, or task. We are all inadequate in ourselves. Your sufficiency is of God:

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God (2 Corinthians 3:5)

Here are some positive aspects of inadequacy.

-It drives you to God:

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; (Corinthians 1:8-10)

-It motivates you to live and work in the power of the Holy Spirit:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:11)

-It lets God enable you to reach your greatest potential:

I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

-It allows God to receive all the glory and praise because you recognize the sufficiency is His:

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

-It gives you the capacity to walk in contentment, joy, and peace:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusts in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength: (Isaiah 26:3-4)

172 INCREASE

Nearing the conclusion of his ministry which was to end in martyrdom, John the Baptist proclaimed “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” (John 3:30). The Amplified Version adds to this: “*He must increase, but I must decrease. [He must grow more prominent; I must grow less so.]*” That is true faith—to look adversity in the face and say, “My losses are okay as long as He increases!”

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. (Philippians 3:7-8)

Considering your own circumstances, how can God be manifested in a greater way as you face suffering? Are you willing to decrease in position and power so that He can be manifested in a greater way? Are you willing to be less prominent--less in the forefront, on the back seat instead of on the stage, and relinquish your titles--so that He can increase?

173 INTERCESSOR

The Holy Spirit helps you in times of need by serving as your intercessor. Whether it is an infirmity, a trial, a difficult circumstance, or sin, He makes intercession for you and through you.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

When you do not know how to pray, the Holy Spirit will bring things to your remembrance and make intercession in your behalf according to God's will:

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

The Apostle John used a similar term to describe Jesus. He said "...if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). The title "advocate" has the same meaning as the Greek word "paraclete" or "comforter" which Jesus used to describe Himself (John 14:16-18).

In the natural world, an intercessor or advocate serves as counsel for your defense in a court of law. In the spiritual world, the Holy Spirit serves as your intercessor, constantly interceding for you in prayer. Jesus Christ serves as your advocate, continually representing you before God:

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

With the Holy Spirit interceding through you and Jesus interceding for you, you can't lose! According to Scripture, Jesus is also the judge (2 Timothy 4:1). Think about it: In a court of law, if your judge becomes your advocate (your defense attorney), then the case against you is over! Charges are dropped. You are free from every accusation and every penalty of your transgression!

174 INTERRUPTIONS

We all hate them. Interruptions. We are occupied with what we perceive to be important things, when suddenly we are interrupted. The phone rings. A visitor knocks on the door. Someone has a crisis and calls for help.

What you are going through right now, that illness, problem, or difficult circumstance is definitely an interruption in your life. You were going about your normal business when tragedy struck, and in some cases, life will never again be the same. You may be experiencing a tragic and long delay, or an extended interruption to life as you knew it.

You must come to view your loss, your tragedy, or your diagnosis not as an interruption, but as part of your journey. When Jesus was going to heal a leader's daughter who was gravely ill, He was interrupted by a woman who had an issue of blood for 12 years. According to Old Testament law, this condition prevented her from intimate relationship with her husband and from entering the Temple to worship. She had spent all her money to find a cure. When the woman reached out to touch the hem of Christ's garment, Jesus stopped and ministered to her despite His urgent mission.

Meanwhile, word came that the leader's daughter had died. "Don't trouble the Master any further. It is too late!" But Jesus continued on with His mission and raised the girl from the

dead. Sometimes interruptions are an important part of your purpose. And sometimes, as in this story of the leader's daughter, the interruption creates a delay that results in a greater miracle.

175 ISHI

The name by which God expresses His most passionate love for you is Ishi, meaning "husband or spouse" (Hosea 2:16). This name is drawn from the book of the Old Testament Prophet Hosea. The purpose of Hosea's revelation was to graphically illustrate God's boundless love for His sinful people despite their unfaithfulness in embracing other gods.

In Hosea 3, God gives the prophet instructions to marry a prostitute. His unfaithful wife, Gomer, leaves him several times for other men, yet Hosea remains faithful. He repeatedly finds her, redeems her, and brings her back home to him declaring: "...*You shall stay with me for many days. You shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man; so I will also be toward you*" (Hosea 3:3).

Using this natural analogy of a spiritual truth, Hosea describes how Israel has been unfaithful to God and how He longs for His people to repent and turn from their wickedness. Repeatedly, the Lord told Hosea to show love for his unfaithful wife as an illustration of God as a faithful spiritual spouse who loves His errant people and wants to restore them:

And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi...And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord. (Hosea 2:16,19-20)

If you are feeling alone today, know that God is your spiritual spouse. He is faithful when you are unfaithful. He is loving and merciful and, if you wander away from Him, He longs for you to return. He will seek you. He will pursue you.

If you are single, widowed, divorced, abandoned, or in a difficult marriage, know that you are not alone. The Lord is your spiritual spouse. He will be your faithful companion, your help, your confidant, your protector, and your best friend. You can call Him Ishi.

176 ISOLATION

It is tempting to isolate yourself when going through adversity, depression, and heartache. But from the beginning of time, God declared that it is not good to be isolated. He said of Adam, "*It is not good that man should be alone*" (Genesis 2:18). God created you for community, for fellowship with Him and with others. He does not want you to become an island of isolation.

Isolation causes you to focus on self and insulates you from wise counsel of others: "*Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment*" (Proverbs 18:1, ESV).

Don't sit around waiting for someone to reach out to you in friendship. Proverbs 18:24 states "*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly...*" Reach out to someone in your church. Join a small group Bible study. If you are physically able, serve in some capacity in your church or start a small group yourself!

And just so you know: You are never really alone because the remainder of Proverbs 18:24 states "*...there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother*". That friend is Jesus. As your closest friend, ask Him to guide you to find new friends that will bless and support you and to whom you can be a blessing to in return.



J

177 JABEZ

Names were very important in Old Testament times because of their meaning. In 1 Chronicles 4:9, for some unknown reason a mother named her son Jabez which meant "he causes or will cause pain". Perhaps Jabez was unwanted or there was physical or mental pain associated with his birth? We are not told, but his name most certainly was a handicap.

But every handicap in life, every negative thing, can be turned into a blessing by God. Jabez prayed a "one sentence" prayer that changed everything. It is not the length of prayer that is important, but the content. His prayer is one you can emulate in the face of your own painful circumstances or handicap:

-Oh, that You would bless me indeed: Ask for God's blessings. You have not because you do not ask (James 4:2).

-Enlarge my territory: The purpose of the blessings Jabez sought was to expand the territory for which he was personally responsible. Spiritually, enlarging your territory means to expand your sphere of influence, ministry, and personal outreach for the Kingdom of God.

-That Your hand would be with me: Jabez knew that he could not handle life or ministry without God's hand upon him. Jabez wanted the world to recognize God's work in his life despite the handicap of his negative name.

-That You would keep me from evil: Jabez asked to be kept from evil, meaning all of the temptations and attacks of the enemy that would lead to sin.

-That I may not cause pain: Jabez did not want to "live up to his name" and cause pain. You do not have to live under the shadow of the negative labels people have attached to you.

The Bible says that God granted what Jabez requested. He will do the same for you if you will only ask.

178 JOURNAL

God is a writer. He authored His Word and dictated it to men who wrote it down under the inspiration and anointing of the Holy Spirit. He wrote His law on two tables of stone (Exodus 31:18). He wrote the message of salvation in all creation (Psalm 19:1). God once wrote a message of divine judgment on a banquet-room wall (Daniel 5:25). Jesus wrote in the sand and a woman's life was changed (John 8:7-9).

God keeps a book of life (Revelation 20:12), and the name of every Believer is recorded in Heaven (Luke 10:20). Every part of your body and each day of your life was written in God's book before your birth (Psalm 139:16). He also writes His message upon your heart and mind (Hebrews 10:16). He is currently writing a book of remembrance about those who fear the Lord and a record of your tears, books that are not yet finished (Malachi 3:16; Psalm 56:8). Many Biblical characters like Moses, Solomon, the prophets, the disciples, and Paul received mandates to write under the inspiration of God.

You may not be a writer, but perhaps God wants you to journal your experiences as you go through your current difficulties. Through journaling, you will be able to express your feelings and record promises and prayers to God. Sometime further down the road on your journey, you will be able to read back over your entries and see the faithfulness of God. Try to write a line a day. A line of gratitude or humor. A record of God's provision. If you are an artist, you may best express your feelings in sketches.

God gave me one word at a time as I went through my difficult journey. One word from Him to sustain me. One word to give me hope. And now you are reading the results of these words. Who will be touched and blessed by the account of your own journey?

179 JOURNEY

The journey of life is a metaphor for the collective experiences and challenges that we encounter throughout our lives. This journey of life is filled with lessons to learn, joys to celebrate, and hardships and heartaches to overcome.

The twists and turns of life shape your character and teach you valuable lessons. Not everyone may understand your journey, and that is okay. It is your personal journey, not theirs. They have their own journey of life which you may not understand.

Embracing your journey means that you accept that life will not always be perfect. You know that there will be challenges along the way. Sometimes extreme. It also means that you realize you are not perfect and you will make mistakes along the way.

But most importantly, an understanding of the journey of life means that as a Believer, you never walk alone. He is with you each step of the way.

So be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so

*that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.
(Deuteronomy 5:22-23, NIV)*

180 JUSTICE

If your present adversity involves legal, financial, or criminal matters, you are concerned about receiving justice. The Bible says: *“Many seek an audience with a ruler; but it is from the Lord that man gets justice” (Proverbs 29:26, NIV)*. Do not look to man, courts, lawyers, the parole board, or the legal system for justice. The only true justice comes from the Lord.

Perhaps you feel you have been unfairly treated by friends, family, or leadership. Again, justice comes from the Lord. *“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face” (Psalm 89:14)*. The Bible declares: *“...for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19)*.

All accounts are not settled quickly. Some issues may not be resolved until eternity. You can be sure, however, that in the end you will receive justice because God is just.

Stop running here and there seeking justice. Rest your case in the hands of a just God and await His perfect timing.



K

181 KINDNESS

It is sometimes difficult to extend kindness to those who have wronged you, those who fail you in your time of need, and those who misunderstand you. It is easy to become grumpy and unkind when you aren't feeling good or you are overwhelmed by the difficulties of life.

Always remember the kindness that God has extended to you by forgiving your sins and making you part of the family of God. Ask Him to give you the ability to extend that same kindness to others.

Since you have been chosen by God who has given you this new kind of life, and because of his deep love and concern for you, you should practice tenderhearted mercy and kindness to others. Don't worry about making a good impression on them, but be ready to suffer quietly and patiently. (Colossians 3:12, TLB)

182 KNOWING

God declares: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). He is not speaking of the knowledge that comes through self-help books or the information highway of the Internet. God wants you to function from a position of knowing that is based on His Word and the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

You especially need this knowing as you experience difficulties. It is this kind of knowledge that will help you through problems and temptations:

Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete. If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask him; he will not resent it. (James 1:2-5, TLB)

As a Believer, you have the Holy Spirit within to provide wisdom and knowledge. When you don't know what to do in any situation, just keep on doing the last thing God told you to do until you receive clear guidance through the Word, prayer, and the Holy Spirit.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2;12-14)

183 KNOWN

You were known by God and ordained for your calling while you were still in the womb. God declared to the Prophet Jeremiah: *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew [and] approved of you [as My chosen instrument], and before you were born I separated and set you apart, consecrating you; [and] I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”* (Jeremiah 1:5, TAB).

You may not be called to be a prophet, but God has known you since you were in your mother’s womb. He has not abandoned you. He has plans for you and every experience, both good and bad, is directing you to His purpose.

Moses spent years in the wilderness as a shepherd as God prepared him to shepherd His people to their Promised Land. Several of the disciples were fishermen as God prepared them to become fishers of men. David cared for sheep and saved them from their adversaries, just as he would do for the nation of Israel in later years.

Every experience is preparing you for your destiny. You are who you are and you are going through what you are going through because God purposed it from the beginning of time. Nothing is wasted. Each experience of every day is guiding you to that destiny. You can be assured that you are known by God.



L

184 LABOR

In difficult times you may not be able to minister as you once did. If you are a caregiver, your time may be totally consumed with caring for your loved one. If you are experiencing physical, mental, or financial challenges, these situations may require you to readjust your former ministry schedule.

Just know that “...*God is not unrighteous to forget or overlook your labor and the love which you have shown for His name's sake in ministering to the needs of the saints (His own consecrated people), as you still do*” (Hebrews 6:10, TAB).

God has not forgotten your labor of love in the past as you ministered in His name. Also note the last words: “*as you still do*”. You may not feel you are doing much right now, but you are ministering to others who are watching how you respond in your time of adversity. They are observing how you express love to that one for whom you are caring. They are watching how you continue to worship in the midst of chaos. They see how you are reaching out to help others even when you are experiencing pain.

Most importantly, God is watching and He will not forget.

185 LAMENT

It is difficult to admit things are not going well in your life. That is why when someone asks, “How is it going?”, you usually respond with “Great.” But when bad things happen, you may have questions about your circumstances and feel a need to express sorrow. In biblical terms, this is referred to as a lament.

Lamentation is an important part of the Bible, as demonstrated by many of the Psalms and in the books of Job, Jeremiah, and Lamentations. Lament prayer is not voicing complaints or whining about your difficult circumstances nor is it ritualistic, memorized prayers.

Lament is a response to your own brokenness and to the broken world by which you are affected. It is not just aimlessly expressing a feeling, but it is taking your feelings of grief, sorrow, and frustration to God. Lament is an honest acknowledgement that things are not as they should be and an appeal to God to set them right.

Don't be hesitant to lift your laments to God. Lament is honest communication with Him that leads to comfort, transformation, and forgiveness.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice. (Psalm 130:1)
My soul is in deep anguish. How long, Lord, how long? (Psalm 6:3)

Mourning is different from lamentation. It is a continuing, ongoing grief. When Samuel was mourning because of King Saul's failure and rejection, the Lord asked: *"How long will you mourn for Saul?" (1 Samuel 16:1)*. God directed him stop mourning, fill his horn with oil, and get on with God's work. The word "mourn" as used here means to mourn for the dead and reveals the depths of Samuel's grief.

The Bible says there is *"A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance" (Ecclesiastes 3:4)*. Extreme emotions are inevitable in this world as you experience disappointments, rejection, and loss. You can express these through biblical lamentations. Mourning should be time limited. You can mourn, but then you must refill your spiritual horn with oil and get on with God's work.

186 LEAN

Who or what do you lean on in times of trouble when you need answers? Do you lean on your own understanding? Do you lean on people around you instead of turning to the Lord? The Bible says: *"Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint" (Proverbs 25:19)*.

When you need answers, do not lean on others or your own carnal understanding of a situation. The Psalmist declares, *"do not trust in chariots or horses"* which in Bible days were symbols of worldly solutions. Even people you love dearly may fail you. Put confidence in the Lord who never fails (Psalm 20:7). Trust Him and continue to acknowledge Him in all your ways and He will direct your paths:

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

In Song Of Solomon 8:5 the Bride is depicted coming out of the wilderness leaning on the arm of her Beloved (Jesus). Trust Him. Remain faithful. Continue to acknowledge Him in all your ways and you will come out of your wilderness leaning on Him.

"When every crutch is removed from your life, you have a choice. You can look around for some other something or someone to lean on, or you can lean on God and God Alone." -Charles Swindoll

187 LEGACY

A legacy is not just material resources that you leave when you depart from this world, although that is an important part of planning. You also leave a legacy in how you respond to the difficult circumstances of life.

Someone is watching you during your great trial. Someone is going through something similar and looking to you for guidance in how to respond. Create for them a legacy of steadfast faith, enduring hope, and a demonstration of supernatural strength provided by God. Leave a lasting legacy lived out in the most difficult times of your life.

"Your greatest legacy is not a product, an institution, or a building that you leave behind. It is what you have transferred into the lives of those to whom you have ministered."
-Myles Munroe

Think about your legacy with an eternal perspective as you live out each day:

"So often we think about life in terms of what's happening today, this week, or next month. We need to try to look at things as God does, with an eye for eternity. Is what you are doing now making a lasting impact? Will it matter in another year, another decade, another century? Begin dedicating yourself to things that will still be important long after you are gone." -John Maxwell

188 LIFE

You have been given one more day of life in which you can worship God and minister to others. Don't waste it. Your decisions and actions today will either bring forth life or death in your own spirit and in the lives of others.

God says:

I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you that I have set before you life and death, the blessings and the curses; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live And may love the Lord your God, obey His voice, and cling to Him. For He is your life and the length of your days... (Deuteronomy 30:19-20, TAB)

Choose life and minister life to others through your words and actions. Don't wait for a special occasion to celebrate. Being alive is a special occasion. Celebrate abundant life through Jesus Christ.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

If you are suffering from illness, there may come a time you may need to make a decision about your end of life health care. Some treatments offer little hope, are very debilitating physically,

and rob you of what quality time you have left. This is a decision each person must make individually with the guidance of the Lord.

Best advice? Don't live just to stay alive. Life is not determined by its longevity, but by its quality. Pray and ask God for wisdom, seek wise counsel, then make your decision. You will live long enough to fulfill God's plan for your life:

Charles Spurgeon comments on Genesis 49:33:

“Jacob did not yield to death until he had delivered his last sentence of admonition and benediction to his sons. He was immortal until his work was done. So long as God had another sentence to speak by him, death could not paralyze his tongue.”

189 LIMITED

Do not be limited by your past or present circumstances. God sees your future. He views you not as you are, but as you will be.

-God did not view Moses as a murdering recluse destined to dwell in the desert forever. He viewed him as a great leader who would deliver the people of Israel from bondage.

-God did not view David as just a young shepherd boy. He saw him as a mighty warrior, a king, and a man after His own heart.

-God did not view Gideon as the least member of the least tribe of Israel, but He saw him as a powerful warrior of God.

-God did not view Jeremiah as he perceived himself to be—like a child. God saw him as a mighty prophet of God.

-God did not view Peter as a deserter, rather He saw him as he would be when he was endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

No matter what your situation, no matter how discouraged you may be, and regardless of the web of negative circumstances that entangles you right now: That is not how God views you. He views you not as you are, but as who you will become as you are empowered by His Holy Spirit.

190 LIMITS

God sets a limit to the sea so that the waters cannot cross the boundaries which He has established:

...He gave to the sea its limit and His decree that the waters should not transgress [across the boundaries set by] His command, when He appointed the foundations of the earth (Proverbs 8:29, TAB. See also Job 38:10-11)

God has also set a limit to the trial you are enduring and the difficult circumstances you are experiencing. He has set boundaries past which the enemy cannot penetrate. In Job 1-2, Satan was hindered in his attacks on Job. God set the limits.

Meditate on this Word today:

Do you not fear and reverence Me? says the Lord. Do you not tremble before Me? I placed the sand for the boundary of the sea, a perpetual barrier beyond which it cannot pass and by an everlasting ordinance beyond which it cannot go? And though the waves of the sea toss and shake themselves, yet they cannot prevail [against the feeble grains of sand which God has ordained by nature to be sufficient for His purpose]; though [the billows] roar, yet they cannot pass over that [barrier]. [Is not such a God to be reverently feared and worshiped?] (Jeremiah 5:22, TAB)

191 LONLINESS

Are you feeling lonely today? Loneliness is a sense of separation from people, often accompanied by isolation, depression, and feelings of rejection and self-pity.

Sometimes people withdraw from you when you need them most because they simply don't know what to say or do to help you through difficult times. But loneliness is not the same as being alone. A person can be alone, and yet not be lonely. Conversely, one can be surrounded by many people and still feel lonely.

God never intended for you to live disconnected from others. One of the first things God did was establish a relationship with Adam and then provide him a wife. God said it was not good to live in isolation (Genesis 2:18). God's plan is for you to have a meaningful relationship with Him and others.

Sometimes however, because of the circumstances of life, you are separated geographically from those you love. If this is your situation, get involved with the Body of Christ. Join a church, attend a Bible study, or become part of a prayer group. If you are homebound, join an online Bible-believing church and connect with other Believers through the Internet for prayer, worship, and Bible study.

Squash self-pity and isolation by serving others to the best of your ability. If you are physically able, volunteer at a homeless shelter or a food kitchen. Visit the elderly and shut-ins. Tutor a child. Volunteer for missions, prison ministry, or for service in your church. If you are homebound, minister online, pray for others, or minister in prayer and counseling over the phone. The opportunities are endless, and as you put yourself out there to serve you will develop positive relationships with others.

Also, know that you are never really alone. Jesus promised to be with you always and He sent the Holy Spirit to be with you and dwell within you (John 14:17). Meditate on these promises:

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me. (Psalm 27:10)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:16-18)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35, 38-39)

God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

192 LOSS

Whether it be a dream, finances, health, or a relationship that you have lost, you cannot remain focused on what you had in the past. Paul counted his losses as gains:

But whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as [one combined] loss for Christ's sake. Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One). (Philippians 3:7-8)

It is a paradox of the Kingdom of God that loss is gain. But sometimes it is difficult to surrender your losses to God and count them as gain. That was my case as I watched my husband of 47 years develop dementia.

The long goodbye of dementia perhaps wouldn't have been so difficult had we not been so close prior to this hideous disease. We went everywhere and did everything together, especially after his retirement from the California Highway Patrol. He was a great man, a great husband, and a wonderful man of God.

Because of medical insurance reasons, we had to move from what we thought would be our retirement home in Colorado back to California. I often wished I could have my old life back. My prayer room overlooking the Rocky Mountains. My church in Colorado Springs. My ministry with the women at the Criminal Justice Center. Most of all I wanted my husband back, one who would remember to reach for my hand instead of me now always having to reach for

his. A confidant who understood not only what I was saying, but what I was feeling. I didn't want to be his caretaker. I wanted to be his wife. But he could no longer remember the past and cannot figure out the present or the future. The same was true for my Dad, also affected by dementia. How often I longed for his comfort and guidance. I wanted to be his daughter again.

John Newton, author of the hymn Amazing Grace, suffered from dementia in his final years, and lamented over the loss of his memory. Yet he confided: "I do remember two things. I am a great sinner, and Jesus is a great Savior." When it comes to faith, these are the only two things anyone needs to know, and both my husband and my Dad knew these truths well..

Encouragement came from Robert Davis, a pastor of a large church in Miami who developed early onset dementia. He wrote:

"I know that the Lord is with me. That knowledge has always given me inner peace. He has always had a purpose for me. I trust that this is a part of that purpose...My brain may be dying, but in my spirit Christ has healed me; and I can say with the songwriter, 'It is well with my soul.' Live every day to the glory of God. Do every bit of good you can do for as long as you can do it. We have prepared for the worst and now we are going to live expecting the best. If the worst comes, we are ready for it. If it doesn't, we will not have wasted today worrying about it."

Sadly, if your loved one is experiencing dementia or another extended illness, the "last of life" is not as you planned it. Travel, adventures, grandkids--all aborted because of this disease. But as author Randy Alcorn suggests for Believers: *"The best is yet to be, the next of life, for which the first was made."*

This life is not the end. It is only the beginning years of eternity. The Bible states that God will restore all things in the new heaven and earth. Whatever your loss, it will be restored.

193 LOVED

The Bride in the Song of Solomon represents you as a Believer and the Beloved is symbolic of Jesus. The Bride declares, *"Your love is better than wine"* (SOS 1:2), meaning that there is no pleasure in the world that compares to His love.

