

Finishing Well

Lesson #34 Testimony From The Valleys Of Life Sept. 21, 2022

After the old gate, we learned the importance of building a broad wall.

Notice there is a long distance between the old gate and the valley gate. It's as though the Lord allows a 'honeymoon' period where He teaches you and His presence is strong in your life.

We should learn to walk with Him and trust Him in everything.

If we don't work on establishing a strong relationship with Him, we will not be able to stand and react obediently when the Valley Gate arrives.

Tower of the Ovens [Furnaces] precedes the "Refining Process"

Tower of the Ovens: The heat and pressure of the Christian life with various trials and tribulations will surely come.

It's VITAL for every Christian to KNOW: *Hard times WILL come.*

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.

In this world you will have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.

The next 2 gates, Valley Gate & Dung Gate, are the purifying gates of the refiner's fire:

- to test our character & purify us to outwork the purpose of God for our lives

Truth: There is abundant growth in the valleys, but not much growth on mountain tops.

Valley experiences are used by the Lord:

- For my personal growth = Spiritual Maturity
- Clear away the rubbish; my faith refined by the fire
- Produce fruit in my life

Proverbs 24:10 If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.

Problem: Using my strength instead of His strength which is available to me!

Reasons we are anxious & panic: We don't have a solid belief in God's Word & promises.

We do not understand God's ways. My response is based on emotion rather than truth.

- It is time to walk by faith. Act like the Word of God is true.

This is when our "mettle" is tested by fire. [tribulation, trials, fiery trials, etc.]

The 4 'P's of Valley Experiences

1. The Promise of Trials

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

When trouble comes, do you ask, "Why me, God? Why did You allow this?"

If a valley brings the glory of God into your life, can you give Him thanks for it?

Wiersbe: Continuance is a proof of true faith in Jesus Christ. [John 8:31-32; Acts 2:42]

Paul made it clear that living the Christian life was not an easy thing and they would all have to expect trials and sufferings before they would see the Lord in glory.

2. The Purpose of Trials

a. To chasten or correct us

Heb. 12:6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens,

Heb. 12:11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful [grievous]; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

b. Deal with our old nature, the flesh

God uses the valley, a difficulty, to bring us back to a place of humility before Him.

God seeks to throw the garbage, the rubbish, out of our lives.

Phillips Translation: When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, don't resent them as intruders. But welcome them as friends. Realize they come to test your faith to produce in you the quality of endurance. [James 1:2-4]

Sequence: Various trials to test my faith > Produces endurance & perseverance = Maturity

c. Should yield increasing maturity. Sequence: Astray; Afflicted; Obeyed

Ps. 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your Word.

d. The valley should cause us to seek Him, confess our sins and draw near to Him.

e. The valley should add strength in the hard times.

Coaches in weightlifting teach that the muscles of the human body grow stronger when they are broken down. This breaking down comes through the hard, tough training of lifting.

➤ Hard work, hard training, and hard study produce great results later.

Job was tested by God. In the end, with God's help, Job proved faithful, and was doubly rewarded. In our hard times, we can grow stronger, and receive a great reward from God if we hold steadfast and are thankful for the hard times.

Job 13:15a Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him:

Job 23:10-11 But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside.

3. The Providence of Trials

a. Prepare me for a future task

Gen. 50:19-20 Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

We KNOW that all things work together for our good. However, what God is trying to accomplish is not always evident.

God kept His overall plan from Joseph so He could teach him needed lessons.

God wanted Joseph to have explicit faith in Him in ANY kind of circumstance.

b. A valley may bring a confirming testimony to your life for God's use later. If you never experienced tribulation, how would you ever know "the God of all comfort?" When you go through a valley while "giving thanks always for all things," people will see and take comfort from your reaction. They will see in you the God who carried you through.

Paul wrote Philippians while in a Roman prison. He'd suffered every conceivable hardship and heartache: shipwreck, beatings, mocking, persecution, hunger, thirst, and character assassination. Yet Paul said in Philippians 1:12:

"But...understand, brethren that the things which have happened to me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel."

Why? It put the stamp of authenticity upon Paul's ministry. Paul said, "I'm in prison. Thank You, Lord," because it extended the Gospel of Christ.

Some people say: "People are Christians just for what they can get out of it. Put them in the frying pan — give them a little persecution — they'll fall away like flies." That's exactly what the devil said to God about Job: "You've surrounded Job with all Your goodies. Take them away. He'll curse You to Your face." God said, "You don't know My servant, Job. He loves Me not for what I've done for him, but for who I am."

The life of Job — and Paul — shut the devil's mouth.

If your valley can be used to bring others to Jesus Christ, can you thank God for it?

Insert Testimony

Nancy Leigh DeMoss: Absolute Surrender: Brokenness is the shattering of my self-will - the absolute surrender of my will to the will of God. It is saying, "Yes, Lord" - no resistance, no chafing, no stubbornness - simply submitting myself to His direction and His will in my life.

I Thess. 4:3 For this is the will of God: your sanctification.

Charles Spurgeon: The trials that come your way are not the product of mere caprice. You are not the victim of empty vexatious circumstance. You are a child of the King! You are clay on the Potter's wheel. Pressures will come. God is looking for ones to step into places of ministry who have an effective testimony.

To fit His workers properly, He must plunge them into the fires of affliction.

4. The Prize Of Trials

Rom. 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Wiersbe: The HOPE, confident expectation, of this GLORY should make suffering much lighter and bearable in comparison.

I Pet. 1:3-7 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, ⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: ⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Col. 3:1-4 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

⁴ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.

We all experience ups and downs in life, but we don't go through them alone.

Throughout life's hills and valleys, God walks with us.

Gen. 28:15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go..."

Although our circumstances change, God never changes.

James 1:17 assures us that God "...does not change like shifting shadows."

Malachi 3:6 God declares, I am the LORD, I do not change.

Truth: God will take you through places you don't understand just to bring you to the place where He wants you to be.

When we know the meaning of God's sovereignty over the hills and valleys of our lives, we can rest with peace and even joy in all circumstances.