



Revelations & Reflections Newsletter
(July 27, 2006)

TIMES OF TRIAL

1 Peter 1:6-7: “⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These 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” (NIV).

I love the way God works. He provides us just what we need, when we need it. Last night, this scripture was highlighted during bible study. I wanted to recap what was discussed and share it, because I find it to be quite powerful and empowering! Why? Because if we know a trial is coming, we are better able to prepare ourselves to go through it. A soldier does not just go into battle. He is first trained, and when properly prepared, he is sent to battle where he is literally tried by fire. If he succeeds, he lives. If he doesn't, he dies. Well, we are soldiers on the battlefield of Christianity, and all too often we find ourselves in a war we are not prepared for. I believe that is why many Christians today appear to be falling away from their faith. I have found myself really struggling in that area lately. Last night, I believe God gave us some training for how to survive in our times of war.

Learning to recognize our trials is much like being a sentry on duty. The sentry is placed there to watch for what is coming. As they see something or someone approaching, they must identify it and sound the alarm if there is a threat. Many years ago, I received a prophetic word that the things I was going through were related to what I was praying about. Examine my prayers, and I would know what I was going through. I did not take heed to that word. I was a hearer and not a doer. However, God in His great mercy began sounding the alarm in my life whenever something is getting ready to happen. There are different alarms that sound, and until recently, I was not able to discern between them. However, let me say this, whenever I am personally getting ready to go through a trial, I get this gnawing in my stomach. I wasn't even the one that noticed it. My husband was. My stomach has been gnawing A LOT lately. I have been going through many personal trials. Recently, I have begun to heed that prophetic word in my life, and it is already bearing much fruit! So, here is a life lesson I would like to share with each of you.

1. ***When a prophetic word comes to you, pay attention to what is spoken.*** Write it down and do what it says. When God gives us something prophetically, it means He is getting ready to do something. If we do not heed His voice, judgment will soon follow. He says what He means and He means what He says. If we don't listen to Him, He will allow us to sink deeper and deeper into despair until we do listen. Or, our hearts will get so hard, that eventually, we will no longer care.

2. ***Pay attention to how you feel in your spirit, soul, and body before, during, and after different events in your life.*** This will help you begin to recognize when God is sounding the alarm for you that a trial is coming. We are a three part being (1 **Thessalonians 5:23**), and God will use all three areas to speak to us. Pay attention to your emotions: unexplained anger, depression, times of upset (wanting to cry for no reason) to name a few. Pay attention to your body. The one that comes to mind for me is obviously the gnawing I get in my stomach. It's the physical region that manifests what is going in my spirit and soul. Pay attention to your spirit: times of dryness, disconnects from God. These are just a few things to look for. Ask God to help you discern how He sounds the alarm in your life and what each alarm means. I remember when I was in the military, different alarms had different meanings. I was never any good at telling the difference in them. I thank God He is helping me do better with the spiritual alarms than I did with the military ones!

3. ***Pay attention to the things you are praying about.*** This will help you know what the trial is when it comes! The best way to do this is to journal, then periodically go back through it, looking for recurring themes and unanswered questions or prayers. And, the one thing I realized this morning is when I have unanswered prayers or questions in my life, it may be wise not to add new prayers or questions until I have received answers to the ones already out there. This will reduce the number of directions I have to look and the areas for my faith to be tested in! Imagine the sentry being on duty and trying to guard more walls than he can see at one time. That's what we do when we just keep moving forward adding more and more things to our prayers and asking more and more questions when we haven't received answers to the ones already out there.

I truly believe these three simple things will help each of us to make it through our times of trial and wilderness seasons without quite as many scars as we have endured thus far. I don't count this list as all-inclusive, but I do count it as a beginning! Father, help us to make it so!

Now, here is the best piece of the puzzle God revealed last night. In order to get a more full understanding of this scripture, we broke it down into its components. So, the first question we asked was, "*What is the 'in this you greatly rejoice'?*" Based on the previous scriptures, we are to rejoice in our salvation and that we are being sanctified. Our salvation is more important than anything this world has to offer. As a matter of fact, we are told to lay up our treasures in heaven and not on this earth (**Matthew 6:19-20**). So, we should never look to a circumstance to be the fix we need in a trial, but we should look to how we can draw closer to Jesus. Lord, have mercy! Something I have been asking You is finally making sense, but I will save that for another moment.

Anyway, back to the point at hand. It's not our circumstances, but our salvation (where we spend eternity) and our sanctification (how we live now) that God is concerned

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about. With that understanding, here is the bullet version of one small way to better stand during a trial:

- Rejoice in our salvation
- Rejoice that we are being sanctified
- Understand the fire testing us is burning off what isn't of God
- Understand our faith is being proven
- Let our time of testing result in praise, glory, and honor at what Jesus reveals

Honestly, I didn't understand that last point until just now. By faith (despite our circumstances), we will praise, glorify, and honor Jesus WHEN He is revealed in us. I do believe it's both the what He reveals TO us and the what He reveals IN us that matters. When we get the revelation He is seeking to reveal in our trial, He is then revealed in us. One more piece of the world falls away! Hallelujah!

I don't know about anyone else, but I do know the information contained herein is one of the most practical pieces of comfort I have received during this wilderness season. I have had a lot of puzzle pieces lately, yet not been able to put them all together to get the full picture of what God is speaking. The puzzle pieces are now coming together and beginning to take shape, but there is still much to unfold. In the meantime, this little nugget, for me, is bread from heaven to sustain my soul. I pray it will do the same for you. May His peace, His comfort, His grace, His mercy, and His compassion overflow in each of your lives. In closing, I would like to leave you with this scripture to meditate on:

Luke 21:34-36: ³⁴"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation [*NLT uses careless ease*], drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.

³⁵For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.

³⁶Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man" (NIV)

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