The word for "love" in this passage is actually plural in Hebrew and reads "Your loves is better than wine". God's love is so great that it cannot be explained without an exception to the rules of grammar. It means that God loves you with many types of love. He loves you as a friend, as a brother, a spouse, a Savior, and a father. He loves you eternally.

Whatever you are facing today, know that you are loved!

See what [an incredible] quality of love the Father has given (shown, bestowed on) us, that we should [be permitted to] be named and called and counted the children of God! And so we are!...(1 John 3:1, TAB)



M

194 MAGNIFY

When you inspect something with a magnifying glass, what you are focusing on becomes larger. David said, “*O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together*” (Psalm 34:3). When you magnify the Lord in worship and exalt His name, He becomes bigger than your financial problems, your health issues, your broken heart, and every challenge you might be facing.

Make this declaration right now:

*I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.
(Psalm 69:30)*

Do it now! Let God become bigger than all you are facing today as you magnify Him and exalt His name.

195 MANNA

God sent miraculous provision to Israel during their wilderness journey.

*And when the dew had gone, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a fine, round and flakelike thing, as fine as hoarfrost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said one to another, Manna [What is it?]. For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.
(Exodus 16:14-15, TAB)*

Manna in Hebrew is “*mah nah*” which means, “What is it?” They named it this because they did not know what it was. It did not fit their preconceptions of how God might provide for them in their time of need. They had never experienced anything like this before. They were given instructions to gather it daily and it sustained them throughout their wilderness journey.

The manna was symbolic of the bread of life, Jesus Christ:

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto

him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. (John 6:32-36)

As Israel and the manna, the people at the time of Christ's ministry on earth did not recognize Him as the true bread from heaven. Today, many people still do not recognize that Jesus is the answer to their troubled lives. Don't be one of them.

You cannot live on "yesterday's manna" spiritually speaking. As Israel, you must gather fresh manna each morning as you come into the presence of the Lord in worship, prayer, and study of the Word. Don't face your day hungry!

196 MASTERPIECE

God is creating a masterpiece. That masterpiece is YOU. In the midst of your struggles, your heartache, the chaos, and the fight for your life you may not realize it, but He is working to reveal His purposes in you:

For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live]. (Ephesians 2:10, TAB)

Don't grumble and complain. Remember that He is working, which means He isn't finished yet. He is allowing circumstances to equip you as never before to do His work:

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. (Philippians 2:13-15)

197 MEDICINE

God works supernaturally, and He also works through medicine. In 2 Kings 20:1-7, Hezekiah was on his deathbed and he asked the Lord to spare his life. The Lord sent the prophet Isaiah to tell him God had heard his prayer, he would be healed, and he would live 15 additional years.

Even though this promise was given by God, Isaiah used the medical means available at that time to address Hezekiah's illness. He took a lump of figs and laid it on the boil and Hezekiah recovered.

God has always worked in partnership with mankind. One of many biblical examples is how Jesus used the disciples when feeding the multitudes. God often does His miraculous work through methods He has already placed in our hands. This includes legitimate medical help.

Medicine can be a powerful force when combined with prayer. God will either heal you supernaturally through prayer, through prayer and medicine combined, or you will receive eternal healing as you pass into eternity. One way or another, you and the ones you are praying for will be healed.

198 MEMORIALS

A memorial is something that reminds people of a significant person or event so that they do not forget it. Here are some significant memorials in the Bible:

- The rainbow: Remembering God's promises.
- The blood on the doorposts: Remembering God's salvation (Passover).
- The practice of circumcision: Remembering God's covenant.
- The stone tablets: Remembering God's law.
- Aaron's Rod: Remembering God's power.
- The Manna: Remembering God's provision.
- Stones from the Jordan: Remembering God's deliverance.
- The Ebenezer rock: Remembering God's help in the past.
- The Lord's Supper: Remembering the Lord Jesus until He returns.
- The empty cross and the empty tomb: Remembering the promise of eternal life.

Do you need to be reminded of God's promises? Do you need deliverance? Do you need to recall God's help in the past that gave you hope for the future? Whatever your circumstances, there is a Biblical memorial to assure you that God has already provided for your need.

199 MEMORY

Memory is a gift of God. Your memory enables you to learn and function in every area of life. Good memories of days gone by bring comfort and joy, but some bad memories may haunt and torment you. Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 3:13-14)*

Paul had some difficult things to put behind him, such as being personally responsible for the persecution and death of Believers. He also had some great things in his past: Miracles, deliverances, and tremendously successful evangelistic campaigns. But he chose to put all these behind him and look ahead to the future.

Some people are trapped in their painful past: The past is just that: It is past! Stop living in it. Stop dwelling on it. Stop trying to rewrite it mentally. Do not let the past become your prison. Your history will not prevent your destiny. As long as you are living in the past, you will never have a future.

Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:18-19)

200 METAMORPHOSIS

In the scientific world, metamorphosis is the process by which animals or insects undergo a complete change of physical form or substance. The result of metamorphosis may change the entire organism, including its behavior. A classic example is the caterpillar being transformed into a butterfly that no longer crawls but flies.

At the time of salvation, you experienced a spiritual metamorphosis: *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

God’s first purpose for you was the instantaneous change that occurred at the time of salvation, but He also desires additional changes through spiritual growth. These changes may occur rapidly or gradually, depending on your willingness to obey God’s Word. Old habits and patterns of life are replaced by new patterns fashioned by your conformity to God’s image and His Word.

You can trust the God who turns coal into diamonds, sand into pearls, and a worm into a butterfly. You are in a season of metamorphosis spiritually. Like the caterpillar in the cocoon, you may be in a place of secluded darkness, but you are in the process of change. Circumstances around you are changing. Embrace the changes, even those that are difficult. And when it is time, abandon that old cocoon of the past and you will learn that you can fly.

201 MINUTES

Life is made up of minutes. These minutes multiply into hours, hours into days, days into weeks, and weeks into years. As you get older, if you are facing a life threatening illness or declining health, you become even more aware of the value of time.

Don’t waste a precious minute of life grumbling, complaining, or arguing. Do not let your time be consumed by bitterness and unforgiveness. Redeem every moment of time for good purposes (Ephesians 5:16). Realize that your life is like a vapor that appears for a short time and then vanishes (James 4:14).

Pray this prayer: *“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom”* (Psalm 90:12).

*It won't be long
Till we'll be leavin' here
It won't be long
We'll be goin' home*

Count the years as months
Count the months as weeks
Count the weeks as days
Any day now
We'll be goin' home.

-Andre Crouch

202 MIRACLES

The main requirement for a miracle is that you have run out of all human options in the natural world.

“Necessity is the foundation for miracles. To escape the one is to miss the other. Great difficulties are meant only to force us out of ourselves into reliance on Him. When there is no way forward or back, then God is able. He has a plan. So do not fear impossibilities. They are of no account to Him. Fall at His feet, and wait for Him to act. A miracle is ahead.” -Watchman Nee

God is still a miracle-working God: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).*

Keep praying for miracles of healing, salvation, restoration, and deliverance. Remember, however, that miracles are not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is God's glory whether in life or death (John 11:4).

“What do you do when the miracle you are believing God for doesn't happen? ...Sometimes you need to keep holding out for the miracle, like the woman with the issue of blood...But sometimes you need to accept the new normal and recognize that God might want to glorify Himself in a way you wouldn't choose. And it takes tremendous spiritual discernment to know when to believe what.” -Mark Batterson

203 MOMENTUM

Momentum is the force and speed of a body in motion. An example of physical momentum is running straight at a locked door in order to break through it. If you start and stop on the way or waffle from side to side, you will lose momentum. The speed and force of your body will be affected and you will be unable to break down the door.

Now let's translate this into the spiritual realm. If you start and stop and waffle in your spiritual experience, you lose momentum which is vital if you are to experience breakthroughs. Be consistent in your prayer, worship, Bible study, and church attendance and you will be ready to face the obstacles of life. Then when you confront a barricade in the spiritual world, you are prepared to experience breakthroughs in salvation, healing, deliverance, finances, etc.

204 MORE

You may have heard people say regarding the tragedies of life, “God won’t give you more that you can bear.” Actually, this Scripture applies specifically to temptation:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

In every temptation, God provides a way of escape so you can bear it successfully. Take the way of escape!

The difficulties of life, however, often involve circumstances that are more than you can bear, tragedies from which there is no way of escape. You simply must go through them. It is when you are faced with challenges that are more than you can bear that you learn to rely on God instead of self and you grow spiritually.

The psalmist said: “*Before I was afflicted, I was going astray, but now I heed your word. You are good and do good; teach me your statutes*” (Psalm 119:67-68). At the end of his trying ordeal, Job proclaimed: “*I had heard of You [only] by the hearing of the ear, but now my [spiritual] eye sees You*” (Job 42:5, TAB).

If you are facing more than you can bear today, know that you are yoked together with the Lord. You do not have to face “more than you can bear” alone. His Word to you today is:

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

205 MORNING

The Lamentations of Jeremiah is not a book you normally look to for comfort, as it is an extended dirge over negative conditions and the judgment of God’s people, Israel. But in the midst of this sad lament, a bright promise emerges. The prophet declares: “*Great is his faithfulness; his loving-kindness begins afresh each day*” (Lamentations 3:23).

Every morning of every day, God’s loving-kindness begins afresh and His mercies are once again extended to you. No matter how you failed yesterday. No matter what you face today.

The Bible promises that “*...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*” (Psalm 30:5). Years ago, I sat with a friend by the bedside of her dying husband as she sang the words of this song to him, “*Joy Comes In The Morning*”:

*If you've knelt beside the rubble of an aching broken heart
When the things you gave your life to fell apart
You're not the first to be acquainted with sorrow, grief or pain*

But the master promised sunshine after rain

*To invest your seeds of trust in God in mountains you can't move
You have risked your life on things you cannot prove
But to give the things you cannot keep for what you cannot lose
Now, that's the way to find the joy God has for you*

Chorus:

*Hold on my child joy comes in the morning
Weeping only last for the night
Hold on my child Joy comes in the morning
The darkest hour means dawn is just in sight*

-Bill and Gloria Gaither

Years later, I sang this same song to her as she faced death. Many years had come and gone, but each morning God's mercy had been renewed to us both.

Morning will come for you too. Hold on!



N

206 NAMES

God's name has the power to meet every need in your life, whether it be spiritual, physical, material, emotional, or mental. God is...

Jehovah Jireh: The Lord our provider (Genesis 22:14).
Jehovah Rapha: The Lord our Healer (Exodus 15:26).
Jehovah Nissi: The Lord our Banner (Exodus 17:15).
Jehovah Shalom: The Lord our Peace (Judges 6:24).
Jehovah Raah: The Lord our Shepherd (Psalms 23:1).
Jehovah Tsidkenu: The Lord our Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6).
Jehovah Shammah: The Lord is who is Here (Ezekiel 48:35).

In addition to these compound names of God the Father, there are many other names in the Bible for God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit that reveal their ministries in your behalf.

No matter the trial or circumstance, there is a special name of God that applies to it and there is supernatural power in each name to bring deliverance. Release that power by declaring the names. For example, if you are in need of healing, proclaim "Jehovah Rapha, you are my Healer."

For further study of the names, see *Names Of God* at <http://www.harvestime.org>

207 NEGATIVES

In Numbers 21 when Israel murmured against God and Moses, the Lord sent fiery serpents among them as judgment and many died. When the people finally confessed their sin, the Lord told Moses to make a serpent and set it upon a pole so that everyone who looked on it would live and not die.

Why would God use the emblem of a serpent to bring healing when it was that very form Satan took in the initial temptation and downfall of mankind? Because by looking to the image that represented sin, they would be healed of the serpent's poison. A double negative becomes a positive. For example, two negatives make a positive: $(-3) \times (-2) = 6$. The negative of a negative nullifies the negative and produces its opposite.

In the New Testament Jesus declared: *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14-15).* When Christ died on the cross, He became the image of sin so that all who were infected by sin could look to Him and be healed.

These emblems of sin lifted up represented the nullification of the negative and production of the positive which is redemption from sin. No matter how deep your sin, if you have failed, fallen, or turned your back and walked away from God, all you must do is look to the cross and live.

208 NEVER

Never say never. “I will never be able to do this. I will never survive this. I will never be able to forgive this.” When you say “never”, you are limiting God.

By refusing to say “never”, you are leaving even the most difficult of circumstances open to His miracle working power.

Instead of saying “never”, make this declaration by faith: *“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).* Then you are able to believe that...

- You can do this in His strength.
- You will survive this.
- You will endure this by faith.
- You will, by an act of your will, forgive this.

209 NEVERTHELESS

The disciples fished all night and caught nothing. Then Jesus told Simon...

...Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. (Luke 5:4-7)

Simon declared, “Nevertheless at thy word...” meaning that in spite of the circumstances, in spite of their failure, regardless of being worn out physically and disappointed mentally, they would act upon the Word of the Lord.

Set aside your circumstances, your failures, your physical and mental problems. It doesn't matter how many times you have tried in your own strength, now is the time to act in His strength on the basis of the promises in His Word. Declare to the Lord, “Nevertheless at thy word I will ____.” And then fill in the blank.

210 NEXT

In times of adversity you often wonder, “What should I do next?” What is next after your great loss? What happens next when you are recovering from a health issue or loss of a relationship?

Emily Freeman draws wisdom from the example set by Jesus:

“So often, right after Jesus performed a miracle, He gave a simple next thing to do. To the leper, He said to tell no one, ‘But go and show yourself to the priest.’ To the paralytic He said, ‘Get up, pick up your stretcher and go home.’ To Jairus and his wife, after raising their daughter from the dead...He told them to go make lunch. Rather than a five year plan, a clear vision, or a list of goals, the leper, the paralytic, and Jairus and his wife were given clear instructions by Jesus about what to do next, and only next...But what about for us? Let us take our cues from Jesus...by considering what it means for us to do the next right thing now. Not the next big thing. Not the next impressive thing. Just the next thing right in front of us.”

Look around you. What is God leading you to do next?

211 NIGHT

Every night ends in morning. You may be experiencing a spiritual night-time right now with darkness all around, but just as in the natural world your night will end in morning.

You do not overcome the darkness by focusing on the darkness. You overcome the darkness of night by focusing on the light. Jonathan Cahn notes:

“You don’t overcome sin by dwelling on sin. You overcome sin by dwelling on God. You overcome emptiness by dwelling in His presence. You solve your problem not by dwelling on your problem, but by dwelling on the Answer....You overcome sorrow by the presence of joy, and hate by the presence of love, and evil by the presence of good. Apply this secret and it will change your life. Overcome the absence by the presence of its opposite.”

In the midst of your darkest night, focus on the Light of the World, Jesus Christ.

212 NO

King David desired to build a permanent tabernacle for the Lord. When David first asked Nathan the prophet about it, he encouraged him to do whatever he desired. But then God gave a different message for David through Nathan (2 Samuel 7). David’s son, Solomon, would be the one to erect the temple.

David’s motives were pure, but he wasn’t the one destined by God to execute this plan. Although David was excited about the project, he allowed himself to be stopped by God. David was disappointed that he couldn’t build the temple, but he didn’t become bitter or angry. Instead, he

responded with a great prayer of praise and glory to God recorded in 2 Samuel 7:18-29. He also prepared an abundance of materials for the temple to enable his son, Solomon, to accomplish the project according to God's plan.

God answers prayer with either a "yes, wait, or no". How do you respond when the Lord says "no" to something you want to do? God told David, "You did well that it was in your heart." In other words, God credits you with what you would have done if you were able or chosen to do so. If you can't do something you desire, let God use you to help others achieve it.

213 NORMAL

The word "normal" means that circumstances conform to a standard that is usual, typical, or expected. The "new normal" is a phrase that refers to a condition, situation, or set of circumstances that is different from what was previously experienced but now has become usual or typical. The phrase is often used to describe changes that occur after a crisis. An example is Joseph who was forced to experience a new normal in Egypt, first as a servant and later as a prisoner.

You may have been in a crisis so long that it has become your new normal. Your circumstances may prevent you from ever going back to what you considered to be normal. Your normal, your new normal, or even extremely abnormal situations are not a challenge to God.

This present new normal is part of your journey, not its entirety. New direction and new purposes are often generated as a result of new normal situations. Surrender the familiar to God and be open to what God wants to accomplish through your new normal.



O

214 OBEY

Let's be honest. Some difficulties in our journey of faith arise because we have not responded in obedience to the Word of the Lord. Somewhere along the pathway of life, we chose a wrong turn.

One biblical example is Abram who was commanded by God to leave the land of Ur and his relatives behind and travel to the Promised Land. Abram responded in partial obedience and left Ur, but he took along his father Terah and nephew Lot.

The name Terah means “delay”, and the prophetic meaning of his name was fulfilled when the family tarried at Haran until he died. The name “Haran” means parched and barren. Partial obedience results in delays at places of dryness, barrenness, and spiritual death. Taking Lot along also resulted in many future problems for Abram, including dissention and wars. Partial obedience always results in difficulties.

Consider this question: If a man is 99% faithful to his wife, is he a faithful husband? No he is not! That one indiscretion makes him unfaithful and may cost him his marriage. Likewise, anything less than 100% obedience is disobedience.

Difficulties offer an opportunity to examine your ways to be sure your circumstances are not a result of your own disobedience. If so, repent, ask forgiveness, and return to the right road that leads to your destiny.

“God will never reveal more truth about Himself to you until you have obeyed what you know already.” -Oswald Chambers

215 OIL

The Bride in the Song of Solomon (symbolic of true Believers) declares of her Bridegroom (symbolic of Jesus): *“Because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth...”* (SOS 1:3). The Passion Translation reads: *“For your lovely name is Flowing Oil.”*

It is a person, not a religion, doctrine, or denomination that changes lives. It is the fragrance of His name poured forth that will heal your hurt. Just speaking the name of Jesus is like pouring

forth a fragrant ointment, a precious oil which heals and soothes. He is the anointed one and whatever you need is found in His name.

There are five “ingredients” in the ointment of His name. His name is:

- Wonderful
 - Counsellor
 - The Mighty God
 - The Everlasting Father
 - The Prince of Peace
- (Isaiah 9:6)

As a Believer, the oil of Jesus Christ should be being evident in your life through your conduct and attitudes. But in order to heal and soothe others, this fragrance must not be hoarded. It must be poured out to a hurting world even when you are hurting yourself. You must offer it as a sacrifice, as the woman who anointed Jesus with her precious ointment (Mark 14:1-9).

You have met Jesus and received this precious anointing, but your life is only fragrant as you pour out what you have been given in loving sacrifice to the Lord. With whom could you share the fragrance of Jesus today? What hurting person needs this ointment poured forth?

For we are the sweet fragrance of Christ [which exhales] unto God, [discernible alike] among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing: To the latter it is an aroma [wafted] from death to death [a fatal odor, the smell of doom]; to the former it is an aroma from life to life [a vital fragrance, living and fresh]. (2 Corinthians 2:15-16)

216 ONE

During my health challenge, I learned to take one day at a time: “I can do radiation today...not the six weeks that lay ahead. I can do chemo today...not the six other rounds ahead during the next year.”

The Bible says to number our days, not our years (Psalm 90:12). Live one day at a time. Live every day to its fullest, whether it is one of joy or sorrow, work or leisure, pain or passion. Make today count.

Do not live in fear, but live responsibly. Live each day as if it might be your last and “...do not worry or be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries and anxieties of its own. Sufficient for each day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:34, TAB).

I guess I am a slow learner. Some months into my health challenge I figured this out. This is the way I should have been living all along!

217 OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities often come disguised as obstacles with which you struggle. Sometimes they come as interruptions which you tend to resent. Sometimes you miss today's opportunities by focusing on the future or the past.

Just for today, try looking at each obstacle as an opportunity. View these as problems as chances to extend love and patience, to grow spiritually, and as situations that may lead to ministry to others.

Nothing happens without purpose in the life of a Believer, so no matter how great the challenges of this day don't miss the hidden opportunities.

218 ORBIT

Just as God created the heavenly elements by His Word, you were created by His Word and recreated through your new birth in Jesus Christ by His Word.

Just as surely as God has a set orbit for the heavenly elements, He also has set a specific plan and purpose for you.

Just as the elements of heaven yield to the gravitational pull and remain in their orbit, as you yield to the gravitational pull of the Holy Spirit you will remain in the orbit of the destiny that God has ordained for you.

Your journey may be difficult right now, but you can remain securely in the right orbit as you are held steady by the gravitational pull of the Holy Spirit.

219 OVER

The enemy will try to tell you that it is over. Your life is over. Your relationships is over. Your ministry is over. The truth is, nothing is over until God says it's over!

*For so long now my soul's been waiting
For that song of sweet release
Instead of this my ears keep hearing
The constant sound of marching feet
Could it be while battle rages
I'm listening for one certain sound
It's one very special trumpet
Calling Christians to their crown*

*Chorus:
It's not over till it's over
Not until the trumpet sounds
We must not give up the battle*

*We must bravely hold our ground
The fight of faith will not be finished
Until the Savior's call resounds
It's not over till it's over
Not until the trumpet sounds*

*Faithful pilgrims who have journeyed
Through the storms of fear and doubt
They don't worry though clouds may gather
They know what life is all about
For very soon they will be leaving
Where they're going they're first class bound
But it's not over till it's over
Not until the trumpet sounds*

-Carroll McGruder

As the words to this song express, it is not over until God says it is over. When God says it is over, accept it. Otherwise, keep on fighting! Very soon that trumpet will sound and God will declare that all the battles of life are over forever.

220 OVERCOMER

You are not a victim of circumstances, fate, or bad luck. The Bible says you are an overcomer which means "to conquer". Jesus calls you to overcome by locating the enemy, engaging him in combat, and defeating him. You are called to overcome the flesh (1 Peter 4:1-2, TAB); the world (John 16:33); and the devil (Romans 6:14).

You do not overcome because of who you are or how you feel. It is not because of any merit of your own good works, your strength, or anything else you possess. You overcome the flesh, the world, sin, Satan, and his evil principalities because of Jesus Christ who lives within you: "*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony...*" (Revelation 12:11).

There is no excuse for failure. You possess the power to overcome the wicked one! John spoke of overcoming in the past tense... "*You have overcome!*"

*I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because **ye have overcome the wicked one**. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. (1 John 2:13-14)*

John also declared victory in the present tense:

*For everyone born of God **overcomes** the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5, NIV)*

Rejoice in the knowledge that regardless of the persecution, turmoil, and trials you are going through, you will persevere. As a Believer, you are an overcomer and someday you will stand before the throne with the redeemed saints of God as a fellow-overcomer!



P

221 PACE

As an athlete in a race, you must pace yourself in this journey of life. This race is not a brief sprint. It is a marathon. To pace yourself means to maintain consistent and continuous speed in walking, running, and moving forward. On some stretches of this journey you may be able to move rapidly. On other more difficult trails you must slow your pace.

Coaches teach athletes to find the right sustainable speed that will enable them to finish their race as fast as possible. That speed, however, is not always the same. The running pace for a half-marathon will be different than for a marathon, and the pace for running uphill won't be the same as when you are going downhill.

The same is true in the spiritual world. You need to find a sustainable spiritual pace that will keep you moving forward, recognizing that you will have to adjust your speed for difficult times, interruptions, and unforeseen circumstances in life. The objective is to keep moving forward so you will be able to declare the words of the Apostle Paul:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

Paul's pace was slower when he was incarcerated than when he was preaching before multitudes and traveling from city to city, but he was always in the race. He ministered to great crowds and, when he could no longer do that, he preached the Gospel to individuals, leaders, and prison guards. He remained on course to finish well. Pace yourself and keep moving forward.

222 PAIN

Pain has a purpose in the natural world. Pain works for your wellbeing by warning that something is wrong in your body. Pain communicates that you need prayer, rest, medical attention, or a change in lifestyle.

Pain has purpose in the spiritual world also, whether it be emotional, mental, or physical pain. From the depths of your pain may come your greatest purpose if you respond to your pain properly. An example is the woman who was sexually abused as a child and started a ministry to

abused women. Another is the quadriplegic who started a world-wide ministry to the handicapped.

The Apostle Paul declared: “...*but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope*” (Romans 5:3-4). Peter wrote:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

When Paul was bitten by a viper it did not say it was not painful, but he was protected from the venom. Some situations will cause you pain, but they will not kill you. Instead, the pain will direct you to your purpose.

Do not embrace your pain, but embrace the purpose of your pain. Do not endure it, engage it and use it for God's glory. You will not learn from pain alone. Will you become bitter or better as a result of your pain? Make your pain a platform for praise.

“Worship in spite of your weariness. Praise louder than your pain. Our circumstances do not make God any less worthy or wonderful.” -Ray Hughes

223 PARADOX

A paradox is defined as a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense, yet it is true. You will not be able to understand every step of your spiritual journey because you are a part of the Kingdom of God in which there are many spiritual paradoxes.

Here are some examples: In the Kingdom of God the poor are rich. Sorrow results in joy. The meek are conquerors. The last are first and the least are considered the greatest. The humble are exalted. That which is highly esteemed in the world is lowly valued in the Kingdom. You lose your life in order to save it. You give in order to receive.

View everything that happens along your journey in life with a spiritual mind because you are part of a Kingdom of paradoxes. Your circumstances right now may seem contradictory, but they are part of this spiritual paradox.

224 PAST

When you are in difficult circumstances you often tend to dwell mentally on the past. You lament because things are not the same. Perhaps they never will be the same again.

Yesterday ended last night. Don't dwell on the past, whether it was good or bad. The past is just that: It is past. Regret over the past steals the joy of the present and your hope for the future.

As long as you are living in the past, you will never have a future. Unless there are spiritual treasures in your past to be mined for the future, then leave the past alone.

Yesterday is a cancelled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Today is the only “cash” you have. Use it wisely.

225 PATIENCE

Impatience is defined as annoyance with aggravating circumstances or people. Impatience often leads to wrong responses such as angry, hurtful words and actions. Patience, the opposite of impatience, is the ability to cheerfully bear an unbearable situation or person.

The Bible says you are to be longsuffering (patient) with joyfulness (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 1:11). You are to preach the Word of God with longsuffering (2 Timothy 4:2) and put on longsuffering as a spiritual quality (Colossians 3:12). Many verses in Proverbs extol the benefits of patience (Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:2,11; 15:18).

When you are impatient, you are not trusting God’s timing. Abraham became impatient and birthed Ishmael through his own plan. This decision created problems that last to this day. King Saul became impatient because Samuel didn’t arrive on time. He acted in haste and disobedience, and it cost him the kingdom. What will impatience cost you?

The very difficulties you are going through are exactly what develops patience. As you learn patience in difficulties, it sets in motion an important spiritual process so that you can ...*“glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:3-5).*

Heed the psalmist’s appeal to *“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him...” (Psalm 37:7).* He declared:

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. (Psalm 40:1-2)

Remain *“...joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (Romans 12:12).*

226 PATTERN

When Moses was instructed to build the Tabernacle where God could dwell with His people, the Lord commanded: *“According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it” (Exodus 25:9; see also Hebrews 8:3).* Every detail of the Tabernacle was to be built according to the pattern. To accomplish this, God selected two men, Bezalel and Oholiab, and empowered them with His Spirit to create everything according to the pattern (Exodus 31:4-5; 35:30-32,35).

If you are a born again Spirit-filled Believer, the same Holy Spirit that dwelt in these two men dwells within you to enable you to fulfill the plan of God. God has a specific plan for your life: *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"* (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).

You may be going through difficult times right now, but you need not abort the plan God has for your life. As Bezalel and Oholiab, God has empowered you to be able to follow the pattern. Just carry on and wait for the finished product!

227 PEACE

The word "peace" is from a Greek word that means "a cessation of conflict, order in the midst of chaos". Peace is a calm inner stability that permits you to conduct yourself peacefully and unaffected by circumstances. In Hebrew, the word is "Shalom" which means wholeness, completeness, and tranquility that is unaffected by outward circumstances. It is supernatural peace that results not because difficult circumstances change, but in the midst of them.

There are three aspects of peace:

-Peace **from** God: This is the Prince Of Peace, Jesus Christ, who God sent into the world to die for the sins of all mankind (Isaiah 9:6).

-Peace **with** God: This is provided by repenting of your sin and accepting Jesus as your personal Savior: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1).

-Peace **of** God. This is the peace that enables you to live in harmony with others in this troubled world. Jesus said: *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). This is ongoing supernatural peace in the face of trouble and adversity: *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"* (John 14:27).

You cannot experience the peace **of** God unless you acknowledge Jesus as the Prince of Peace **from** God and you have made peace **with** God. Peace is not found in something, but it is found in Someone. That Someone is the Lord Jesus Christ. His supernatural peace results from taking every anxiety to God in prayer:

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:67)

Peace reigns in your life when your mind is focused on God instead of your problems: *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusts in thee"* (Isaiah

26:3). When you walk in God-given peace, you are able to enter difficult situations with the confidence that you can be a peacemaker.

Peace is a gift of God, but you must receive it and allow it to rule in your heart: *“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...” (Colossians 3:15)*. Regardless of your circumstances, let peace rule in your heart and life today. Christ’s legacy to you is peace: *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27)*.

228 PERCEPTION

Perception is the ability to hear, see, or become aware of something through the natural senses. Spiritual perception is the ability to hear, see, or become aware of something through revelation knowledge of the Holy Spirit.

Second Kings 6 finds Elisha and his servant, Gehazi, facing an enemy army. When Gehazi saw the multitude of horses and chariots surrounding the city, he was fearful and asked Elisha, “Oh, my Lord, what shall we do?”

Elisha did not respond to the threat he saw with his natural eyes. His eyes were not focused on the surrounding chariots and horses of the enemy. He saw a greater army, the armies of heaven and their horses and chariots of fire. Elisha did not see defeat; he saw victory! Elisha’s servant was overwhelmed with fear because he was seeing only with his natural eyes which were focused on the circumstances.

God wants you to view your circumstances with spiritual perception. He doesn't want your eyes glued to your problems. He wants you to focus on His unlimited power and promises. Don't react according to what you see with your natural eyes. Pray for the spiritual perception of the Holy Spirit to give revelation knowledge regarding the challenges of life.

229 PERSEVERANCE

Praying more than once for a need is not vain repetition. Words without meaning that are uttered without sincerity are vain repetitions, as are memorized prayers that do not originate from your heart and public prayers made expressly to be seen by others.

In the Bible, perseverance is defined as persistent prayer. The story of the woman and the unjust judge, the determination of the Syrophoenician woman in behalf of her child, and the repeated prayers for rain by Prophet Elijah all illustrate this truth.

Repeated prayer about a concern is not unbelief. It is perseverance that is standing in faith until the promises of God are received.

Keep on asking and it will be given you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking [reverently] and [the door] will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking receives; and he who keeps on seeking finds; and to him who keeps on knocking, [the door] will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8, TAB).

Ask, seek, and keep knocking until the door is open and you receive your answer.

230 PERSPECTIVE

A letter to parents from college-aged daughter illustrates perspective:

Dear Mom and Dad:

*I have so much to tell you. Because of the fire in my dorm set off by student riots, I experienced temporary lung damage and had to go to the hospital. While I was there, I fell in love with an orderly and we have moved in together. I dropped out of school when I found out I was pregnant, and he got fired because of his drinking. So now we are going to move to Alaska where we might get married after the birth of our baby.
Your loving daughter*

P.S. None of his really happened, but I did flunk my chemistry class and I wanted you to keep it in perspective.

By the time the parents got to the P.S., they didn't even care that she flunked her class. Their perspective had changed!

Spiritual perspective is important because "...the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Spiritual perspective is when you view people, challenges, and circumstances of life with the guidance of the Holy Spirit instead of from your own intellect. It is viewing all of life from a biblical perspective through the lens of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual perspective is vital to making good choices. Lot saw that the land near Sodom looked good. He had no spiritual perspective to recognize how sinful it was and he ended up in trouble.

Spiritual perspective prevents deception. Joshua met with the Gibeonites, heard their story, looked at their moldy bread, and did not ask counsel of the Lord. Not realizing they were an enemy, he was deceived and made a covenant with them.

Spiritual perspective prevents you from having a grasshopper mentality. The ten spies that brought back a negative report from the Promised Land declared "*And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight*" (Numbers 13:33).

Spiritual perspective empowers you to face your enemy in the spirit world because the enemies against which you are fighting are not visible to the human eye. They are recognized only through spiritual discernment: "*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against*

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Spiritual perspective enables you to benefit from difficult circumstances that arise along the journey of life knowing that...

...our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

Your difficulties have great value when you get your eyes off of them and gain a spiritual perspective that focuses on the eternal.

231 PILLOW

There is a song that has come to be known as the “*Pillow Song*” that addresses sorrow and loss. In times of heartache and pain your pillow becomes a friend as it signals that you made it through another day.

If you need a place for your broken heart to heal, fall into the arms that won’t let go.

*Don't know why it happened
It's hard to understand
You give someone your heart
And then they're gone
Searching for a reason
We must walk through this season
Well don't give up just yet
A light is shining up ahead*

Chorus:

*If you need a pillow for your sorrow
If you need a blanket for your soul
If you need a place your broken heart can be made whole
He'll be your strength to face tomorrow
And when the night seems dark and cold
Fall into the arms that won't let go
Fall in to the arms that won't let go*

*Don't have all the answers
Facing tragedy
It seems as though the tears will never end
But through the dark you'll see Him
The one you can believe in*

*He's offering you rest
And a place to lay your head.*

-Al Denson

232 PLANT

Israel had just been taken into captivity when God gave them an unusual word. He told them to “*Plant gardens and eat the fruit of them*” (Jeremiah 29:28). Why would they want to plant gardens in a time of suffering, in a place where they did not want to be?

The spiritual analogy is that it is the Lord's desire that you are fruitful where you are no matter what your circumstances. Isaac sowed seeds despite a famine, and he reaped a great harvest (Genesis 26:1,12). God wants you to continue to sow good seeds despite your spiritual “famine”. If you do so, you will to reap a harvest.

Don't stop praying, giving, or working for the Lord. You may not be able to do what you used to do, but you can do what you can.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. (John 15:16)

As you bear fruit right where you are in the midst of suffering, you will experience a new dimension in your relationship with the Heavenly Father. You will ask in the name of Jesus and the Father will respond.

233 PLEASURE

In 2 Corinthians 12:10, Paul declares that he took “... *pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses...*” What? Why would Paul possibly take pleasure in these things?

Let's read the verse in its entirety: “*Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*” The reason Paul rejoiced in these things was because he knew that God's strength is manifested in weakness. It is one of the paradoxes of the Kingdom of God.

Paul mentions a thorn in the flesh from which he suffered perpetually and, despite prayer, did not receive deliverance. Some people use the “thorn in the flesh” excuse to languish in illness or bondage, but we must remember that the only Biblical example of a thorn in the flesh out-wrote, out-preached, and out-traveled all of his partners in ministry. Paul's infirmities, reproaches, persecution, and distress did not hinder his dynamic service for the Kingdom nor the demonstration of God's power through Him.

Paul speaks of his "infirmity" which means "want of strength, weakness, an inability to produce results through his own natural abilities." Through this weakness, God's power and strength were manifested in him and through him. God can and will do the same for you when you embrace your "thorns" of life knowing that God is going to do great things through your weakness.

234 PLEDGE

In Old Testament times when a couple was promised in marriage, the groom would send the bride a gift. This gift was given as a pledge that her beloved would return for her when the time was right. It was a guarantee of his faithfulness.

Prior to Christ's departure from earth to Heaven, Jesus promised to send a gift to His followers. That gift is the Holy Spirit which was given on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Here are some of the purposes of the Holy Spirit:

- Convicts you of sin and draws you Jesus.
- Enables righteous living.
- Dwells within you.
- Baptizes you and endues you with power.
- Demonstrates God power in you and through you.
- Strengthens you.
- Unites you with other Believers.
- Intercedes for you.
- Conforms you to the image of Christ.
- Teaches you.
- Assures you of salvation
- Comforts you.
- Quickens you.
- Speaks to you and through you.
- Inspires worship.
- Empowers you for witnessing.
- Gives spiritual gifts.
- Develops spiritual fruit in you.

The Holy Spirit is Christ's guarantee to encourage, comfort, prepare, and bless you until He returns. It is a pledge of His faithfulness. He has not forgotten you. He will return for you.

235 PONDER

To "ponder" means to deliberately consider, examine, and contemplate something for a long period of time. The Bible says "*Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established*" (Proverbs 4:26).

It is wise to examine your path in life frequently, especially in times of adversity. Make sure you are not on a spiritual detour or heading toward a dead end. Make sure you are on the right path,

the route that will lead you to victory over your circumstances. Take time today to ponder your path: *"So let a man examine himself..." (1 Corinthians 11:28).*

Pray this prayer:

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

236 PORTER

In modern buildings of major cities there is often a doorman stationed at the entrance. He provides security and opens the door to those authorized to enter. He also serves as a porter to assist in carrying packages and luggage.

As a spiritual Porter, the Holy Spirit opened the door to prepare the way for Jesus Christ to enter the world when He was conceived by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit opens the door to the sheepfold so that His sheep can enter by opening the hearts of men and women to be receptive to the Gospel (John 10:1-16).

As a Porter, the Holy Spirit comes to your aid to lift your heavy burdens and remove the baggage you carry from your past. He also guards the door of your life so that strangers or enemies cannot enter. He keeps you from deception, false doctrines, and the attacks of the enemy.

It is the Holy Spirit of God that *"...opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens..." (Revelation 3:7)*. The Apostle Paul said of the city of Ephesus: *"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:9)*. Let's examine the words in this verse:

- Great means gigantic.
- Effectual means ready to set in motion to produce a desired result.
- A door is a God-given opportunity.
- Opened means it is already standing open awaiting your arrival. You won't need to use a battering ram to open it.
- Unto me means that, even as Paul was specifically chosen by God to minister in Ephesus, there are doors specifically designed for you.
- Many adversaries were around this door. Whenever God opens a supernatural door, there will always be supernatural adversaries. But the same God who opened the door will guide you through it and defeat every opposing foe.

There may be adversaries lurking around, but the Holy Spirit, your spiritual porter, is holding the door open for you. Go right on in!

237 POWER

The early church was born in a demonstration of the power of God, not through great public speakers or theological debate. Paul wrote:

And my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

Paul recognized that “...*the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. (1 Corinthians 4:20).*

Many people know the Word of God but they have not experienced the power of God. Many ministers today are well-educated. They preach with enticing words of man's wisdom, but there is no demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power. They do not really understand the power of the Gospel to save, heal, deliver, and work the miraculous.

In some churches the miraculous has been replaced with human reasoning that demands a logical explanation for everything that happens. God's power has been replaced by theological debate over whether the miraculous is for today or was only for the early church. When reason and debate take the place of the miraculous, the life flow of God is replaced by man-made religion.

People have had their fill of religion and its accompanying ritual. They want to experience reality. They want to witness and experience the visible manifestation of God's power. They want to receive a message from God's Word that is applicable to their lives.

The world is not interested in what you have done for God or what you know about God. The world is attracted to Jesus when they see visible results of the power of the Gospel which has changed your life. That power is never greater than when it is manifested in times of difficulty. The world is watching how you respond.

238 PRAISE

Just as there was a prescribed way to enter the Old Testament tabernacle, there is a proper way for you to enter God's presence. You “*enter His gates with thanksgiving and come into His courts with praise*” (Psalm 100:4). You move towards the destination of His presence by thanksgiving and praise.

Thanksgiving and praise focus on what God has done. The Bible says “*Forget not all His benefits*”, meaning the wonderful things He has done for you (Psalm 103:2). Praise leads to worshipping God for who He is.

You praise God by the power of the Holy Spirit that operates through you. As you do so you build a spiritual place for God's presence, as He inhabits the praises of His people: “*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of Israel*” (Psalm 22:3). Praise enables you to cast off the garment of sadness and be clothed with the garment of praise (Isaiah 61:3).

Many Believers are preoccupied with ministering for God by preaching, teaching, training, etc. But your most important ministry is to minister to God through worship, of which praise is an integral part: *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”* (1 Peter 2:9).

Praise is your purpose in good times and bad times. Pray these praise verses to the Lord during your devotional time today: Psalm 18:49; 47:6-7; 56:12; 68:4,32; 75:9; 78:4,92:1; 108:3;135:3; 144:9; 146:2; 147:1; 149:3,6.

239 PRAYER

Prayer is an opportunity to express your deepest emotions, struggles, and battles. The book of Psalms aptly illustrates this, as David often expresses times of deep sorrow and difficulties.

God always answers prayer. It is either yes, no, or wait. You need to know that...

“It you don’t get the answer you prayed for, it is not a fail...the answer is up to God. Prayer is the way we put the ball in God’s court. The only way you can fail is by failing to ask...If you don’t ask for the miracle you will never know what God might have done.”
-Mark Batterson

If you prayed for healing for someone who was ill and they died, your prayer was not answered in the way you desired. But the prayer of another greater than you has been answered. Jesus said: *“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me...”* (John 17:24). Whether it was by disease or disaster, if your departed loved one was a Believer they are with the Lord. Christ’s prayer that those He loves be with Him has been answered.

The Holy Spirit is vital in prayer during difficult times, because *“...the Holy Spirit comes to our aid and bears us up in our weakness; for we do not know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it worthily as we ought, but the Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads in our behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance”* (Romans 8:26, TAB).

The words to the song *“Hear My Heart”* express this most adequately:

*Sometimes I feel no one's ever been in this place before
This is hard, and I'm not sure that I can do this anymore
I know some day I'll look back, and all this won't seem real
But Lord, right now I need you to know just how I feel*

*When there are no words to say, and no prayer that I can pray, hear my heart
When I don't have strength to try, and I've cried all I can cry, hear my heart
'Cause you know every fear and every doubt, I cannot speak
You know all the ways I need you and all the ways I'm weak
So, I'll be quiet, so you can hear my heart.*

-Jeff and Sheri Easter

240 PREPARATION

God prepared Moses and the Apostle Paul in the wilderness. He prepared Joseph during times of slavery and imprisonment.

Nothing is wasted. Every experience of your life, even difficult times, are orchestrated by God to prepare you for your destiny.

Yes, even what you are going through right now!

“There is a kind of preparation that cannot be found in a university or a theological seminary. It is not even necessarily found in gaining more experience. It is that which God sovereignly ordains for a specific purpose...The task to which we are called may be unique. Therefore, the preparation we need will also be unique. There may be no precedents to which we can point to explain what is going on.” -R.T. Kendall

Your preparation is unique to your calling. Don't waste time questioning it. Embrace it.

241 PRESENCE

When we speak of the presence of God, it implies a close personal encounter with the Lord. This occurs as a result of times of prayer, praise, worship, and revelation received from His written Word.

There are three different aspects of the presence of God. God is omnipresent, meaning He is present everywhere. There is the personalized presence of God where He reveals Himself to you personally through Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Word. There is also the manifested presence of God when, through a sovereign act, God reveals Himself in a special way.

During seasons of great difficulty, it is actually not answers to your questions that you need. You need His manifested presence. God declares: *“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord”* (Jeremiah 23:24).

The Psalmist acknowledged:

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy

hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.
(Psalm 139:6-8)

When Jesus returned to Heaven after His ministry on earth, His physical presence was replaced by the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit. He told His disciples, "I am with you, but I shall be in you."

Put aside the chaos, your questions, and your doubts. Take time today to enjoy His presence.

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Psalm 16:11)

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. (Psalm 95:2)

Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. (Psalm 100:2)

242 PRESS

Be encouraged to press on! When everything within you says give up, don't quit. It may not be on your time table, but if you will press on and continue to follow God, as surely as the sun rises He will rain blessings upon you once again. The prophet Hosea declared:

Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth (Hosea 6:3, NIV)

The Apostle Paul declared:

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 13:12-14)

Choose to believe and press on as you meditate on the words of this song "*I Choose Christ*"!

*This was not the path I would have chosen
I could see no hope from where I stood
Even though I knew what God had promised
I didn't see how he could work it for my good
Yet that road where pain was a companion
Took me to an unexpected place*

*And standing in the middle of the darkness
That was where my heart would learn to say:*

*I choose Christ when everything around me says give up
I choose faith, I choose to trust, to believe He is good
He'll come through like He said He would
Every time, oh I choose Christ.*

-Sue Smith

243 PRIORITIES

The difficult season you are in provides an opportunity to reprioritize your life. Set new priorities. Ask God for wisdom to do so, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit through the ongoing process.

“The key is not to prioritize what is on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”
-Stephen Covey

Minimize stress. Maintain your joy. Maximize your relationship to the Lord. Simplify your life. Ask God for wisdom to resolve the tension between what you want to do, what others want you to do, and what you are able to do. If you can no longer keep previous commitments, say so. Learn to say no. “No” is a complete sentence, no additional explanation necessary.

You may need to redefine ministry priorities. You may not be able to do what you once did, but you can do what you can. Self-care is not selfishness. Establish new boundaries and concentrate your energy and effort on redefined priorities that are set by God.

If you aren't dead, you aren't done. God still has a purpose for you to fulfill. Jesus said of the woman who anointed Him, *“She has done what she could”* (Mark 14:8-9). Her sacrificial act seemed small, but Jesus considered it important enough that her story is still being told.

244 PRISON

You may be incarcerated in a prison of pain, disability, difficult circumstances, or an actual prison. The Apostle Paul was a great man of God who was incarcerated for his faith several times during the course of his lifetime. Paul did not view himself as a prisoner of the government, however. Repeatedly he referred to himself as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:1); "an ambassador in chains" (Ephesians 6:20); and as "the prisoner of the Lord" (Ephesians 4:1). He saw his incarceration as having divine purpose:

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. (Philippians 1:12-14, NIV)

Paul willingly served as a prisoner of the Lord, a captive for Christ, who was strategically placed to advance the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. In one prison he sang praises which resulted in salvation and deliverance. In another he ministered the Gospel to his captors. From another prison, he wrote sacred words of inspired Scripture and dispersed them to the world.

Despite his incarceration, Paul fulfilled his divine destiny. He knew God was in control of his circumstances and he used them purposefully instead of allowing negative circumstances to control him. Reflect today on how what you are experiencing might advance the cause of Christ as you respond positively to your circumstances.

245 PROBLEMS

A problem is defined as a situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome. You may feel like you have a whole list of those right now.

When you come into God's presence in prayer, it is normal to want to pour out your heart and tell Him about your problems.

But what about, just for today, try this: Don't tell God about your big problems. Tell your problems about your big God. Turn your problems into praise.

Do not focus on your issues, focus on the solution. The solution is God.

246 PROGNOSIS

A prognosis is the projected course and result of a disease or medical condition. It entails determining the duration and intensity of symptoms, the possibility of complications, and the likelihood of recovery. The type of the disease, its stage at diagnosis, the patient's age and general health, and the effectiveness of current therapies all influence a medical prognosis. A prognosis is a statement regarding your future that is based on general statistics.

If you dwell on a negative prognosis it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Important to remember is that a medical prognosis does not factor in your faith or God's miracle working power. All of your days were written in God's book before there was one of them. You have an appointed time to die, and it is not determined by a doctor's prognosis.

My friend Marie was given two weeks to live. She lived for six years after this prognosis. My friend Valerie was given six months to live because of terminal cancer. She ministered for God and we enjoyed a rich friendship for 40 years after this prognosis.

A diagnosis is man's perception of your present condition and a prognosis is an educated guess regarding your future odds. Remember: While your diagnosis may be correct, it does not determine your prognosis. The latter is in the hands of God alone.

247 PROMISES

The Bible declares: *“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)” (Hebrews 10:23)*. You can be assured that every promise God has made He will fulfill. The keys to receiving this fulfillment are knowing the promises, connecting your struggles to specific promises, and claiming them by faith.

The Apostle Paul confirms:

...I have been telling you about Jesus Christ the Son of God. He isn't one to say yes when he means no. He always does exactly what he says. He carries out and fulfills all of God's promises, no matter how many of them there are; and we have told everyone how faithful he is, giving glory to his name. (2 Corinthians 1:19-20, TLB)

Every promise of God to you is secured in Jesus Christ:

For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.(2 Corinthians 1:20, NAS)

To this, you should add a loud AMEN!

As a Believer, at the end of your life you will be able to look back over your life and proclaim:

And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. Know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one thing of them has failed. (Joshua 23:14, AMP)

248 PRUNING

In John 15:1-5, Jesus draws an analogy that He is the vine and we are the branches. Pruning is necessary in the natural world if a plant is to remain productive and bear fruit. When a farmer prunes a plant, he cuts off the unproductive branches in order to make the plant produce more fruit. He carefully removes everything which would hinder the growth of the plant.

Pruning is also necessary in the spiritual world. When God prunes, He removes from your life everything which would hinder your spiritual growth. This involves loss, but the process is necessary if you are to bear spiritual fruit. God may remove relationships that are detrimental to your destiny. He may change your priorities. He will deal with secret sins.

Jonathan Cahn details this process further:

“To a tree being pruned, the process of pruning takes on the appearance of loss. So every child of God in this life will experience what appears to be loss. Some things will pass from your life, others will be taken. They will appear to you as losses. But they will

not be. The purpose of pruning is not to harm the tree, but just the opposite. It is to allow the tree to bear the fruit it was meant to bear. So too, in your life with God, when you experience losses, they will not be for your harm. Every loss will be redeemed. Each will be used to cause you to become what you were made to be. So don't dwell on what was and is no more. Dwell on that which is yet to come" - Jonathan Cahn

249 PURPOSE

Purpose is the reason why something is done, the aim or intention of actions. God is a God of purpose. He has a reason for everything that is permitted in your life. Nothing is without purpose, even when you do not understand what is going on. Knowing that there is purpose in what you are facing on life's journey helps you through the tough times.

...I will do all My pleasure and purpose...Yes, I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed it, and I will do it. (Isaiah 46:10-11, TAB)

In the final hours before Calvary, Jesus said to Peter:

... Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. (Luke 22:31-32)

Why not just deliver Peter instead of praying for him? Because there was purpose in the experience that lay ahead for him.

Peter thought he was strong in faith and responded: "...Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death" (Luke 22:33). But Jesus answered: "...Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me" (Luke 22:34). After Peter's failure, repentance, and restoration, he became a strong leader in the early church.

You have a purpose in God's plan. It is His plan and purpose that you are to be a child of God and inherit salvation and eternal life (Ephesians 1:5 and 11). It is His plan that you bear spiritual fruit (John 15:8).

Jesus has prayed for you, just as He did for Peter and the disciples, saying: "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word*" (John 17:20).

That includes you.



Q

250 QUICKEN

“Quicken” is an unusual word used in the King James Version of the Bible:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:11)

The word quicken means to “revive or make alive.” In Psalm 25:11 in the King James Version it says, “*Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name’s sake.*” In the New International Version, interprets the verse this way: “*For your name’s sake, Lord, preserve my life.*”

Quickening is preservation by God. By the power of God you can be quickened from sickness, depression, discouragement, fear, anxiety, and death.

He quickens you through His Word:

Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word. (Psalm 119:154)

He quickens you according to His merciful judgment:

Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord: quicken me according to thy judgments. (Psalm 119:156)

He quickens you according to His lovingkindness:

Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth. (Psalm 119:88)

The psalmist prays: “*Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name*” (Psalm 80:18). As He quickens you today, use that renewed energy to call on His name and believe for great things.



R

251 RAINBOW

In Genesis chapter 9 after the end of the flood which had destroyed the earth, God made a covenant with Noah which confirmed His promises. A covenant is a visible reminder of a pledge or commitment. The rainbow became the sign of God's promise that the storm was over and He would never again destroy the earth with a flood.

In the natural world, a rainbow occurs when the light from the sun passes through a medium denser than air, like a rain drop. Spiritually, the rainbow relates to the storms of life. Noah saw the rainbow after the storm. Ezekiel saw the rainbow in the midst of the storm (Ezekiel 1:28). John saw the rainbow before the storm of God's judgment (Revelation 4:3). Spiritually, there is a rainbow before every storm of life, during them, and after them.

The rainbow covenant was with Noah, his sons, and their descendants, which means everyone born after the time of Noah. Unfortunately this beautiful sign of the rainbow has been distorted and adopted by people who are far from God. Do not let their perversion of this symbol obscure its meaning.

The rainbow is God's covenant that there will be an end to your storm.

"If you want to enjoy the rainbow, be prepared to endure the storm."
-Warren Wiersbe

252 READY

When my husband of 47 years was nearing death, I said to him, "You do know that very soon Jesus is coming to take you to Heaven, don't you?" Without a moment's hesitation he said, "I'm ready and waiting." A few minutes later, he passed into the presence of the Lord.

If you or someone you love are facing death, you can have the same confidence that my husband had by accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior. Then you, too, can be "ready and waiting". You can have full assurance of your eternal destiny.

But we do [strongly and earnestly] desire for each of you to show the same diligence and sincerity [all the way through] in realizing and enjoying the full assurance and development of [your] hope until the end. (Hebrews 6:11)

Whether you or your loved one experience death or go in the rapture, here is a scriptural guarantee regarding your readiness: “...*Being be confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*” (Philippians 1:6).

253 REALITY

Walking in faith does not mean denying reality. That illness, those divorce papers you hold in your hands, your financial problems, that troubled child—all these things are real. As Believers, however, we view reality through eyes of faith as did our forefather Abraham.

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickens the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. (Romans 4:16-21)

Abraham looked at the reality of his situation and then called those things which were not as though they were. Against hope, he believed in hope. He did not stagger at the promises of God no matter what reality declared.

Do not deny reality. That is actually a form of unbelief. If you admit the reality of the situation, you must then exercise trust in God. If you deny the reality of a situation, then you do not have to trust God because in your mind the problem doesn't exist. View your reality today through the eyes of faith.

254 RECALCULATING

Recalculating means to calculate again for the purpose of finding an error or confirming a previous computation. It is a word used by the Global Positioning Systems (GPS) in recent model cars. GPS is an automated voice that guides you to a destination and recalculates if you go off course. If you miss a turn, your GPS will announce “recalculating” and continue to repeat this until you return to a correct route.

The Bible is your spiritual GPS which guides you on earth and directs you to your eternal destination. The voice of the Holy Spirit will guide you and let you know when you get off course. It is wise to check this spiritual GPS often and...

Examine and test and evaluate your own selves to see whether you are holding to your faith and showing the proper fruits of it... (2 Corinthians 13:5, TAB)

Recalculating and examining your attitudes, thoughts, and actions in light of God's Word is vital during challenging times.

In the natural world, you can sometimes wander outside the range of the GPS and the system fails. But in the spiritual world, if you stay on course with your spiritual GPS of God's Word, you will reach your destination in this life and the one to come.

255 RECOGNITION

Walking along the Emmaus Road, the dejected disciples did not recognize the resurrected Christ when He began traveling with them.

There have been times when Jesus has been right there with you and you have failed to recognize Him. Every blessing of life you have received, every provision in your time of need, every healing, deliverance, and comfort you have received means that He was there.

Every Godly pastor, teacher, and counselor that has helped you along the way was from Him. Every loving hand extended to you by another Believer and every true friend you have had, that is Jesus reaching out to you through them.

Today, change your focus from your current problems to express gratitude for all the times He was with you in the past and you failed to recognize it.

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." (Genesis 28:16)

256 REDEEMED

Are you redeemed by the blood of the lamb, Jesus Christ? Are you a true Believer? Then no matter what you are facing today, you can do so in the power of this promise:

But now, thus says the Lord, who created you,...He who formed you..."Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. 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." (Isaiah 43:1-2)

You are secure from spiritual waters, rivers, floods, and fires. You can face today's journey in the strength of this promise alone.

Join the patriarch Job in declaring:

For I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold... (Job 19:25-27)

257 REGRETS

Do you have regrets?

Do not be gentle with them. Confess them to God, and then get over it.

You are paralyzed spiritually when you focus on regrets because...

"...You are living in a dismal fantasy. How is that a fantasy? Think about it: God has removed your past from you, separating you from your sins as far as the east is from the west and comforting you more deeply than anyone has grieved you. That's truth, and to the extent you dwell on those past events, you are out of touch with reality. Base your life on truth. It's calling you forward." -From Walk With God

Regrets are tied to yesterday. Truth propels you forward.

258 REJECTION

The original meaning of the word rejection was to throw back. Rejection occurs when a person or a group of people exclude an individual and refuse to acknowledge or accept them. Abandonment is a similar term, meaning to desert someone, to leave and never return.

When you are going through difficult circumstances, you may sometimes be rejected and abandoned by others. Know that you are not alone. The Old Testament prophets were often rejected and disrespected. They ended up in lions' dens, pits, and were martyred. Joseph, whose story is recorded in Genesis, was rejected by his family and his brothers sold him into slavery. Moses experienced repeated rejections before Pharaoh agreed to release the slaves.

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul was stoned by one group of people who rejected his message, run out of town elsewhere, and escaped with his life by being let over the wall in a basket. Peter and John were imprisoned when their message was rejected, and Stephen experienced the ultimate rejection. He was martyred after preaching one of the greatest messages recorded in the New Testament.

Everyone experiences rejection. It is impossible to go through life without feeling rejected at some time. God Himself experienced rejection. In Numbers 14:11 the Lord asked Moses: *"How long will these people reject me? How long will they not believe me, with all the signs which I have performed among them"* (Numbers 14:11).

Jesus experienced rejection. The prophet Isaiah said concerning Jesus: *"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not"* (Isaiah 53:3). Jesus came to His own people and they rejected Him and He was rejected in His own hometown (Mark 6:4; John 1:11). Like Jesus, you will be rejected by some people simply because of your faith and the fact that you are not of this world (John 15:18-19).

Rejection is a feeling, but we do not live the Christian life on the basis of feelings. We live by faith in God. We do not live in the natural. We live in the supernatural. Regardless of what others think, you are who the Lord says you are. As a Believer, you belong to the family of God (Romans 8:16). You are so valuable that Jesus died for you (John 3:16).

Do not view rejection as a negative thing. If you have made Jesus the Lord of your life, then He is guiding each aspect of your life. The fact that you are rejected by a person, group, job, college, etc., may be part of His plan for you. God guides through closed doors as well as open doors.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
(Matthew 5:11-12)

He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me. (Luke 10:16)

259 RELATIONSHIP

Religion is the belief in a god or a group of gods. It is an organized system of beliefs, rituals, and rules that dictate how to worship these gods. Religion is man's attempt to reach God and is based on works.

Relationship is a divine connection with God. It is God reaching down to man. A true relationship with Him involves accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is not based on anything you do, but on what God has done for you through His infinite grace and mercy at the cross.

Religion, with its rules and regulations, will not get you through the difficulties of life. Relationship with God will. He is a spiritual father, spouse, friend, and is closer than a brother. You foster relationship with God in the same way you develop close relationships with people: By spending time with Him.

Relationship will see you through tough times. Religion and ritual will fail you. Relationship will not.

260 REMEMBER

The Prophet Jeremiah knew what it was to experience affliction. In Lamentations chapter 3 he describes his experiences as darkness, premature aging, and having his bones broken. He felt hedged in and so chained by affliction so that he could not escape. He viewed himself like a target for the enemy and a derision to others. He had no peace or prosperity. He felt that God was ignoring his prayer as he walked a rocky, crooked road of life without strength and hope.

In the midst of this suffering however, Jeremiah drew a powerful conclusion :

This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" 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. (Lamentations 3:21-26, N)

When regrets assault you, when guilt or shame over the past attack you, and when your present circumstances overwhelm you remember this: The Lord's mercies and compassion never fail. They are new every morning. Great is His faithfulness.

261 REPORTS

We live in a negative world. Just watch the evening news. It is filled with negative reports. . Even the weather report is negative. Why not say "80% chance of sunshine" instead of "20% chance of severe storms"? After 28 minutes of negative reports that could drive you to go on depression medication, they present a brief story in the last couple of minutes to end the broadcast on a positive note.

The varied crises of life frequently involve negative reports. You may have received one recently. A bad health report, negative financial news, divorce papers, or bad news about one of your family members or friends.

The Bible is filled with bad reports. Ten spies returned with a negative report about the Promised Land. Job received word that his children were killed and his servants and herds captured by the enemy. Elijah fled when he heard the report that Jezebel was out to kill him. As Jarius hurried towards home bringing Jesus to his ailing daughter's side, a servant met him with the tragic news that the child was already dead.

Let's look at one of these "bad reports" in more detail. King Jehoshaphat received a negative report about a huge military assault coming against him (2 Chronicles 20). When Jehoshaphat heard that the enemy surrounded him, he cried out to God saying, *"We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us, nor do we know what to do"* (2 Chronicles 20:12).

If you do not know what to do about the negative report you have received then follow the steps Jehoshaphat took. He replaced fear with faith (2 Chronicles 20:3); he rose up to take action (2 Chronicles 20:5); and he refocused his attention on God instead of the problem (2 Chronicles 20:6). He sought and received revelation from God (2 Chronicles 20:14-18); responded in obedience (2 Chronicles 20:20); and reversed the curse on the enemy (2 Chronicles 20:22-24).

The Bible says a positive outlook and a good report strengthens a person (Proverbs 15:30). It will certainly do so in times of adversity. Faith is not just passive believing or wishful hoping. Faith is acting on the truth of God's Word despite negative reports. Claim these promises given to Jehoshaphat:

Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's... Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you. (portions of 2 Chronicles 20:15-17)

262 REPOSITIONING

When Isaac was living in Gerar in the land of the Philistines, the people stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug. The local herdsmen argued with Isaac's herdsmen claiming the water from these wells was theirs (Genesis 26).

Isaac called the names of these controversial wells Esek, which means contention, and Sitnah which means hatred. Isaac abandoned these wells and dug another well named Rehoboth, which means enlargement. This repositioned him in Beersheba, where he built an altar and called on the name of the Lord.

Difficulties of life, like the strife and contention Isaac experienced, are used by God to accomplish similar purposes in your life. They drive you to be repositioned in a new phase of the will of God. You may be called to a new ministry or a new place geographically. You may be called upon to relinquish the old in order to embrace the new.

What conflicts are you experiencing right now that God is using to reposition you to the center of His will?

263 RESISTANCE

When you work out with weights, you resist the weight by exerting your strength against it. This resistance enables you to grow stronger muscles. The same is true in the spiritual world. When you encounter a weight of difficulties you gain spiritual strength when you resist them in the power of the Lord.

When circumstances are not conducive to joy but you rejoice anyway, you gain spiritual strength by not giving in to depression and discouragement. When it is difficult to hope yet you do so like faithful Abraham who against hope believed in hope, you are increasing your spiritual strength. You grow stronger when you feel like giving up but you keep on going.

Resistance makes you stronger. *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).* Peter admonishes:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. (1 Peter 5:8-10)

Satan seeks those to devour. You do not have to be one of them.

"When you lift weights, you exert your strength against the weight. The resistance causes you to grow stronger. ..When you exercise the qualities of God against resistance it also causes you to grow stronger...When it is hardest to love, you love regardless and your love grows stronger. When your circumstances are not conducive to joy but you rejoice anyway, your joy increases. When it is hardest to do what is right but you do it anyway, when it is hard to hope but you hope anyway, when you feel like giving up but you keep going...that is when you grow stronger in God...So don't despise the resistance, but give thanks for it. Embrace the resistance." -Jonathan Cahn

264 REST

Rest is restorative for any type of trauma whether it be physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. First Kings chapter 19 relates a time when the Prophet Elijah was fearful and discouraged due to death threats from the evil Queen Jezebel. He fled to the wilderness, sat down under a juniper tree (a broom-tree), and asked God to let him die. If he really wanted to die, he could have just stayed where he was and Jezebel would have taken care of that!

Somehow, we have the idea that our prayers should always be polite and pious. Nice words don't grab God's attention, but He responds to heartfelt, honest cries for help. God knows what is in your heart. He knows when you are angry or depressed. He knows when you are tired and when you feel abandoned. When you have had enough of the circumstances of life, come to God in prayer and tell Him about it. He won't reject you. Share your true feelings. Linger in His presence.

Elijah poured out his heart to God and then fell asleep, probably from exhaustion. While he slept, an angel was dispatched to minister to him. God heard Elijah's prayer, gave him rest, and sent an angel to prepare food and water because the journey was too great for him.

You may think you can make it on your own, but you can't. When the journey grows too great for you, take time to get in the presence of God. Talk to Him. Worship Him. Stop running here and there and rest in Him. Heed Christ's call to *"Come apart and rest for a while..."* (Mark 6:31).

265 RESTORATION

During Christ's ministry on earth He restored eyesight, hearing, withered limbs, and broken lives. After Job's loss during a great trial of faith, God restored all he had lost—in fact He doubled it (Job 42:12-17).

God is a God of restoration. He declares:

For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord...(Jeremiah 30:17).

I'll make up for the years of the locust, the great locust devastation — Locusts savage, locusts deadly, fierce locusts, locusts of doom... (Joel 2:25, MSG).

Even today, I declare that I will restore double to you. (Zechariah 9:12)

The devil comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Jesus came that you might have abundant life (John 10:10). View trouble as an opportunity for God to bless you with more than what you originally had. He is the God of restoration in every area of life.

Most importantly, He is the God who restores your soul (Psalm 23:3).

266 RESURRECTION

I sat recently at the graveside of my husband who left for Heaven just a few months before my battle with a malignant brain tumor. As I reflected on all that had happened in the intervening weeks, I realized that I was sitting on the very spot where my body would be resurrected at the coming of the Lord.

The doctrine of the resurrection is a vital tenet of our faith because “... *if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain*” (1 Corinthians 15:13-14).

The resurrection confirms Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Romans 1:4); that He is supreme over all created beings (Ephesians 1:20-23); that Believers are justified (Romans 4:25); and that death is defeated (Hebrews 2:14).

Because of the resurrection of Jesus, you will also be resurrected and given a new body:

Behold I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. (Philippians 3:21)

Because of our firm belief in the resurrection and eternal life, my husband and I opted not to have the dates of our deaths on our tombstones. We have only the dates of our births and the scripture: “*And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die*” (John 11:26). If you are facing death or have lost a loved one recently, rejoice today in the truth of the resurrection. You are already living in eternal life because at the time of death, your spirit goes to be with God.

267 RETRIEVE

To “retrieve” means to recover and regain information about something that happened in the past. Often, when you try to remember something in the past you can’t seem to do it. Scientists have studied this phenomena and say it is not necessarily your memory that is the problem, but your ability to retrieve it. They say that regularly scheduling rehearsals of information will help you remember.

God repeatedly commanded His people to remember all He had done for them in the past. He scheduled regular feasts to commemorate events in the past, present, and future. These rehearsals enabled Israel to remember the faithfulness of God.

Instead of dwelling on failures or sins which have already been forgiven or on the bad things that have happened in your past, schedule some time today to retrieve positive memories of all God has done for you. Regularly rehearse these so that you will never forget and you can to retrieve these faith/building memories in challenging times in the future.

268 RETURN

Restoration always involves returning to the point of your defeat, your place of deviation from God’s Word, or your departure from your faith. The repeated appeal of the Old Testament prophets was to return.

After a marvelous military victory at Jericho, Israel was soundly defeated at the city of Ai (Joshua 7). When the sin that caused their defeat was dealt with, they were commanded by the Lord to return to Ai where they experienced a glorious victory (Joshua 8).

After 40 years in the wilderness, Moses was commanded to return to Egypt and deliver God’s people (Exodus 3).

After fleeing Queen Jezebel and a bout with depression, the prophet Elijah was commanded to return and anoint new kings over Syria and Israel and his successor, Elisha.

Return to the point of any failure you have experienced and reclaim victory.

Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 3:7)

269 RIPTIDE

It is a warm, balmy day and you are enjoying a swim in the ocean when all of a sudden you are caught in a riptide.

Rip currents, also called riptides, are strong, narrow currents that occur when water trapped between an underwater sand bar and the shore gives way and pushes back out to sea. The undertow is strong and dangerous. If you are caught in a riptide, you are cautioned not to fight it or try to get back to shore. Swim parallel to the shore until you are clear of the danger.

Sometimes circumstances rush in like a spiritual riptide. Everything within you says to fight back to get back to where you were. In order to survive spiritual riptides, don't fight in your natural strength or you will certainly go under. Relax and let God take control. He will get you to where you need to be.

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. (Isaiah 59:19)

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned or scorched, nor will the flame kindle upon you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...(Isaiah 42:2-3, TAB)

270 ROOTED

The word for today is rooted.

*As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him: **Rooted and built up in him, and established** in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:6-7)*

As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, you are to continue to walk in Him. The **bold-faced** words in this verse explains how you can do this through three examples:

-The agricultural example: You must be rooted in Him. Your growing depends on your environment. Are you planted in the Word of God? The parable in Mark 4 confirms the importance of receiving and retaining the Word of God.

-The seed sown by the wayside is snatched up by Satan.

-The seed sown on stony ground, has no root so when affliction arises they cease growing.

-The seed sown among thorns is choked out by the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things

-The seed sown on good ground represents those who hear the Word, receive it, and it brings forth fruit.

“The person who loves God is like a tree with deep roots. During a drought, when all the other trees are perishing, that tree will remain healthy and strong. There is no anxiety, for the commitment of that tree reaches beyond the circumstances of the storm. If we are to succeed in the midst of trouble, and if we are not to quit when the going gets tough, we need to get our roots down deep into the Lord, establishing a commitment in Christ that goes beyond our circumstances.” -Dr. David Jeremiah

-The architectural example: You must build your life on Him. The parable of the wise and foolish men in Matthew 7 demonstrates the importance of building your life on the Rock, Christ Jesus, and the Word of God. Storms and seismic activity in the spiritual

world come to everyone. When the shaking starts, if you are not rooted in Christ, grounded in faith, and established in God, you will fall. If your spiritual house is not on the right foundation, it will collapse.

-The legal example: “Established” in Hebrew means confirmed and verified like a legal document. Your legal document is the Word of God.

When you become deeply rooted you will be greatly blessed and able to stand strong in the midst of adversity:

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. (Psalm 1:1-3)

271 RUN

Many great men and women of God who have gone before you have run difficult races in life. The Word says...

Since we have such a huge crowd of men of faith watching us from the grandstands, let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back, and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up; and let us run with patience the particular race that God has set before us. (Hebrews 12:1, TLB)

Your race is unique to you. To finish it successfully you must eliminate everything that hinders you and run your race with patience, keeping your eyes on Jesus at the finish line (Hebrews 12:2). The Word from the Father to you today is:

Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life shall be many. I have taught you in the way of skillful and godly Wisdom [which is comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God]; I have led you in paths of uprightness. When you walk, your steps shall not be hampered [your path will be clear and open]; and when you run, you shall not stumble. (Proverbs 4:10-13, TAB)

Spiritually, some days are walking days, while others are running days. Whether you are hobbling through this day, barely walking, or running with great strength, the path will be clear before you. If you do stumble and fall, remember that...

“The winner is not the best runner; but the one who crosses the finish line... You won’t win this race by running it perfectly. No one does. But when you fall...no matter how great your fall, get up and keep going. And if you fall again, get up again. And if you keep falling, keep getting up again. And if you keep falling and getting up again, you’ll end up crossing the finish line and you will win the race. For this race and this faith are not to

those who run perfectly or never fall. Rather, those who win are those who get up after having fallen...” -Jonathan Cahn

The mile race that was held at the 1954 British Empire Games in Vancouver, B.C., is considered to be one of the greatest races of all time. It pitted the two fastest men in the world against each other: Roger Bannister and John Landy.

From the start, the race was clearly between these two men. Unlike most runners, Landy's method was to move to the head of the pack early and by the sheer power of his physique outlast the other runners who would reserve strength for a final thrust at the finish. Following his usual approach, Landy started fast. Soon the other runners were dropping back, leaving Landy out in front with Bannister trailing him. Landy and Bannister were maintaining a blazing pace, one that would surely set a new world record. But who would get to the finish line first?

As the runners came to the final lap, Landy was in the lead ahead of Bannister, as he had been throughout the race. Ahead of him stretched the finish line. Somewhere behind him was Bannister. Suddenly, a deafening roar arose in the stands. Landy knew what it meant. Bannister was making a last desperate effort to catch him.

The finish line was getting closer and closer, and the roar of the crowd was growing louder and louder. Landy knew that Bannister was catching up, but where exactly was he? Just before crossing the finish line, Landy turned his head to the left so he could see where Bannister was. Seizing the opportunity, Bannister threw himself past Landy on his right side and beat him across the finish line.

Looking back cost Landy the race! As runners in this race of life, we are to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Don't be distracted by the roar of the crowd. Don't be distracted by other runners. Don't look back to the old life.

“Whatever you are facing right now, this is not the time for you to give up. On the contrary—it is time to jump back in the race and run with all your might to fulfill your God given purpose and destiny.” - Rick Renner



S

272 SAND

Beach sand holds many spiritual analogies to help you as you navigate your way through difficult times:

- Sand shifts and causes erosion during storms. Don't let the storms erode your experience with God. You are built on the rock Christ Jesus.
- Sand castles are beautiful, especially when created by skilled artists. Whether elaborate or simple however, they are all temporary. They eventually wash away, as do the temporary pleasures of this world. Do not mourn the loss of the temporary. Focus on the eternal.
- Sand waves are ripples in the sand formed by strong currents or wind. Entire fields of sand waves lurk underwater and continue to build to a level that causes problems to ships trying to navigate through them. Unresolved negative emotions like anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness have the same effect in your life. These emotions are easy to harbor in difficult times. Reject them.
- When lightning strikes sand, it melts into a tubular structure called a fulgurite. The shape follows the path of the bolt as it travels through the sand, instantly melting it. It is no longer sand, but is permanently changed. You are a new creature in Christ, touched by His Light, permanently changed, and no longer tossed about by the tides of life.
- Sometimes you may feel like you are climbing a sand dune, taking one step forward and then sliding back. Persevere and you will get to the top.
- God's thoughts regarding you are more in number than the sand (Psalm 139:17-18).
- God set the boundaries of the sea at the sandy shoreline (Jeremiah 5:22). He has set the limits of your trial and it will not exceed that line.

-Jesus wrote something so powerful in the sand that all the accusers of the woman caught in adultery slinked away. No matter what your situation is today or what it was in the past, He is writing something new over your life.

And finally:

*Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us.
Footprints on the sands of time.*

-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

273 SCARS

The scars you bear are reminders of the pain of your past. Some scars are seen, others are unseen. Some scars are in the body, and some in your heart, soul, and mind.

You can look at those scars and dwell on the pain of the past, or you can view them as reminders of all God has brought you through and praise Him for what they represent. Someday, God will remove all scars.

The lyrics of the song “*The Only Scars In Heaven*” reflect this great truth:

[Verse 1]

*If I had only known the last time would be the last time
I would have put off all the things I had to do
I would have stayed a little longer, held on a little tighter
Now what I'd give for one more day with you*

[Verse 2]

*'Cause there's a wound here in my heart where something's missing
And they tell me that it's gonna heal with time
But I know you're in a place where all your wounds have been erased
And knowing yours are healed is healing mine*

[Verse 3]

*I know the road you walked was anything but easy
You picked up your share of scars along the way
Oh, but now you're standing in the sun,
You've fought your fight and your race is run
The pain is all a million miles away*

[Chorus]

*The only scars in Heaven, they won't belong to me and you
There'll be no such thing as broken and all the old will be made new
And the thought that makes me smile now even as the tears fall down
Is that the only scars in Heaven are the hands that hold you now.*

-Mark Hall and Matthew West

274 SEASONS

The lives and ministries of Believers are governed by spiritual seasons that are analogous to those in the natural world. It is important to understand these seasons so you can cooperate with what God is doing in your life.

You will go through repeated cycles of spiritual winters, springs, summers, and autumns during your journey of faith. You will experience seasons of good and bad times, seasons of dormancy, times of planting, cultivating, and harvesting in every ministry or project you undertake and in life in general.

"Everything in life is seasonal. We can't change the seasons; we can only adapt to them."
- Dr. Edwin Cole

The psalmist declares:

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit **in his season**; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalm 1:1-3)*

Notice the phrase "in his season". If you are a true Believer who is delighting in God's law, you have a season! Your "season" is the time when God fulfills His specific plan and promises in your life.

The difficult season you are experiencing right now will pass, just as seasons change in the natural world. This season will not last forever. God has a specific timing--a new season--for the vision, ministry, and spiritual harvest He has planned for you:

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. (Habakkuk 2:3).

275 SECRETS

God has secrets. There are some thing He has not and will not reveal:

There are secrets the Lord your God has not revealed to us, but these words that he has revealed are for us and our children to obey forever. (Deuteronomy 29:29. TLB)

God may give you revelation concerning some things that occur along your journey of life, and you will understand the “why” behind your difficult circumstances. For other challenges of life, you may never know the purpose. For some tragedies, in our thinking, there seems to be no adequate explanations.

The first sin resulted from Eve wanting to be as God and know all things. We still want to know “why”, but sometimes that is not revealed. Settle it in your heart that you will continue to serve God even if you don’t receive the revelation you desire. Rejoice in what is revealed, and accept that for which there is no explanation.

276 SEEK

The Bible says:

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31-33, NIV)

You will have many needs during this journey of life, especially during challenging times. If you follow the divine order of this passage, all you need will be provided.

You are commanded to “seek first” God’s Kingdom and His righteousness. Do not be consumed by your needs and the challenges you face, but focus on God’s Kingdom. As you do, all you need will be supplied.

The Bible promises that “...*they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing*” (Psalm 34:10).

Seek God by humbling yourself and repenting of and forsaking sin. God promises:

“..ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”
(Jeremiah 29:13)

Immerse yourself in His word, prayer, and worship. Seek His presence continuously. Live a Kingdom lifestyle and focus your time, attention, and resources on the work of the Kingdom. All else will be supernaturally provided.

277 SEPARATION

Separation is never easy, whether it be by distance, death, or divorce. Separation is the end of something. Things will never again be the same.

You never need fear separation from God. He declares:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

No matter the depth of your loss, rest in this assurance today:

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never lose it or perish throughout the ages. [To all eternity they shall never by any means be destroyed.] And no one is able to snatch them out of My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater and mightier than all [else]; and no one is able to snatch [them] out of the Father's hand. (John 10:28-29, TAB)

278 SHADOWS

Shadows will cross your spiritual pathway from time to time along the road of life. It may be a shadow of loss, discouragement, sorrow, pain, or other difficult circumstances.

It may seem gloomy today, but remember that shadows are not the reality. They are only a reflection. God has promised to take you through every shadow, even the shadows in the valley of death (Psalm 23:4).

Someday soon the Lord's shadow will fall across your pathway and He will escort you home into His presence.

*So I am watching quietly every day,
Whenever the sun shines brightly I rise and say,
Surely it is the shining of His face.
And look unto the gates of His high place, beyond the sea;
For I know He is coming shortly to welcome me.*

*And when a shadow falls across the window of my room,
Where I am working my appointed task;
I lift my head to watch the door and ask, If He has come;
And the angel answers softly in my home,
Only a few more shadows, and He will come.*

279 SHAKING

Growing up in California, I am familiar with earthquakes. The San Fernando earthquake, the Loma Prieta earthquake near the Santa Cruz mountains,, and the Northridge earthquake were some big ones. In 1987, the Whittier Narrows earthquake struck my home down of Whittier damaging practically all of the stores on the main street, killing eight people, and wrecking thousands of homes. Only those structures built to code to withstand earthquakes remained standing.

The Bible speaks of spiritual shaking which God allows to accomplish His purposes. If you are going through a “shaking”, you can know that it is not without purpose. The Bible says that God shakes heaven, earth, the sea, the land and all nations so that His house will be filled with His glory (Haggai 2:6-7). You may be in a time of shaking right now, but hold steady. His glory is going to be revealed in you. God declares...

...Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. (Hebrews 12:26-28)

In the natural world, structures that are not built properly collapse during earthquakes. The same is true in the spiritual world. A time of spiritual shaking comes so that which cannot be shaken may remain. Hold steady as God shakes that which needs to be removed from your life so that those things which cannot be shaken will remain.

Hudson Taylor, while training new missionaries, set a full glass of water on the table and then struck the table with his fist. As the glass shook, the water splashed over the rim. He told the trainees: “*You will be struck by the blows of many sorrows and troubles in China, but remember they will only splash out of you what is in you.*”

In this time of shaking in your life, what will splash out of you?

280 SHAME

Multitudes around the globe are carrying heavy burdens of shame. Some are ashamed because of their own sinful conduct. Some carry shame because it has been imposed upon them by others who have condemned them. Still others have inherited a cycle of shameful behavior or feelings of shame from their parents. Some feel their present adversities are a result of their sin, and that heaps even more shame upon them.

Shame is an emotion that will keep you forever shackled to the past. It will prevent you from rising up to fulfill your God-given destiny. It may be the shame of divorce, abortion, sexual abuse, abandonment, or the shame of every sinful act you may have committed or that was committed against you.

God's strategy for shattering the shackles of shame in your life is not psychology, self-improvement, or group therapy. It is divine revelation. His strategy is based on His Word. That revelation is that Jesus bore your sin on the cross, just as He bore your shame.

As a Believer, you no longer bear your sin, right? So why do you continue to bear your shame? You should be...

*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, **despising the shame**, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)*

He bore all the sins of the world, but what He despised most was the associated shame. He bore it so that you wouldn't have to. Accept this truth and then pause and listen closely. You will hear the sound of your shackles of shame breaking in the spirit world.

For further study of shame, obtain "*Shattering The Shackles Of Shame*" available free at <http://www.harvestime.org>

281 SHEPHERD

Jesus compares Himself to a shepherd:

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:11-15)

The sheep know their shepherd's voice and will only follow him. A good shepherd never leaves his sheep alone. He provides for their needs, tends to their wounds, and protects them from predators. He will lay down his life for them.

Psalms 23 describes the loving benefits extended by your Shepherd. He is your provision (verse 1); your peace (verse 2); your pathway (verse 3); your protection (verse 4); your preparation (verse 5); and your promise (verse 6).

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever. (Psalm 23)

What is your view of God? Do you view Him as a distant, uncaring Lord or as a loving shepherd?

Further study of Psalm 23 is available free at <http://www.harvestime.org>

282 SIDELINED

To be sidelined means to be prevented from competing or taking an active part in something. You may feel sidelined today because of your health, circumstances, relationships, or your duties as a caregiver. You may no longer be able to take an active part in what you once did for the Lord. Like a team member sidelined in an athletic event, you can only watch from the perimeter.

But have you ever wondered about who the people are on the sidelines with the player who has been ejected? They are coaches, doctors, and trainers. They are there to meet every need of a player who has been sidelined and get him back into the game.

If you are feeling sidelined in the spiritual world know that God, your spiritual Coach and your Divine Physician, is right there with you preparing you for the future. You will not be sidelined forever. You will get back in the game. Use this time wisely to prepare for the future.

283 SIGNS

Our God is a God of signs.

He set the stars in the sky as signs. He gave the sign of the rainbow to confirm His promises after the flood. He sent numerous signs to Pharaoh through the ministry of Moses. Gideon received a sign of the fleece. God moved the sundial back and stopped the moon and sun to enable His people to experience victory. Many of the prophets declared their messages with accompanying signs, and Believers are to minister with the signs of God following.

Genesis 50:24-25 records Joseph's dying request that his body be interred in the Promised Land. All during the long years of Egyptian slavery, Joseph's coffin served as a sign to remind God's people that someday they would be set free and return to their homeland.

Israel looked in faith on a coffin, believing the promise that they would one day be set free. As Believers, we look to an empty tomb that confirms that someday we will be freed from the shackles of this world and go to our true home.

Things won't always be like they are today. Hold on to that hope. Remember the signs.

284 SIN

When you encounter difficult times in your journey, the enemy tries to make you believe that the issues you are facing are because of your past sins. Satan is the accuser who continuously brings up everything in your past and tries to make you believe you are being punished by God and that He no longer loves you.

If you are a true Believer in Jesus Christ and have repented of your sins, the next time Satan does this, silence him with these truths from Gods Word:

-Your sins have been blotted out: *"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake..." (Isaiah 43:25).*

-Your sins are forgotten: *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12).* God doesn't even know what you are talking about when you rehearse past sins that have been forgiven. He doesn't remember them.

-Your sins have been cast behind God's back: *"For You have cast all my sins behind Your back" (Isaiah 38:17).* He cannot see them anymore.

-Your sins have been erased: *"I've wiped the slate of all your wrongdoings. There's nothing left of your sins. Come back to me, come back. I've redeemed you" (Isaiah 44:22, MSG).*

-Your sins have been removed: *"As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psa1m 103:11-12).* God doesn't say north and south, because there are limits on those directions with the north and south poles. But if you travel east and continue traveling around the world in that direction, you will always be going east.

285 SMALL

In 2 Kings chapter 6, some young prophets came to Elisha with a problem. They had borrowed an axe for their building project and lost it in the muddy water. They took the prophet to the place where it had been lost, Elisha put a branch in the water, and the axe floated to the surface.

This miraculous event confirms that God is just as concerned about what might be perceived as "small issues" in your life as He is about what you perceive as "big issues" like war, human trafficking, etc.

When asked if it was okay to pray about "small things", G. Campbell Morgan responded: "Is anything big to God?" In other words, everything you pray about is "small" to the Lord. Don't hesitate to bring every need to the Lord, whether you consider it to be large or small.

Another tremendous truth in this account is that the ax head was retrieved and restored to its original purpose. Mankind is like that ax head. He has fallen and is stuck in the mud and mire of sin. The stick cast into the mire represents Jesus Christ who the prophet referred to as "a branch" in Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12. Only through the cross of Christ can mankind rise from the mire of sin, be spiritually resurrected, restored to His rightful owner, and placed back into the hands of God to fulfill his intended purpose.

286 SOARING

Many birds flap their wings with furious movements in order to fly. Eagles don't do this. They soar! In fact, they glide about ninety percent of their air time. God has made them with an instinctive ability to anticipate air currents and they soar by using thermal currents of air created by the surrounding terrain. They spread their wings and tail feathers, the wind carries them to new heights, and then they glide down to catch another upward thermal.

Do you want to remain earth-bound spiritually, or do you want to fly high with the eagles? The choice is yours. You can continue to be bogged down in your troubles or rise above them and soar like an eagle.

How do you learn to fly spiritually? Wait on the Lord in prayer, meditation, worship, and the Word and associate with other "eagle Christians" who will accompany you to new spiritual heights.

This promise is yours:

He gives power to the faint and weary, and to him who has no might He increases strength [causing it to multiply and making it to abound]. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and [selected] young men shall feebly stumble and fall exhausted; But those who wait for the Lord [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] shall change and renew their strength and power; they shall lift their wings and mount up [close to God] as eagles [mount up to the sun]; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint or become tired. (Isaiah 40:29-31, TAB)

You already have your spiritual wings. All you must do is learn to use them.

287 SOLITUDE

Solitude is not the same as loneliness. Solitude is the state of being alone by choice for a purpose such as rest, relaxation, recovery, and for spiritual purposes.

There is great benefit in spiritual solitude in the presence of the Lord. You will be renewed and refreshed. You have time to deal with problems and issues in your life. You can immerse yourself in God, His Word, and worship. Jesus arose early and sought solitude in the mountains where He went to pray.

During difficult times, solitude is vital. When problems and confusion surround you, heed God's command to "...Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

"It is significant that the Psalm in which the words 'be still' occur is filled with noise and commotion. The earth shakes, the waters roar and are troubled, the mountains threaten to tumble into the midst of the sea, the nations rage, the kingdoms are moved, and the sound of war is heard throughout the land. Then a voice is heard out of the silence saying, 'Be still and know that I am God'." -A.W. Tozer

Don't withdraw from God in times of adversity. Withdraw to Him.

288 SOLUTIONS

A search for solutions is common in times of crisis, but are you searching for your own solution or God's answer? Often, we try to manipulate ourselves out of difficult circumstances, only to find our plans do not work.

In the book of Jonah, we find the disobedient prophet in the belly of a great fish prepared by God to get His errant prophet back on course. It states that Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and nights (Jonah 1:17). Chapter two records Jonah's prayer of repentance, after which the fish vomited him out on dry land (Jonah 2:10).

The question is, what was Jonah doing the first two days before God delivered him? Given his history of self-will recorded in Jonah chapter one, he was probably trying to figure out his own solution to his problem. After a couple of futile days, Jonah finally turned to the Lord in repentance and was delivered.

Don't spend another day in the belly of the fish of your circumstances trying to find your own solutions. Turn to God in prayer right now and seek His solutions.

Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:12-13)

289 STAND

God instructed the nation of Israel to cross over the Jordan to their Promised Land, but it was the flood season and the river was overflowing its banks. God said: *"You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan"* (Joshua 3:8 TAB). When they obeyed God's command, the waters were rolled back and they crossed over safely.

There comes a time in your spiritual journey that, despite the raging river of circumstances, you must take the first step of faith and stand firm on God's Word.

"God needs those willing to step right into death if need be, and to stand there steadfast until all are safely over. Because that little band of priests did so, holding firm with the ark in the place where death threatened, a whole nation passed through Jordan. Not one soul remained behind! Of course it was not they but the ark of God that opened the way into a land of promise...But note this too: It was they who took it there and held it there. By their act of faith in standing with the Lord amidst death, others passed into abundant life." - Watchman Nee

God's Word to you today is to stand. Stand fast despite your challenges. Stand fast in the midst of your sorrow or depression. Stand fast in the raging circumstances around you. And as you stand in the place of what seems to be impending death, you will safely pass over and bring other fearful souls with you to new life on the other side.

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **Stand** therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Ephesians 6:13-18)*

290 STEADFAST

One who is steadfast is loyal, unswerving, fixed, and unchanging. At a time when so much in your world is in an upheaval and changing, there is Someone who remains steadfast and never changes. His Word declares:

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Psalm 145:8, ESV)

For I am the Lord, I change not... (Malachi 3:6)

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

You can depend on Jesus because He does not change. Yesterday, today, and forever He remains steadfast in the midst of your changing world.

291 STEPS

The prophet Jeremiah declared: "*Oh Lord I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*" (Jeremiah 10:23). The good news is that there is One who does direct your steps, is doing so at this very moment, and will do so no matter where your path leads. Get in step with the Spirit of God:

If we live by the [Holy] Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. [If by the Holy Spirit we have our life in God, let us go forward walking in line, our conduct controlled by the Spirit.] (Galatians 5:25, TAB)

As you navigate the difficult paths of life, God sees every step you take (Job 31:4) and He has promised:

-Your steps will not slip: "*Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip*" (Psalm 18:36).

-Your steps are ordered by God: *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delights in his way” (Psalm 37:23).*

-God will set you in the way of His steps: *“Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps” (Psalm 85:13).*

Very often, your route is a slow and gradual climb as you take one step at a time. A step out of sorrow. A step back to health. A step out of addiction towards sobriety. Someday soon, you will pause and look back over the path you have come and realize just how far you have ascended on this journey of life by just taking it step-by-step.

Perhaps you are reluctant or fearful to take the next step in your journey. Mark Batterson notes:

“There comes a moment when you need to take a radical step of faith. And that moment will define every moment that follows. The first step is always the longest and hardest.”
-Mark Batterson

The priests bearing the Ark of God had to take the first step into the Jordan River before the waters parted. As you begin this day and start to navigate the twists and turns it may bring forth, do not be afraid to take the first step. Pray this prayer: *“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me” (Psalm 119:133).*

292 STONES

In the flower bed in front of the medical offices where I received radiation for cancer, former patients had placed small decorative stones. These were painted with words of inspiration and scriptures to encourage others who would pass this way.

Jacob set up a stone of remembrance in Genesis chapter 28 after receiving a dream from the Lord:

And Jacob awoke from his sleep and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it. He was afraid and said, How to be feared and revered is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gateway to heaven! And Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone he had put under his head, and he set it up for a pillar (a monument to the vision in his dream), and he poured oil on its top [in dedication]. And he named that place Bethel [the house of God]...And this stone which I have set up as a pillar (monument) shall be God's house [a sacred place to me]... (Genesis 28 portions of verses 16-22, TAB)

When Israel crossed the Jordan into their Promised Land, they also set up stone memorials taken from the pathway where they crossed the river (Joshua 4). These stones were to remind the people and future generations of God's miracle working power in bringing them to their destiny.

Perhaps it is time to set up your own spiritual stone of remembrance by recalling all God has done and is doing in your life.

293 STRENGTH

Really needing strength for this day? Kay Arthur notes:

“Knowing God enables us, as Believers, to display strength in times of stress and take action when the rest of the world seems to be immobile.”

Meditate on these promises and commands as you seek strength for this day:

...Your strength will equal your days. (Deuteronomy 33:25)

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. (1 Chronicles 16:11)

...for the joy of the Lord is your strength. (Nehemiah 8:10)

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalms 18:2)

The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalms 27:1)

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. (Psalms 28:7)

But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him. (Psalms 37:39-40)

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:26)

He gives strength to the weary, and increases the power of the weak. (Isaiah 40:29)

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. (Isaiah 40:31)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (Ephesians 6:10)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

294 STRESS

Stress is a physical, mental, or emotional response to situations that causes physical, mental, and emotional tension. Stress can result from both positive and negative circumstances. Things like a geographical relocation, a new job, or a new baby although positive experiences, may also be stressful. Negative circumstances such as a prolonged illness, the death of a loved one, a poor working or living situation, and difficult relationships are certainly causes of stress. Sometimes it is the result of inflexible goals or a person's rigid personality. Stress is related to health conditions like depression, high blood pressure, unresolved anger, etc.

Stress results from a lack of trust in God. If you really trusted Him to take care of your circumstances, you would not be stressed out about them. Analyze why you are stressed. Like David, question yourself: *"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?"* Then, whatever the reason for your concern, tell yourself by faith: *"Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you ..."* (Psalm 42:5-6).

Boldly declare that the Lord will help you confront all of the situations causing you stress: *"So we take comfort and are encouraged and confidently and boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be seized with alarm-I will not fear or dread or be terrified. What can man do to me?"* (Hebrews 13:6, TAB).

The Bible says to cast your cares on the Lord (Psalm 55:22). The word "cast" implies a continuous action. You may cast your cares on God, yet stressful thoughts return. When they do, cast again!

Turn every stressful thought into a prayer. The Word says: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:6-7).

Praise and worship God, because it is impossible to remain stressed when you give yourself wholly to expressing your love and gratitude to God.

295 STRETCH

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul penned these words:

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

When Paul wrote those words, he was a prisoner in Rome awaiting trial and possible execution. He was an old man facing the end of his life. You most likely are not experiencing these

identical circumstances, but you may be hindered by other issues in which you find yourself presently embroiled. Let's examine Paul's declarations so we can apply them in our own lives.

Paul was convinced that God was not through with him yet. He said he had not yet apprehended, meaning taken hold of, grasped, and fulfilled all that God had planned for him. The same is true for you. If you aren't dead, you aren't done!

Paul had one goal. He was forgetting what was behind and looking ahead in hopeful anticipation towards the future. He was stretching and straining towards it. Paul had some pretty difficult things to put behind him, such as being personally responsible for the persecution and death of Believers. He also had some pretty great things in his past: Miracles, deliverances, and tremendously successful evangelistic campaigns. Paul chose to put these all behind him, both the bad and the good, the gains and the losses.

Paul was stretching towards his goal (verse 14) which was *"to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."* Paul wanted to fulfill his calling and finish well. No matter what your present circumstances, this should be your goal also. Difficult circumstances will stretch you, but keep on straining towards what lies ahead as Paul did. Do not stop advancing.

Newton's first law of motion, also known as the Law of Inertia, states that an object at rest remains at rest unless acted on by an external force. Let the external force of God's power flow through you today and keep you moving ahead. You are never too old, too young, too handicapped, or too poor to stretch towards the goal of finishing well.

296 STUMBLE

To stumble means to trip, lose your balance, and almost fall. Perhaps you are feeling off balance today mentally, physically, emotionally, or physically. Know that you do not walk this road alone:

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.
(Psalm 37:23-24)

Just because others are falling does not mean you have to fall. God promises: *"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee"* (Psalm 91:7).

If you do make a misstep and fall, God upholds and raises up those who have fallen and are bowed down because of the difficulties of life: *"The Lord upholds all that fall, and raises up all those that be bowed down"* (Psalm 145:14).

You may stumble from time to time, but when you do then get right back up and continue your journey.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude verses 24-25)

297 STUMP

In the vision of God's judgment of King Nebuchadnezzar recorded in Daniel 4, the stump of the tree and its roots would be left, meaning that Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom would be restored once he acknowledged that the true God of Heaven ruled.

The stump would be surrounded by brass and iron so that it could not be destroyed. Perhaps this referred to a fence that confined the mentally distraught king in safety or the reference is merely symbolic. Whatever it means, it implies supernatural protection.

You may feel like all you have left is a "stump" of your former life, but know that God is supernaturally protecting that spark of life. From the roots of this stump new growth will eventually burst forth. New visions. New dreams. Wait for it.

298 SUFFERING

Suffering is pain that is experienced physically, mentally, or emotionally. It is distress that results from physical affliction, psychological or emotional troubles, loss, adversities, and tragedies. Here are a few facts regarding suffering.

-Suffering entered the world because of sin. From the time of the first sin committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, evil entered the world and suffering has been part of its tragic manifestations (Genesis 3:17-18).

-Suffering is not always due to personal sin. While it is true that you can suffer some consequences of personal sin, all suffering is not caused by this. That is one of the key revelations of the book of Job. A Believer may suffer because of their faith in God, their ministry, others around them, and circumstances of life.

-Suffering has purpose. There is a spiritual reason behind the suffering of the righteous (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6). Satan cannot afflict a Believer without the permission of God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6). Suffering always has divine purpose: *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7).* It is actually through suffering that you experience true joy (James 1:2).

-Remember these six "p"s of suffering:

- Purpose: God has divine purpose in your suffering.
- Profitable: Your suffering is profitable if you submit to God and trust Him.
- Presence: God is with you in your suffering.
- Prove: Your faith will be proven by the difficulties.
- Produce: Your suffering will produce positive spiritual qualities in your life.
- Perspective: You will emerge with a new perspective.

299 SUNRISE

It is sunrise, the beginning of a new day. It can also be sunrise in your soul if you will praise God despite your heartache, despite your loss, or despite your health.

Bless the Lord this morning and worship His holy name through the words of this song.

*The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes*

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before, O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name*

*You're rich in love and You're slow to anger
Your name is great and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find*

*And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore*

-Matt Redman

300 SUNSET

Endings can be just as beautiful as beginnings when you understand the miracle of a sunset. Do not cling to the fading light of this day. Whether this day or season of life was hard or easy, it is over. You will never experience it again. It is now in the past.

Life is full of sunsets and sunrises, both in the natural and spiritual worlds. Before the new day can dawn, the sun must set on the old one. Sunsets point towards new beginnings. If the old did not pass away, the new could not come.

Take some time to reflect on the beauty of the sunset this evening. Another day is ending, and God has remained faithful. A new day will dawn, and He will continue to be faithful.

*From sunrise brilliance to sunset beauty,
Lift up his praise from dawn to dusk! (Psalm 113:3, TPT)*

301 SUPPOSITION

A supposition is an idea or statement that someone assumes to be true although they have no evidence to support it. It is dangerous to go through difficult challenges making suppositions or assumptions.

When the Apostle Paul was enroute to Rome, the crew of the ship he was on supposed it was okay to set sail:

*Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west. And when the south wind blew softly, **supposing** that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.
(Acts 27:9-13)*

The crew supposed it was okay to sail. Their error of supposition occurred because of a lack of spiritual perception and it resulted in disaster. Paul had a spiritual perspective, a direct word from God, which they should have heeded.

As you navigate your personal storm, do not make suppositions. Do not make assumptions that you should do what others are pressuring you to do or not to do. Wait until you have spiritual perspective. Wait until you hear from God and you know that you know.

302 SURRENDER

We sing the old hymn “I surrender all,” but do we really understand what surrender is? Surrender does not mean giving up. It is not resigning yourself to your fate. Surrender is a choice you deliberately make to stop trying to control everything in your life and let go and let God have His way.

True surrender demands nothing. It does not negotiate and does not try to make a deal with God. True surrender is when you give your plans, ideas, ambitions, dreams, and desires to God. It is relinquishing the good for the best and acknowledging His authority over your life. God is in control of your destiny, not the doctors, radiation, chemo, insurance companies, or lawyers.

Surrender is learned in the School of Gethsemane where, in the mist of the greatest trial of your life, you are able to say: “Not my will but Thine be done.”

“We are dealing with the crucifixion of the will, not the obliteration of the will. Crucifixion always had a resurrection tied to it. God is not destroying the will but transforming it so that over a process of time and experience we can freely will what God wills.” -Richard Foster

Embrace true surrender as did John the Baptist who declared: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

303 SURROUNDED

You are not alone as you face this day. You are not alone in the midnight hour. If you could see into the spirit world, you would be able to discern the fact that you are surrounded.

-You are surrounded by angels: “For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways” (Psalm 91:11).

-You are surrounded by the shield of the Lord’s favor: “For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield” (Psalm 5:12).

-You are surrounded by Believers who stand ready to help you if you let them know your need: “Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me” (Psalm 142:7).

-You are surrounded by a great crowd of witnesses in the heavens who are cheering you on:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

-You are surrounded by God who is singing and shouting your deliverance:

You are a hiding place for me; You, Lord, preserve me from trouble, You surround me with songs and shouts of deliverance. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]! (Psalm 32:7, TAB)

Do as the psalmist admonishes: Selah. Pause and calmly think on these truths.

304 SUSTENANCE

Sustenance refers to something that sustains or comforts. Spiritual sustenance is that which sustains and comforts spiritually. It is joy and fulfillment that no earthly experience can satisfy. As Israel in the wilderness, you need daily sustenance for your journey through uncharted territory.

In Old Testament times, the priests' food was the sacrifice. As a born-again Believer, you are a priest of God (Revelation 1:4-6). As a spiritual priest, you live on the food of the priests which is the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Spiritual sustenance comes when you spend time with God in prayer, worship, and the Word.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
(Matthew 5:6)

In the natural world, it is often said "You are what you eat." In the spiritual world, that is true also. You are what you partake of, what you allow into your heart, mind, and spirit. Today, make a decision to partake of only that which is good and holy.

...as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.
(1 Peter 2:2)

305 SYNC

Being out of sync is described as a situation in which two or more people or things do not move or happen together at the same time and speed because they do not agree. It is also defined as not sharing similar goals and desires and having a differing perspective.

Feeling out of sync today? Maybe you are out of sync with people around you because they do not seem to understand what you are going through. Perhaps you feel out of sync with God because He doesn't seem to be moving in the time frame you desire.

Did you stop to think that maybe the problem is you? Maybe it is your timing that is out of sync with God's plan. You want it right now and God is saying "wait".

Maybe the people around you are not uncaring, but they just don't know how to express their feelings to you. Only a person involved in an experience can truly understand the emotions of it. There are some joys and sorrows you experience which no one else can understand or share. Proverbs 14:10 in the Passion Translation says: *"Don't expect anyone else to fully understand both the bitterness and the joys of all you experience in life."*

Whatever the reason for your feelings, you can easily get back in sync. Repent of your negative thoughts and feelings towards God and others and get back in sync with His plan, direction, and timing. Learn to walk in agreement with God: *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).*

306 SYNERGY

Synergy is the cooperative interaction of two or more people to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate efforts.

Romans 8:28 states that, *“And we know that in all things God works for the good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose.”* The original language reads, “God works together all things for good to the ones called”. The Greek for “works together” as used here is *“synergeo”*, from which the English word *“synergy”* comes.

“Synergeo”, or *“synergy”*, refers to a compounded result that is greater than the sum of its parts. Applied spiritually, this verse means that every part of your life, whether it be bad or good, is being synergized together by God for good and to accomplish His purposes!

Ministry-wise, the Bible declares: *“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20)*. This is what might be called a *“synergetic”* relationship. It reveals that when two or three Believers come together in His name, Jesus Christ is right there with us!

In difficult times it is important to maintain synergetic relationships and/or develop new ones. As part of the Body of Christ, we are better together. You may find a new prayer partner, become a friend of someone in need, or find a mentor that will help you grow through your difficulties. Supernaturally linked together, you will accomplish more than you can alone.

God has some divine appointments for you that will result in synergy. Don't miss them!



T

307 TAPESTRY

A tapestry is a beautiful creation composed of many threads and is usually hand-woven on a loom. When you view the backside of the tapestry, it appears to be a mess of jumbled threads, but when you turn it over to the right side a beautiful pattern is revealed.

When God made the promise in Jeremiah 29:11, the word for “plans” in this verse in the Hebrew language speaks of the skillful weaving of a fabric:

*For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.
(Jeremiah 29:11, TAB)*

Jonathan Cahn notes:

“The plans God has for your life are intricately woven plans...and He will take every thread of your life...every joy, every mistake, every failing, every victory, every defeat, every gain, every loss, every regret, every wound, and every question—and will knit every thread carefully, skillfully, and meticulously to become a perfect tapestry.”

Your life may seem to be a pattern of jumbled threads right now, but you are not looking at the finished product. You are viewing it from a limited perspective. Someday you will see the beautiful tapestry completed and you will understand.

308 TEARS

It’s okay to cry. Jesus wept. He wept at Lazarus’ tomb and over the city of Jerusalem.

God not only sees your tears, but He values them. He collects your tears in a bottle and records them in a book (Psalm 56:8). In Heaven, He has an inventory of every tear you have shed.

Weeping is an important part of emotional healing, especially when it is done in community as the Bible instructs. We are to “*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*” (Romans 12:15).

God promises that *"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him"* (Psalm 126:5-6).

God's eyes are upon you when you cry. He hears you!

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry...The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.
(Psalm 34:15 and 17)

Sow your tears in God and you will reap joy:

"All suffering, all pain, all emptiness, all disappointment is seed. Sow it in God, and He will finally bring a crop of joy from it." -Eugene Peterson

In the end, when we come into the Kingdom we are promised that God *"...will wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away"* (Revelation 21:4).

309 TEMPTATION

During difficult times you may be tempted to return to old habits and behaviors or to complain and become bitter and angry. Here are some facts about temptation that will enable you to overcome the enemy.

-Everyone experiences temptation. No one is exempt. Even Jesus, when He was in the flesh, experienced temptation, but He did not sin (Hebrews 4:15).

-Temptation is not sin. Being tempted is not sin, but yielding and acting upon it is sin.

-God does not tempt you. You are tempted when you are drawn away by your own carnal desires. *"When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death"* (James 1:13-15). The process of temptation is desire, conception, birth, sin, and death.

-The battle with temptation begins in your mind. It starts with desire which conceives evil and gives birth to sin. Stop temptation at the time of conception in your mind before you act on it.

-Temptation arises from three major sources. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life: *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever"* (1 John 2:15-17).

-There is always a way of escape. You do not have to yield to temptation. In every temptation, God provides a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). Take it!

310 TENSES

Are you struggling today with sin, sorrow, or grief? Are you haunted by a sinful past? Christ's sacrifice has you covered:

*He **is** despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and **acquainted** with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he **has borne** our griefs, **and carried** our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he **was** wounded for our transgressions, he **was** bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace **was** upon him; and with his stripes we **are** healed. (Isaiah 53:2-5)*

The past and present are encompassed by this passage:

-Past tense: Surely He **has** born our griefs and carried our sorrows. He **was** wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities and secured our peace with God.

-Present tense: He **is** a man of sorrows, **acquainted** with grief, and by His stripes **we are** healed.

Every spiritual, emotional, and physical need in your past and present is covered by the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. You can confidently trust your future to the One who has already covered your past and present.

311 TENT

Everything in this world is temporary. You grow up in one house or city and then move on to another. You may relocate often during your journey of life. Your occupation may change, and some relationships will be only for a season. Even good health is temporary, for at the time of death your body will fail you.

The Bible compares your physical body to a tent. It is only a temporary residence. The Apostle Paul declares with assurance:

For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. (2 Corinthians 5:1, NLT)

Someday, your earthly tent will fold up and you will move on to eternity.

Meanwhile, while you are camping out in this world, Isaiah encourages you to *“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords,*

strengthen your stakes” (Isaiah 54:2 NIV). Do all you can for God while you can. Give what you can. Pour out your talents, gifts, and abilities for the Kingdom of God.

But don’t get too settled in. You are just passing through this world on your journey of life. Live like a camper. You have not yet reached your permanent home.

312 TEST

No one likes tests, whether it be an academic exam, health test, or other type of evaluation. But the Bible says we all will have times of testing of our faith. James says that we should rejoice when we face these times:

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4, NIV)

You may not feel like rejoicing in the midst of what you are going through, but God wants you to submit your circumstances to the Lord and worship Him regardless. Let your trial become a trail that leads you directly to God.

God led Israel into the wilderness to a place where there was no water. His purposes in this test were to strengthen their faith, reveal that He is the God of provision, demonstrate that He is Lord over every difficult circumstance, and manifest His miracle-working power. After the initial test, God provided both water and food for the duration of their journey.

Have you considered that the Lord may have brought you to this difficult season to accomplish these same things in you? Stay on course during every trial of your faith because “...*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*” (James 1:12, NIV).

313 TESTIMONY

Your test will become your testimony, whether it be good or bad. Consider these examples.

This is the testimony of the Old Testament patriarch Jacob:

And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. (Genesis 47:8-9)

Contrast that with the testimony of the Apostle Paul:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge,

shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

What is your testimony regarding the tests of your life? If you are responding positively and biblically, you have a story to tell that is unique to you and that will bring life to others who are walking a similar journey.

314 THOUGH

One of the keywords repeated in Palms 46:1-3 is “though”.

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, **though** the earth be removed, and **though** the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; **though** the waters thereof roar and be troubled, **though** the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. (Psalm 46:1-3)*

You may feel like the world as you know it is being forever altered. Even though you feel like mountains are shaking and crashing into the sea and the flood waters are roaring, proclaim with the psalmist:

- “God is my refuge and strength.”
- “He is present in my time of trouble.”
- “Therefore, I will not fear.”

Then take time to respond to the final word in this passage, “Selah”. It means to pause and meditate on these truths.

315 THOUGHTS

Satan uses many strategies against your mind. These include questioning the authority of God, deception, seduction, lust, depression, discouragement, rebellion, and wrong attitudes, emotions, and motives. Satan also accuses, condemns, causes confusion, and promotes compromise, rebellion, and tormenting thoughts.

What you program into your mind affects your thoughts. What you watch, listen to, read, and the people with whom you interact--these all affect your thinking. It is wise to erect spiritual protection for your mind by guarding what you see and hear, especially in times of adversity.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2)

God empowers you with the mind of Christ: “But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16). Claim that mind today!

As Believers, *"the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ"* (2 Corinthians 10:4-5, NIV).

The devil will try to hack into your thought life and wreak havoc, just as a hacker inputs a virus in a computer. If you are wise, you will have firewalls to protect the information on your computers. Your spiritual "firewall" against hacking by the enemy is the Word of God.

Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. (Romans 8:5)

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

316 THROUGH

There is a difference between going through something and being delivered from it. In the Biblical record sometimes God delivered His people from difficult situations and at other times allowed them to go through them. For example, Israel was supernaturally delivered from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, while the patriarch Job had to go through an extended time of suffering before his deliverance came.

I had been blessed with good health my entire life. God had supernaturally delivered from asthma, shingles, and other conditions that normally meant extended illness. Then came the brain tumor, radiation, and chemo, challenges that I had to go through instead of receiving immediate deliverance.

During this time of extended health challenges I discovered that God is still at work, even as He is in instantaneous deliverance. I learned that it takes a greater faith to go through something than to be delivered from it. Because of my experience, people in similar circumstances were drawn to me for spiritual help as they knew I understood because I had been there. You will discover the same.

Whether you are supernaturally delivered or you must go through extended challenges, God promises: *"...Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. 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. For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior..."* (Isaiah 43:1-3).

317 TIME

Time is a limited period during which actions, processes, or conditions exist or take place. It is a measure of the duration of events and the intervals between them. Time encompasses the past, present, and future.

Time is a gift from God. You are a steward of this gift and accountable for how you use it each day. Time is a precious and limited commodity. You are probably finding time even more precious if you are elderly or facing a terminal illness.

The biblical day was from evening to morning. People began the day in weakness, tired in the evening which was considered the start of their day, and confessing their reliance upon God. Conversely, we begin our day in the morning relying on our energetic selves. Try starting your day spiritually at evening, in weakness and confessing your need for the Lord.

“Our perception of time must be geared to God’s eternal perspective, not the perspective of the 24 hour day. The way Jesus lived His life is how we should live ours. Not in a hurry, not under insignificant deadlines, not burdened by unnecessary pressures... Following God’s schedule, Jesus accomplished more in three years than anyone else could accomplish in a lifetime.” - David Jeremiah

Commit each day to the Lord. Begin with prayer and the Word and by asking God, "What are your priorities for me today? How do you want me to use my time?" If you commit your day to the Lord at the beginning of each day, a plan will emerge and your tasks for each day will be established (Proverbs 16:3).

View each day in the light of eternity. Do not put off doing important things that contribute to God's purpose for your life because there will come a day when time shall be no more (Revelation 10:6).

"I find myself thinking, 'When life settles down I will...' But I should have learned by now that life never settles down for long. Whatever I want to accomplish, I must do with life unsettled." -Jean Fleming

318 TIMING

The Bible repeatedly uses the phrase, “in the fullness of time”, meaning at a set time predetermined by God. As a Believer, your difficult circumstances did not come to you without passing through the hands of God. Like the patriarch Job, you may not understand why these things are occurring, but you can know this is only for a time and that God's purposes are being accomplished in the midst of your pain.

The Psalmist said: “... *I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content*” (Psalm 131:2, NIV). A weaned child no longer considers his mother merely a source of satisfaction of his needs, but he loves her for her own sake.

Quiet yourself in God's presence and express your love for who He is rather than merely as a source to meet your needs. Only God knows the set time for this trial to end. In the "fullness of time", your adversity will conclude. For right now, just cling to His promises that *"He has made everything beautiful in its time"* (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

319 TODAY

The past is history. There is nothing you can do to change it. Tomorrow is a mystery. There is no way you can comprehend it. Today is a gift, and that is why we call it the present. You have only today. There is no assurance of tomorrow. Today lies between yesterday's mistakes and tomorrow's hope.

God's plan is that you do not live in the past or the future, but you live in the present. Live today. You can make it through your challenges one day at a time. That is how addicts remain free of drugs, alcohol, gambling, and sexual perversion: One day at a time with God's help. That is how you get through sorrow and adversity: One day at a time in the power of the Holy Spirit.

God provides all that you need for each day. Power to overcome sin. Strength for your perilous journey. Comfort for your hurting heart. *"So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time"* (Matthew 6:34, TLB).

320 TOMORROW

The Bible says: *"Do not boast of tomorrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth"* (Proverbs 27:1). James admonishes:

Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a city and spend a year there and carry on our business and make money. Yet you do not know [the least thing] about what may happen tomorrow. What is the nature of your life? You are [really] but a wisp of vapor (a puff of smoke, a mist) that is visible for a little while and then disappears [into thin air]. You ought instead to say, If the Lord is willing, we shall live and we shall do this or that [thing]. (James 4:13-15, TAB)

No one knows what tomorrow will bring. If you focus on tomorrow, you will be unable to enjoy today. And if today should be your last day on earth, it would be sad to spend it worrying about the circumstances tomorrow may bring. Know that whatever tomorrow brings, God will be there.

"It's not wrong to think about tomorrow, to plan for tomorrow, or to make provision for tomorrow. It's just wrong to worry about tomorrow. God has ordained that life moves at the pace of one day at a time. All He wants us to do is be in step with Him—to trust Him for today." -Dr. David Jeremiah

321 TOUGH

God wants you to be tough in difficult times. The word “tough” means “having the quality of being strong or firm in texture, flexible and not brittle; yielding to a force without breaking; capable of resisting great strain without coming apart.”

Here are some verses that will help you be tough in tough times.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isaiah 41:10)

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:9)

For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. (Isaiah 41:13)

322 TRANSITION

A transition is the process of changing from one condition to another. A transition is a season of change.

Sometimes difficult transitions are forced on you. Don't focus on what you are going through, but rather focus on your responses while experiencing this season of change. You are between the “right now” and the “not yet” in a time of transition. This is the time between God's promise and the manifestation of that promise.

For example, God promised the Israelites “I have given Jericho into your hands,” but it was seven days later before the manifestation of that promise (Joshua 6:2). In the New Testament record a blind man was healed after he obeyed Christ's instructions to wash in the pool of Siloam (John 9:6-7). Ten lepers were cleansed after they obeyed Christ's instructions to go to the priest (Luke 17:11-14).

In a time of transition, rejoice in what is ahead of you instead of focusing on what is behind you. Don't lament over what is occurring now, but rejoice in the “now” because it is leading to the “what will be”. Thank God for the answer He has promised and the plan that He will ultimately fulfill.

Let go of the past and embrace the future that God has for you.

323 TRIGGERS

It may be a song. It might be a smell. It may be a familiar place or a photograph. These are all triggers for memories. Sometimes these triggers lead to good memories, but in times of grief or adversity they lead to painful ones.

As you encounter triggers today that prompt memories, if they are good ones embrace them. Thank God for them.

If they are painful, then call on the Holy Spirit who is your Comforter. Cry out to Him: "Holy Spirit, come and do your job right now!" He will show up. Every time!

324 TROUBLE

Peter says Believers should not to be surprised by adversity (1 Peter 4:12-16). The apostles taught the early church that adversity was to be experienced as part of living in the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). In times of adversity, your faith is being refined, and spiritual qualities are being developed in your life: *"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4; see also 1 Peter 1:6-7).*

The Bible indicates that adversity actually works in your behalf you when you are focused on the eternal benefits of the trials instead of the temporary problems:

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."
(2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Whatever trouble you are facing, you can face it with confidence knowing that...

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

The Bible says to rejoice and give thanks to God in times of adversity. You do not give thanks for the adversity itself, but you give thanks to God in the midst of and in spite of it. You may not feel like doing this, but do it as an act of your will.

... no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. (1 Thessalonians 3:3)

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:6-7)

325 TRUST

Trust is believing in the integrity of someone, that they are who they say they are and they will do what they said they will do. It is believing with confident expectation. Biblically, trust is a firm reliance, assurance, and belief in God and His Word.

When dealing with people, your trust can be misplaced. Perhaps you have trusted friends, family, or a spouse and been disappointed. This can result in what is termed "trust issues", where you have difficulty trusting because of disappointments in the past:

Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord." (Jeremiah 17:5)

Trust in the Lord is an expression of your faith. By trusting God, you are demonstrating your assurance that He is who He says He is and that His Word is true. Trust also provides assurance of your salvation and your eternal destiny.

You adversity is a situation you cannot plan your way out of, work your way out of, or buy your way out of. You must trust and believe your way out. You can certainly place your trust in a God who is capable of raising the dead:

Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us. (2 Corinthians 1:9-10)

If you trust God with your eternal destiny, why can't you trust Him with your present circumstances?

If you have difficulty trusting God or others because of past experiences, ask the Lord to heal these emotions. Confess your trust in God with these biblical declarations:

And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You. (Psalm 9:10)

I trust in you, O Lord; I say, "You are my God." (Psalm 31:14)

Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust. (Psalm 40:4)

When I am afraid, I will trust in you... (Psalm 56:3)

*I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."
(Psalm 91:2)*

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. (Psalm 118:8-9)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and, he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)



U

326 UNBELIEF

The biblical meaning of unbelief is refusing to believe in God and His Word. Unbelief is a lack of faith that hinders you from receiving God's promises. You may believe in God, but if you are filled with unbelief regarding the promises revealed in His Word you will miss many great spiritual blessings.

God promised Israel their land, but unbelief kept them from claiming it for forty years. They could not enter in because of their unbelief (Hebrews 3:19). Unbelief hinders the work of God. Jesus did no great miracles in Nazareth because of their unbelief (Matthew 13:58).

You may be in such a dark place that you do not have faith to believe God can change your circumstances, bring healing, or do a miracle. Confess your unbelief as sin, for whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Then, as the father who brought his ailing child to Jesus, pray a simple prayer by faith: "*Lord, I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!*" (Mark 9:24).

327 UNDERSTANDING

During every part of your journey you need spiritual understanding because no matter what challenges you face "*...Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee*" (Proverbs 2:11).

Discretion is the ability to decide what should be done in a situation and the quality of behaving and speaking in a way as to avoid causing offense. Understanding is the ability to comprehend something.

Discretion and understanding come from God "*...For the Lord gives wisdom: out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding*" (Proverbs 2:6). God's Word contains wisdom for every situation you face in life. Through application of the Word, prayer, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, you are equipped with supernatural understanding.

Be like the men of Issachar who had spiritual understanding and knew what to do in difficult times (1 Chronicles 12:32). Claim this promise:

I have better understanding and deeper insight than all my teachers, because Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, because I keep Your precepts [hearing, receiving, loving, and obeying them]. (Psalm 119:99-100, TAB)

328 UNEXPECTED

It was unexpected. That death, the financial need, the betrayal, the divorce, the accident, the health problem. Whatever your challenging circumstances, they were all unexpected. But your situation is no surprise to God. Nothing comes to you without His knowledge. You may not understand why, but you can trust in the One who knows both the what and why of every situation.

Unexpected circumstances will continue to occur throughout life. The good news is that as you travel these parts of your journey, you will also find unexpected promises from God, unexpected comfort, and unexpected provision along the way. He knew. He knows. And He will show up your time of need in unexpected ways.

329 UNLOVED

Are you feeling unloved today? Leah, Jacob's wife, certainly felt that way (Genesis 29).

Leah came from a dysfunctional family, was rejected, and felt unloved by her husband. Her father, Laban, valued tradition more than the happiness of his own daughter as shown by his deceiving Jacob and substituting Leah as his bride.

When God saw that Leah was unloved by Jacob, He opened her womb and blessed her with children. The names she gave her sons reflect the change in her spiritual focus over the years. In naming her first three sons, Leah seems to focus on the hope that perhaps now Jacob would love her, evidenced by her naming her first son Reuben meaning "she has given him a son". In naming Simeon, she hopes Jacob will hear her, as his name means hearing. In naming Levi, she desired that her husband be attached to her, as his name means to be joined together. By the time Judah is born, however, she has changed her focus to God, naming him "praise".

Leah later gave birth to Issachar, whose name means "strength", and Zebulun, whose name means "haven". The sequence of these names reflect the change that has occurred in her spiritually and emotionally. Her focus has changed from striving for Jacob's love and is now on God, who has become her strength and haven.

As Jonathan Cain notes:

"Who are the children of Leah to this day? Those who through sorrows, wounds, rejection, emptiness, broken hearts, frustration, discontent, pain, tears, emptiness, and longing for something more than they have...are chosen for great and mighty things through which His love and redemption come to the world."



V

330 VALLEYS

Mountains in the Bible represent a meeting place with God and a sacred place where His presence is tangible and transformative. The Old Testament law was given by God on a mountain. Moses first viewed the Promised Land from a mountain. Elijah confronted the false prophets on a mountain and God chose a mountain for His holy city, Jerusalem. Jesus was transfigured on a mountain, crucified on Mt. Calvary, and ascended to Heaven from a mountain.

It is easy to serve God on the mountain tops of great spiritual manifestations. It is more difficult when you are walking through deep spiritual valleys.

First Kings 20 tells the story of the defeat of Ben-Hadad who believed that God was only Lord of the mountains, but not of the valleys. A wrong assumption that cost him the battle! He learned that God is also Lord of the valleys.

Like Ben-Hadad, you may think God is great enough to do some things, but not great enough to do others. You must come to realize that He is Lord over all circumstances at all times. The God of the past is the God of the present and future. The God of the small things is God of the big issues of life. The God who was with you on the mountain top will also be with you in the valley.

There is divine purpose in every valley. It is in the valley that your soul is restored beside green pastures and peaceful waters (Psalm 23:2-3). Even in the valley of the shadow of death you need not fear because He is there with you (Psalm 23:4).

God is the Lord of the valley and will turn every difficult trek thorough the low places of life into a valley of Beracah, meaning a valley of blessing: *“On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah. There they blessed the Lord. So the name of the place is still called the Valley of Beracah [blessing]”* (2 Chronicles 20:26, TAB).

331 VICTOR

You are not a victim of your circumstances. You are a victor. The word victor means “one who defeats an opponent, a winner”. According to the Word of God, that’s you! You are an overcomer!

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4-5)

You are a Believer which makes you a victor through Christ. No matter what your circumstances, God has promised in His Word that you are an overcomer. He has made numerous promises to those who overcome:

- Overcomers will eat of the tree of life and live forever (Revelation 2:7).
- Overcomers will not be hurt by the second death of the lake of fire (Revelation 2:11).
- Overcomers will eat of the hidden manna, which refers to Jesus, the Bread of Life (Revelation 2:17; John 6:33-35).
- Overcomers will be given a new name (Revelation 3:12).
- Overcomers will be given power over the nations (Revelation 2:26).
- Overcomers will be clothed in white garments (Revelation 3:5).
- Overcomers will be a pillar in the temple in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 3:12).
- Overcomers will sit with Christ on His throne (Revelation 3:21).
- Overcomers will inherit all things (Revelation 21:7).

If you are not supposed to be victorious and overcome the challenges of life, then why all these promises to overcomers?

332 VICTORY

You don’t know the results of every battle you face in life, but you can be assured of the final victory. The Bible declares: “*The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord*” (Proverbs 21:31, NIV).

You can and should prepare for spiritual warfare, but know that even if you lose a battle, the final victory rests with the Lord.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57)

Read the last chapters of the last book in the Bible. We win!

“This is no time for repining, no time for looking backwards, no time for self-pity or defeated complaining. We are on the winning side and we cannot lose.” -A. W. Tozer

333 VISUALIZE

Alvaro Pascual-Leone, a professor of neurology at Harvard University, conducted an important study on visualization. Pianists practiced the piano while neurotransmitters monitored their brain activity. As expected, the motor cortex was active while they were practicing the exercises.

Then he had them mentally rehearse and visualize the exercise. The visualized movements also triggered the motor cortex, proving what athletes already know: Mental rehearsal is just as important as physical practice.

Spiritual visualization is viewing your circumstances by faith, which is defined as the substance of things not seen (Hebrews 12:1). Rehearse the challenges you face today with faith instead of fear. Walking by faith is exercising spiritual vision because you walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

334 VOICES

There are many voices in the world including the voice of man, the voice of self, the voice of Satan, and the voice of God which is inclusive of that of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. When you are in times of difficulty, you will have many people offering their opinions but you need to listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

One of the purposes of the Holy Spirit is to teach Believers (John 14:26). If the Holy Spirit teaches, then He obviously has a voice. The voice of the Spirit has been described as a sound from Heaven like a mighty rushing wind:

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:2-4)

The voice of the Holy Spirit has also been described as a still small voice in your spirit such as Elijah heard:

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. (1 Kings 19:11-12)

The Scriptures were inspired by the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to holy men who wrote down His Words, so when you are reading the Word you are hearing God's voice "...For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

Jesus said that as the Good Shepherd: “...when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers” (John 10:4-5).

The voice of God can be heard through prophets, teachers, pastors, evangelists, and spiritual gifts in messages that are in harmony with the written Word of God. There is no question that God is speaking. The question is, are you listening?

335 VOWS

Someone made a vow to you and now they have walked away. They promised to be there for you and then left when the going got tough. They exchanged vows with you at a marriage altar, but have forsaken those vows and departed. That friend said they “had your back”, and now they are nowhere to be seen. You are facing a closed door. An empty home. A grieving heart.

God brings some people into your life to be part of your destiny. He removes others who will hinder your destiny. Some people come for a season, others remain for a lifetime. Release to the Lord those who have departed from you.

They left us, but they were never really with us. If they had been, they would have stuck it out with us, loyal to the end. In leaving, they showed their true colors, showed they never did belong. (1 John 2:19, MSG)

Reflect on the vows God has made to you for time and eternity, vows which will never be broken. He said:

...I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:20)

...Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3)

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever...I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. (John 14:16,18)

Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid...for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6, NASB))



W

336 WAITING

We wait in line at the grocery store, the post office, and in the doctor's office. So why do we find it so difficult to wait on the Lord?

Waiting on the Lord is not being inactive, rather it is being actively still as you persevere in prayer anticipating His perfect timing:

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. (Psalm 130:5-6)

Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received power to fulfill their ministry. That power was given on the day of Pentecost at the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). It is because this Holy Spirit power dwells within that you can declare: *"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13).

Waiting on the Lord gives you the promised strength to continue your journey:

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. (Psalm 27:14)

While you are waiting, God is working!

In the natural world, the eagle is the king of the fowls. When storms come, he soars above them. When an enemy attacks, he flies to heights where the enemy must retreat. To you, the Lord promises:

... they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

As you wait on the Lord He will give you renewed strength, the ability to run and not be weary, and enable you to walk and not faint. Wait first, and then get ready to soar above every storm and negative circumstance of life.

337 WASTE

Nothing is ever wasted in the economy of God. When Jesus fed the 5,000, the disciples collected twelve baskets of left-overs. When he fed the 4,000, seven baskets of left-overs were collected (Mark 8:19-20).

Nothing is wasted during your spiritual journey, difficult though it may be. Every moment will be redeemed for God's glory. Like Esther, you have come into the Kingdom for such a time of this.

You may not be able to see it now, but in the future you will look back and see how God redeemed your story for His glory. Your story may impact the world:

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. (Matthew 26:6-13)

A simple act of worship and her story is still being told. Nothing is wasted when it is surrendered to God as an act of worship. There is divine purpose in every aspect of your life.

For all [these] things are [taking place] for your sake, so that the more grace (divine favor and spiritual blessing) extends to more and more people and multiplies through the many, the more thanksgiving may increase [and redound] to the glory of God. 6 Therefore we do not become discouraged (utterly spiritless, exhausted, and wearied out through fear). Though our outer man is [progressively] decaying and wasting away, yet our inner self is being [progressively] renewed day after day. (2 Corinthians 4:15-16. TAB)

338 WATCH

Watch where you are going!

Set your gaze on the path before you. With fixed purpose, looking straight ahead, ignore life's distractions. Watch where you're going! Stick to the path of truth, and the road will be safe and smooth before you. Don't allow yourself to be sidetracked for even a moment or take the detour that leads to darkness. (Proverbs 4:25-27, TPT)

Do not let adversity sidetrack you. Do not end up in dead end situations. Do not be distracted. Do not opt for detours that may provide immediate relief for your suffering, but are not orchestrated by God.

Jesus said:

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. (Mark 13:35-37)

339 WATER

Water is used in Scripture as an emblem of the Holy Spirit and of the Word of God which was inspired by the Spirit. As water is vital to sustaining life in the natural world, the water of the Holy Spirit is essential to sustaining life in the spiritual world. Jesus promised that *"Whoever drinks of these waters will never thirst again"* (John 4:13). The water that Jesus gives is described as:

-Living water. This spiritual water flows out of you through the power of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39).

-A well of water. *"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"* (John 4:14). Like a deep well of water, the Holy Spirit has unfathomable depths from which you can draw spiritual refreshment.

-Springs. The psalmist declared, *"All my springs are in thee"* (Psalms 87:7), meaning that his joy and his very life came from the springs of the Holy Spirit instead of things of the world.

-Rain and showers that water the earth. *"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth"* (Psalm 72:6). Like the earth, we need spiritual showers to refresh us and enable growth.

-Floods on the dry ground. *"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine"*

offspring" (Isaiah 44:3). The floods of the Holy Spirit not only refresh your spiritually dry ground, but the blessing is passed on to your descendants.

-Rivers. Jesus said: *"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit..." (John 7:37-38).* The Prophet Ezekiel describes these spiritual rivers as waters to swim in and being so deep that they cannot be measured (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

Ask God for the refreshing water of the Holy Spirit to be released into the dry and barren areas of your life. Make this declaration: *"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God..." (Psalm 42:1-2).*

Are you pursuing the life-giving water of the Holy Spirit like a thirsty deer seeking water?

340 WEAKNESS

Weakness is a condition of being fatigued, tired, and inadequate physically, mentally, spiritually, or emotionally to the extent that you cannot function effectively. Weakness is multi-faceted and interrelated. You can experience physical, mental, spiritual, or emotional weakness. One type of weakness can affect other areas of your life. For example, emotional weakness can also affect your physical body by causing stress.

Whatever your weakness, admit it to God. The Apostle Paul admitted his weakness, and in so doing God gave him strength to endure it (2 Corinthians 12:8-10). Sometimes God will supernaturally eliminate your weakness, but at other times He gives you strength in the midst of it.

Accept and confess God's provision for strength in your weakness. The same spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells within you. Draw upon that strength. Recognize that when you are weak, you are strong spiritually. Weaknesses, handicaps, and inadequacies reveal your dependence on God. This relieves you of trying to do God's work in your own strength, and motivates you to function in the power of the Holy Spirit. It replaces pride with humbleness and provides a marvelous opportunity for the Lord to demonstrate what He can do through you. Weakness actually attracts God's strength (2 Corinthians 12:8-10).

Here is Edith Schaeffer's summary of 2 Corinthians 12:9-10: *"I have complete proof of the reality of the power of Christ, because I know how very weak I am and what an impossible situation I am in for continuing my work. In the midst of the pain, weariness, and difficulties in every part of my life, still I find strength to go on, and I know it is not my strength."*

341 WEARY

Feeling a bit weary as you face the battles of life today? Galatians 6:9 promises: *“And let us not lose heart and grow weary and faint in acting nobly and doing right, for in due time and at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage and faint”* (TAB).

The word *weary* in Greek speaks of one who is tempted to give up because of difficult circumstances. God says let us *not* grow weary in doing what is noble and right. The word *acting* in this verse speaks of ongoing, uninterrupted action, not a one-time event. It indicates doing what is right continuously.

Each seed in the natural world has a set time of harvest. This is true in the spiritual world as well. God promises that at the appointed time and season you will reap what you have sown. You don't harvest in the same season that you sow. Wait for the harvest and don't grow weary while you are waiting.

The tense of the words *shall reap* describe a fixed event in the future which is guaranteed to happen *if* you do your part and stay on course. The word *if* indicates a choice. Your actions affect your harvest. Do not grow weary and quit in times of spiritual, mental, and physical exhaustion.

342 WELLS

In Bible times, Isaac's wife was found at a well. Jacob found his wife at a well, and Moses found Zipporah at a well. It was at a well that Jesus proclaimed the meaning of true worship and revealed Himself as the source of living water (John 4).

It is at a spiritual well that God meets with the Bride of Christ, the Church. As part of His Bride, when you draw water from the well of His Word and worship Him in spirit and truth, your needs are met and your spiritual thirst is quenched.

“So don't despise your needs. Don't try to extinguish the thirst of your soul or fight the emptiness of your heart...Let them instead fulfill their purpose to bring you closer to the Bridegroom and to the filling of those needs with the water of the Spirit.”
-Jonathan Cahn

Come to the well today. Drink deeply.

343 WHATEVER

The word “whatever” has evolved as an annoying term when one uses it to pacify or dismiss another person's opinions. But the word “whatever” in the Bible carries no such baggage. It is a powerful term.

In John 2:1-11, Jesus and His disciples were attending a wedding where the hosts ran out of wine:

And when the wine was all gone, the mother of Jesus said to Him, They have no more wine! Jesus said to her, [Dear] woman, what is that to you and to Me? [What do we have in common? Leave it to Me.] My time (hour to act) has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, Whatever He says to you, do it. Now there were six waterpots of stone standing there, as the Jewish custom of purification (ceremonial washing) demanded, holding twenty to thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, Fill the waterpots with water. So they filled them up to the brim. Then He said to them, Draw some out now and take it to the manager of the feast [to the one presiding, the superintendent of the banquet]. So they took him some. And when the manager tasted the water just now turned into wine, not knowing where it came from — though the servants who had drawn the water knew — he called the bridegroom And said to him, Everyone else serves his best wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then he serves that which is not so good; but you have kept back the good wine until now! This, the first of His signs (miracles, wonderworks), Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory [by it He displayed His greatness and His power openly], and His disciples believed in Him [adhered to, trusted in, and relied on Him]. (John 2:3-11, TAB).

“Whatever” Jesus says to you today, respond in obedience and His glory will be manifested in your life. Your miracle, like that of turning the water to wine, may depend on your response to “whatever” He says.

344 WHERE

When my 18 year old niece was shot and killed by her fiancé, my question was, "Where was God when Michelle's blood was spilling out on the floor of that little trailer house, when her side was pierced by that bullet?"

Where was God? He was in the same place He was when the side of His own Son was pierced and His blood spilled upon the ground. There was meaning and purpose in His death for the sins of the world. I would come to learn that there was purpose in Michelle's death also, as her story eventually touched the world.

We often deny the sovereignty of God by our very words. “Tough luck,” we say. “How unfortunate. What a tragic accident.” These terms all imply that we are victims of circumstance. But there are no accidents in the lives of Believers. Our world is not out of control. Our God is the sovereign Lord over every circumstance. If God is truly sovereign, and the Bible confirms that He is, it means He is in control. There is no luck, no fortune, no accident. He directs your life and limits all that touches you.

Where is God? He is right there with you, walking by your side each step of the way even when the journey is painful, long, and treacherous.

345 WHO

In this journey of faith you are on, it is not what you know but Who you know that saves you and empower you to finish well. You will find an abundance of self-help books on the shelves of your local bookstore. While some of these may be helpful, you will not make it through your crisis by human knowledge alone.

You can have great theological knowledge, but still not know God. You may understand the prophetic timeline, the history of the Bible, and the doctrine of God, but do you know the God of the Bible?

It is Who you know, the One who walks beside you and will never leave you, that will impart the strength and knowledge you need for this journey.

And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? (Mark 8:27)

Who is He to you today?

346 WHOLE

Jesus once asked a man He intended to heal, “Do you want to get well?”

When Jesus noticed him lying there [helpless], knowing that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, Do you want to become well? [Are you really in earnest about getting well?] The invalid answered, Sir, I have nobody when the water is moving to put me into the pool; but while I am trying to come [into it] myself, somebody else steps down ahead of me. Jesus said to him, Get up! Pick up your bed (sleeping pad) and walk! Instantly the man became well and recovered his strength and picked up his bed and walked. But that happened on the Sabbath. (John 5:6-9, TAB)

Some people have been in crisis so long that they find identity in their crisis. Their sickness or trauma in life has come to define them. Their mind and emotions are consumed by their problem. Their illness, circumstances, or past trauma is all they talk about.

The lame man at the pool of Bethesda was consumed by a focus on his long-term illness. He was troubled that he had no one to help him when the angel stirred the waters with healing power. He was focused on his circumstances instead of the One who stood ready to change everything. Thus Jesus asked: “Do you want to get well?”

The lame man responded positively that he wanted to be made whole. Jesus told him to take up his mat and walk. The man’s mat that he had lain on for so many years became his message because people recognized him and the mat he was carrying, one he would never again need. When you are truly healed, the mat of your suffering becomes your message of hope to a hurting world. The question is: Do you really want to be made whole? It changes everything.

347 WHY

You may have done everything right, and still find yourself in great difficulties. You may have been the best employee ever, but you were laid off. You may have followed the rules of good nutrition, exercise, and healthy living, but you still got the disease. You may have been the best parent you could be, but your children have rebelled. You tried to be a good spouse, yet you now hold divorce papers in your hands. The normal questions in these and similar situations are: “Why? Why did this happen to me?”

Like the patriarch Job, you might desire the opportunity to question God personally and receive an answer as to why:

Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. (Job 23:3-5)

Even Jesus, in His time of agony, cried out: “*My God, why have you forsaken me?*” (Matthew 27:46).

The question of “why” can be voiced as an honest expression as Job and Jesus did, but it can also be intended as an accusation. Be sure your “whys” are inquiries and not accusations. God may reveal some of the purposes in your suffering, but it is possible you will never fully understand it all. The Bible says:

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us...(Deuteronomy 29:29)

There are some secret things that belong only to the Lord. As Job, you may never understand the purposes of your suffering, but you do not have to desperately seek to find meaning. You do not have to justify the actions of God before the world. Just because you do not see meaning in the natural world does not mean there is no purpose in your suffering in the spiritual world:

Since the Lord is directing our steps, why try to understand everything that happens along the way? (Proverbs 20:24, TLB)

Life will not always make sense to you. Don’t try to understand everything along the way. Just journey on in faith.

*“Faith does not eliminate questions, but faith knows where to take them.”
-Elisabeth Elliot*

348 WILDERNESS

Many consider a spiritual wilderness as a place you go through to get to the place God has prepared for you, just as Israel traveled through the desert to get to their Promised Land. The desert is often viewed as a place of difficulty and the Promised Land as a place of blessing and fulfillment of God's promises.

But did you know that there are also deserts in the land of Israel? The Promised Land includes the wilderness of the Negev, the wilderness of Arabah, and the wilderness of Judea. Jesus came back from a Promised Land wilderness endued with the power of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist ministered in the wilderness of the Promised Land. The Apostle Paul spent time in the wilderness being taught by the Holy Spirit.

You will have times when you experience the challenges of spiritual deserts, but this does not mean you have wandered outside the plan of God. God uses wilderness experiences to accomplish His purposes and fulfill His promises. Each wilderness of God's Promised Land has divine purpose and is an important part of your spiritual journey.

Behold, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs forth; do you not perceive and know it and will you not give heed to it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19)

349 WILL

God's will is sometimes not easy.

- Ask Moses who led a difficult bunch of people through the wilderness for years.
- Ask the Old Testament prophets who were disregarded and persecuted.
- Ask John Baptist and Stephen who were martyred for the cause of Christ.
- Ask Paul who experienced great persecution and imprisonment.
- Ask John the revelator who was banished to a desert island.

As part of the Lord's prayer around which we are to model our daily prayers, one phrase is "Thy will be done." In His time of intense suffering, Jesus prayed, "Not my will but thine be done."

When you pray regarding your circumstances, do you pray for your will or do you pray, "Not my will, but yours be done?"

350 WIND

The wind is an emblem representing the power of the Holy Spirit. In the original Bible text, the word “spirit” means wind.

John 3:8 relates the wind to the new birth experience. You cannot see the wind, but there are evidences of it. As God breathed the breath of life into man when he was created, the Spirit breathes spiritual life into one who is born again in Christ.

In Acts 2:1-2, the mighty, rushing wind symbolizes the Holy Spirit. "Mighty" refers to the strength of the Spirit. "Rushing wind" suggests His all-encompassing power.

You cannot see the wind in the natural world, but you can certainly see visible effects of the wind. Sometimes it is soft and caressing, and at other times it is hurricane force. Both reflect the various moves of the Spirit in your life. Sometimes the Spirit moves sweetly and softly. At other times He moves as a mighty rushing wind.

In the natural world the wind has special functions. These functions are parallels of the wind of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual world:

-Wind produces life. It scatters seeds as it blows and this results in new growth. The Holy Spirit produces life through the seeds of the Word of God as they are scattered in your heart and mind.

-Wind separates the wheat from the chaff. It purifies as it blows away the debris. The Holy Spirit serves as a purifying power in your life.

-Wind fans dying coals and sets them ablaze. The wind of the Holy Spirit rekindles your spiritual zeal and makes you a flaming fire of ministry to the world.

When you walk against the wind, it creates drag. When you walk with the wind, you are propelled forward. If you are experiencing spiritual drag, turn around, change your course, and walk in the Spirit. No matter how difficult your circumstances are right now, get in step with the Spirit of God. Walk in the Spirit and let Him propel you forward by the wind of His supernatural power.

351 WISDOM

Godly wisdom is the ability to understand what others cannot understand. It is knowledge of what is right, proper, and reasonable according to God's Word. It is using good sense and judgment.

There are two types of wisdom. The wisdom of God that comes from above and the wisdom of this world. James explains:

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere... (James 3:13-17)

Wisdom can be developed in three ways: By experience, observation, and revelation. Through your own experiences and by observing the experiences of others you can learn what to do and what not to do. The best way to learn, however, is through divine revelation from God and His written Word.

Do you need wisdom for the difficult decisions ahead? The strategy is simple. James said:

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (James 1:4-8).

Ask and do not doubt. Then know that God is guiding every decision you make today and in the challenging days ahead.

352 WITHDRAWING

During difficult times you sometimes feel like withdrawing. You want to go back to bed and cover your head with blankets. Stay home. Keep away from people. Withdraw into a fantasy world of books, movies, or video games.

It is in these times of difficulty that you need the community of Believers more than ever. Consider the words of King Solomon:

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

The Message translation states it like this: *"It's better to have a partner than go it alone...if one falls down, the other helps, but if there's no one to help, tough! Two in a bed warm each other. Alone, you shiver all night. By yourself you're unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third? A three-stranded rope isn't easily snapped."*

You don't need the masses around you, but you definitely need some dedicated Believers who are bound to you in covenant relationship and will walk alongside you. Seek them out today and

let them know your need. Friends are important. Remember that it was four friends who bore the lame man to Jesus to receive his salvation and healing (Mark 2).

353 WOMB

Your life began in the darkness of the womb where you were equipped physically, mentally, and spiritually with what you needed to thrive in the environment into which you would be born. Each part was intricately formed by God to prepare you for the world in which you were to live. When you were ready, a transition was made through the birth canal and you left the darkness of the womb and were born. You moved down the birth canal in darkness into the unknown, into a world of light.

In this present world, God is preparing you to live in the eternal one. Just as He worked forming you in the womb, He is at work in the womb of this world preparing you to live in the next one. Your spiritual rebirth through Jesus Christ and the circumstances of your life, both good and bad, are preparing you for another great transition. This transition will occur when you leave the darkness of the womb of this world and enter into the new world He is preparing.

If it seems dark around you today, know that the darkness will not last forever. You are being prepared for a glorious eternity when you transition into the next world. Trust the process. You are in the womb of Heaven.

“This life is Heaven’s womb. It is not what you’re destined for. It is not your home. It is the place of preparation for the place you are destined for. As the womb was to prepare you for this life...this life is to prepare you for what is yet to come. As an unborn child can never understand or judge his life by the womb, neither can you understand or judge your life by your present circumstances, but only by that which they are preparing you for: Heaven. God will use everything of this world and everything in your life, the joys and the sorrows, the victories and the losses, the mountains and the valleys, all of it—to prepare you, to grow you, and to form you into the child of Heaven you are yet to become. From here on, see this world and your life as it actually is and let it prepare you for the life beyond this life.” -Jonathan Cahn

Your natural life began in a womb. Your eternal life began in a tomb when Jesus was resurrected from the dead. In the natural world, a tomb represents the end of life. In the spiritual world the empty tomb represents Christ’s victory over sin and death. It is one of the paradoxes of God’s Kingdom. The tomb was the womb in which eternal life was birthed.

354 WORD

Many people are concerned about finding the will of God, especially in difficult times. The Word of God is your guidebook for walking in God’s will. The Word is not just a collection of interesting stories, rather “... whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

You receive the Word of God through public ministry and through interpersonal relationships where it is shared among Believers. Most importantly, you receive the Word of God through your private devotional time. You need a daily experience with God and His Word (Lamentations 3:22-23). You are strengthened by the Word of God to face the challenges of life (Psalm 119:28). Read it. Meditate on it. Study it. Listen to it.

Life is composed of many days over a long period of time. When you immerse yourself in the Word of God each day and follow its directives, you will continuously live in God's will. The Bible is not so much focused on knowing God's will, but on fulfilling the will of God that you do know.

Seek God's will for every day and fulfill it that day, then someday you will look back over an entire lifetime of knowing and walking in His will.

355 WORDS

Words can change the course of a day or a life. God deals with us in words. When you speak His Words, they always prosper:

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10-11)

Your words may not solve a problem, but they can give hope. When your words are from God's Word, they result in miracles.

When you experience turbulent times, you may be tempted to speak negative words. Heed these cautions:

-You can be snared with your own words: *"You are snared by the words of your mouth; You are taken by the words of your mouth" (Proverbs 6:2).*

-Your words can separate you from God: *"Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Psalms 12:4).*

-Your words can create a breach (an opening) in your spirit allowing evil to enter: *"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4).*

-Satan uses your lips to affect your soul: *"A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul" (Proverbs 18:7).*

-Your tongue can cause calamity: *"He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity" (Proverbs 21:23).*

-Your tongue affects your whole body: *"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell" (James 3:6).*

-Your tongue affects your whole life: *"He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction" (Proverbs 13:3).*

356 WORKMANSHIP

God is at work in you in both good and bad times. It is all part of His eternal plan for which you were ordained from the foundation of the world.

The purpose of God's work in you is to prepare you for good works you are to do both now and in the future:

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

God filled Bezaleel with the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and workmanship for his ministry of building the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:30-31). God is at work in you also to make you a workman that is not ashamed (2 Timothy 2:15).

You are under construction! God isn't finished with you yet. He is working on those around you as well, so extend grace to them. He isn't finished with them yet either.

357 WORRY

Worry is a state of being troubled with fearful, distressing thoughts about real or imagined problems. Worry is concern over things you cannot do anything about. Worry affects your health resulting in nervousness, sleeplessness, headaches, and panic attacks--the long-term effects of which can affect vital organs.

Worry is a manifestation of your carnal nature expressing doubts in the ability of God to handle situations. Worry does not change anything. Through fretful thoughts you cannot add one hour to your life, so why worry (Luke 12:25-26)? Worry is ineffective and unproductive.

"Worry is carrying tomorrow's load with today's strength, attempting to carry two days at once. It is moving into tomorrow ahead of time. Worrying does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength." - Corrie ten Boom

Worry causes you to lose spiritual focus and changes your focus from the eternal to the temporal. Worry is worshipping your problem instead of your God, because you are focused on the problem and by so doing exalting the problem as being bigger than your God. An ongoing problem can become an idol in your life if you are preoccupied with it to the extent that it overshadows all else. According to the parable of the sowing of the seed of the Word in Luke 8, worry hinders the growth of the Word of God in your life.

When worry seizes your mind, be like David who questioned: *"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?"* Then, whatever the reason for your concern, tell yourself by faith: *"I will put my hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God"* (Psalm 42:5).

Boldly declare that the Lord will help in any situation causing worry: *"So we take comfort and are encouraged and confidently and boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be seized with alarm-I will not fear or dread or be terrified. What can man do to me?"* (Hebrews 13:6, TAB).

The Bible says to cast your cares on the Lord (Psalm 55:22). The word "cast" implies continuous action. You may cast your worries on God today, and yet anxious thoughts return tomorrow. If so, cast again!

The Word says: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:6-7).

Turn every worry into a prayer and praise God for the answer.

358 WORTH

Due to your present circumstances of health, caregiving, loss, finances, sorrow, etc., you may feel you have lost worth if you cannot fulfill your duties and obligations as you once did. You may really feel like this if your adversity has delayed or aborted your previous ministry.

Your worth in God's Kingdom is not based on what you do.

Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (Luke 12:24-27)

Your true worth in the Kingdom of God is based on who you are, not what you accomplish.

You may come through your adversity and return to do all the things you did before and perhaps some new things. But if that is not true for you, remember that your worth is not measured by your performance. You can continue to reach out in new ways to others right where you are, from that bed of affliction, your prison cell, in the midst of your heartache. Even the smallest act is rewarded by God.

And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward. (Matthew 10:42, NIV)

359 WOUNDS

It was the wounds of Christ that secured your salvation from sin: *“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).* Every wound Jesus bore in His body at Calvary had divine purpose in securing salvation from sin, peace, and healing.

Proverbs 20:30 states: *“The blueness of a wound cleanses away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.”* In Bible times the belly was considered the seat of emotions, so this verse means that every wound of life has divine purpose in changing your attitude and actions.

The Amplified version phrases it like this: *“Blows that wound cleanse away evil, and strokes [for correction] reach to the innermost parts”* and the Message version states that it *“goes deep within us.”*

Every wound of life you have experienced or are experiencing has purpose. You may not understand it now, but someday in the future or in eternity you will discern the reason for each sorrow and hurt along your journey.

360 WRESTLE

The battle in which you are engaged is spiritual. The Bible says:

...we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)

Spiritual warfare is not a natural battle between flesh and blood. It is not a battle of man against man. It is not a visible battle. It is an invisible struggle in the spirit world. It is a battle within and around you.

Spiritual warfare is "multidimensional," which means it is fought in different dimensions. It is...

- A social battle between the Believer and the world (John 15:18-27).
- A personal battle between the flesh and the spirit (Galatians 5:16-26).
- A supernatural battle between Believers and evil spiritual powers (Ephesians 6:10-27).

Every person alive is engaged in this battle, whether he realizes it or not. There is no neutral ground. Unbelievers are in bondage to evil and have been taken captive by enemy forces. They are victims of the war. Believers have been freed from the power of the enemy through Jesus Christ and we are assured victory as we wrestle against evil spiritual forces.

No one is exempt from this battle. No one can view it from a distance. You are in the midst of conflict whether you acknowledge it or not. If you believe it will get better without a fight, you are wrong. So don't just succumb to the power of the enemy. Fight for your family. Fight for your health, both body and mind. Wrestle for your unsaved loved ones and your finances.



X

361 X-FACTOR

The term “X-factor” refers to a special quality or an unknown variable that sets someone or something apart from others. It is often used to describe an essential characteristic that contributes to success.

The “X-factor” in your life as a Believer is that you have the resident power of God within you. It is a variable that sets you apart from the world. Jesus said:

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (John 17:14-16)

As a Believer, you live according to the counsel of God found in the Word of God. It is a supernatural power that blesses you with success.

Blessed (happy fortunate, prosperous, and enviable) is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly [following their advice, their plans and purposes], nor stands [submissive and inactive] in the path where sinners walk, nor sits down [to relax and rest] where the scornful [and the mockers] gather. But his delight and desire are in the law of the Lord, and on His law (the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God) he habitually meditates (ponders and studies) by day and by night. And he shall be like a tree firmly planted [and tended] by the streams of water, ready to bring forth its fruit in its season; its leaf also shall not fade or wither; and everything he does shall prosper [and come to maturity]. (Psalm 1:1-3, TAB)

No matter what you face today, you have the X-factor of the Holy Spirit working within you and in your behalf. Your success is assured.



Y

362 YES

There are things you may have to say “No” to during difficult times. You may not be able to do everything you once did, but there are some important things to which you should say “yes” that will help you during life’s challenges.

-Say “yes” to community. Don’t try to make it through adversity alone. Surround yourself with positive Believers who will encourage you. Seek out those who have walked a similar path and have made it through victoriously.

-Say “yes” to exercising. Not running a marathon or swimming the channel, but keep moving physically to the best of your abilities. If you are required to do physical rehab, then do it with an eye to the future and give it your best.

-Say “yes” to activities you enjoy without feeling guilty. Coming apart to rest is an important part of healing, whether it be physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual.

-Say “yes” to something new. Don’t get stuck in a rut.

-Say “yes” to celebrating, not just big things like birthdays, anniversaries, or holidays. Celebrate “end of chemo” day and “radiation complete” day. Include crazy things like national pancake day, siblings day, and national doughnut day. Celebrate each day as a gift from God.

-Say an eternal “yes” to God. Surrender to His will and His plan.

363 YOU

You may be the answer to your own prayer. When Edmund Allenby was a child, he prayed for the restoration of Israel to their home land. As an adult and a general in the British army, he led in the defeat of the Ottoman empire which enabled the return of the Jewish people to their homeland of Palestine. He became the answer from God to his own prayers.

In Matthew 9:38, Jesus told His disciples to pray that the Lord would send forth laborers into the harvest. Then, in Matthew 10:1-5, Jesus commissioned the twelve to go forth and minister in the harvest field. They became God’s answer to their own prayers.

In your specific situation, is there a way that God wants to use YOU as the answer to your prayers? Perhaps as a peacemaker? Perhaps as a comforter? Perhaps as a minister of hope and restoration? Perhaps as an intercessor?

364 YUD

The *yud* is the smallest of Hebrew letters, barely more than a dot. Although it is the smallest of letters, it is very important. In Hebrew, it begins the name of God and is the opening letter of the names of the land of God, the city of God, and Jesus.

Jesus declared: *“For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled”* (Matthew 5:18). A jot and tittle refers to the smallest letters or punctuation in Hebrew.

Zechariah 4:10 questions: *“Who, with reason, despises the day of small things?”* The word “despise” means “to reject, or refuse, scorn, or look down on”. What small thing do you have that can become great in the hands of God? What vision or dream has God given you now or in the past that you have neglected?

You may feel that due to your circumstances you cannot contribute much to the work of God in time, talent, or finances. Don’t despise small things. The widows mite was an honored gift specifically noted by Christ. A single nail in the hands of a woman named Jael won a war. The jaw bone of a donkey was used by Samson to win a battle. A few loaves and fish fed the multitude.

Start where you are and use what you have.



Z

365 ZEAL

God wants you to face the future with zeal, a word that means with energy and enthusiasm. When you are experiencing great difficulties, that is hard to do. It can only be done through delegated zeal from the Lord.

The Bible declares that it is the zeal of the Lord of hosts that performs great miracles (Isaiah 37:32). The prophet states that the Lord is clothed in zeal (Isaiah 59:17). It is the delegated zeal of the Lord that will empower your zeal and enable you to face the future with anticipation.

First Corinthians 14:12 states that you should be zealous of spiritual gifts that edify the church. You should be consumed with zeal for God's house (John 2:17). As Phinehas in Old Testament times, your zeal can turn God's wrath away from his people and the nations (Numbers 25:11).

Jesus gave Himself for us *“that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:14).

Face the future with God-given energy, enthusiasm, and zeal.

JOURNEY'S END



I have enjoyed walking this road with you through “*The Journey: Words For The Way*”. I pray that these words have blessed and encouraged you.

I trust that your testimony will be like that of the psalmist who declared:

He drew me up out of a horrible pit [a pit of tumult and of destruction], out of the miry clay (froth and slime), and set my feet upon a rock, steadying my steps and establishing my goings. And He has put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many shall see and fear (revere and worship) and put their trust and confident reliance in the Lord. (Psalm 40:2-3, TAB)

The Bible says that the end is better than the beginning (Ecclesiastes 7:8). As we conclude this time together, I pray that you will continue to receive additional “words for the way” from God to help you navigate difficult places along the journey of life.

Please share this devotional guide with those who are walking difficult paths so that they can put their trust and confidence in the Lord. In that way, the end of this book will be greater than the beginning as these words continue to be shared with a hurting world. And always remember that where you are right now is not your final destination.

At the time of the conclusion of the writing of this devotional, I am still cancer free although the tumor is still inoperable. But this I know...

As long as I'm alive in this body, there is good work for me to do. If I had to choose right now, I hardly know which I'd choose. Hard choice! The desire to break camp here and be with Christ is powerful. Some days I can think of nothing better. But most days, because of what you are going through, I am sure that it's better for me to stick it out here. So I plan to be around awhile, companion to you as your growth and joy in this life of trusting God continues. (Philippians 1:23-25, MSG)

I am so glad that we crossed paths through the pages of this book. See you at journey's end.

Patricia Hulsey

Here's what I've learned through it all: Don't give up; Don't be impatient; Be entwined as one with the Lord. Be brave and courageous, and never lose hope. Yes, keep on waiting—for he will never disappoint you. (Psalm 27:13-14, TPT)

APPENDIX ONE

BEGINNING YOUR JOURNEY WITH GOD

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, the following guidelines will enable you to take this important step.

Man's greatest problem is sin: In Romans 3:23 we read, *"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."* The Bible says all people are sinners and sin separates them from God.

The end results of sin: *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23). The end result of sin is spiritual death which is separation from God.

God loves you and has provided forgiveness for your sins: The Bible says, *"This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world ... as an atoning sacrifice for our sins"* (1 John 4:9-10). God loves you so much that He has provided a way for your sins to be forgiven so that you do not have to reap the wages of sin.

The answer to your sin problem: Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6). Acts 4:12 confirms, *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."* Jesus Christ is the answer to your sin problem, the only way to God, and the only way to be forgiven.

You must accept Jesus as your personal Savior: Romans 10:9 declares, *"If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord: and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* You must acknowledge your sin, ask forgiveness, and accept Jesus as Savior.

Your past sins: When you accept Jesus as your Savior, He forgives the sins you confessed and He also cleanses you from all unrighteousness, even those sins you do not remember and acts you did not realize were sin. You do not need to confess these past sins repeatedly. They are forgiven and God has forgotten them. God says, *"... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"* (Jeremiah 31:34).

Sins committed after you accept Christ: Part of the daily prayer pattern in Matthew 6:9-13 includes asking forgiveness for sins you commit after receiving Christ.

Pray this prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father: I come to you admitting that I am a sinner. I am sorry for my sin. I confess my sins and ask your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and I accept Him as my Lord and Savior. I want to make this journey of life with you by my side. In Jesus name, Amen.*

Now, go to <http://www.harvesttime.org> and download the free booklet entitled *New Believer Guidelines* and then study *Foundations Of Faith*. These materials will help you as you begin your journey with God. |

APPENDIX TWO

ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF WORDS

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