

8 FOUNDATIONAL THINGS TO KNOW



When you're going through a tough time or a rough patch

Daniel A. Omolola

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A big thank you to my wife—Aduragbemi Omolola—and the children for their prayer, patience, and encouragement. They made it easier for me to do what I enjoy doing: inspiring people to lead a meaningful and fulfilling life.

A big shout out to everyone who is currently going through a tough time and a rough patch, I encourage you to keep your hope in God for He is the light of your countenance. You will laugh at last and your laughter will last!

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Finally, to the faithful God, my dwelling place, the champion of my cause—who screens and filters the nature, severity, and timing of every test and trial that I face so that I can bear it gracefully—be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen!

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Introduction

Life's challenges are common to all, but unique to every individual based on their purpose, destiny, and calling. We all at one point or the other will face uncertain times. It is one of the certainties of life. The day of trouble will come. Life will sometimes be difficult, scary, uneasy, or seem unfair. We can be hard stricken by different adverse situations. Although we may not fully understand why, bad things can *sometimes* happen to good people.

From the scriptures, we understand that not every bad thing that happens to people is caused by sin. Sometimes, we face difficult situations because of our actions or inactions, bad judgments, wrong decisions, indecisions, disobedience, fear, carelessness, or sheer stupidity. Sometimes, unexpected things happen because the devil wants to distract us from the blessing that God has for us. Or he wants to stop us from continuing in the paths of righteousness.

The devil can sometimes use trouble to ensnare or hedge people in so that they find it difficult to see beyond the immediate. He can use trouble to enslave people and cause them to work against themselves through their thinking patterns, mindset, and words. The devil is a noisemaker who wants to be noticed.

At times, troubles and trials come as a test of our faith and the level of our faithfulness. It can also be because of the change of season that God is bringing our way. Or as a wake-up call to quicken us, get us serious, and get us back in line when we have misplaced our priorities.

On other occasions, God may allow some things to happen to showcase His glory and remind everyone around us that He is still God and He controls the affairs of people. God in His wisdom can use tough times to protect us. He can also use our tough times as a setup to destroy our enemies. So, when they

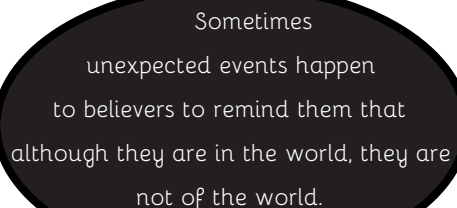
think that they have cornered us up, God will trap them in the process. God can and will use our tough times and rough patches to fulfill His purpose and work everything out after the good counsel of His will.

Sometimes, unexpected events happen to believers to remind them that although they are *in* the world, they are not *of* the world so they would not put their trust in the system of the world or be controlled by it. Unfortunately, many Christians have forgotten that this is not *it* for them. They have forgotten that they are the citizens of the kingdom of God and not only the citizens of this world. They have forgotten that their allegiance needs to be to God. They have forgotten that everything they have here is temporary and they are to use it to accomplish God's purpose to the glory of His name.

Furthermore, people can sometimes suffer from the mess of other people's disobedience, decisions, indecisions, actions, inactions, carelessness, apathy, or selfishness. It is just the reality of life. For example, many citizens of the world are suffering because of the selfishness of their leaders. We have seen how poor leadership has led to political instability, corruption, hunger, inequality, injustice, misappropriation of funds, misallocation, and mismanagement of resources. Hence, people's lives and destinies are being ravaged daily in many countries.

Many people are born into hardship, not due to their faults or doings, but because of how life has dealt with them. For example, many children are born into war-torn countries or refugee camps. Some children are also born into abusive and unstable families where parents themselves are suffering from addictions of every kind and other generational abnormalities.

Moreover, people are funny sometimes because they think that they are *it*. They always think that whatever God can do, they can do it better. And God sometimes allows things to happen to remind everyone that He is the boss and being quiet does not mean stupid. God sees all the time. He is in constant touch with the world we live in. He has never abdicated the world to us to control without Him. It is still His world.



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So, no matter what you are going through right now or what you will go through in the days to come, you need to remind yourself that God loves you dearly. He has also called you according to His purpose. He has promised to make all things work together for your good.

And we know [with great confidence] that God [who is deeply concerned about us] causes all things to work together [as a plan] for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan and purpose (Rom 8: 28 AMP).

Author Napoleon Hill also echoed the same idea when he wrote: “every adversity, every failure, every heartache carries with it the seed of an equal or greater benefit.” I will say not only an equivalent or a greater advantage, but if you are walking with God a far more surpassing glory. This should be reassuring.

However, if you do not know this, you will not count it all joy when you are going through diverse trials. You will be unable to put all things into perspective. You will find it difficult to rejoice in hope. Therefore, don’t despair, panic, condemn yourself, shame yourself, be quiet, continue to cry, resign to fate, give up hope, surrender your God-given authority, lose focus, or stop loving God, people, or yourself when you are going through tough times or rough patches. Something *goood* will come out of your crisis! The reality is that if you lose heart, you will lose focus and your locus of control. It is just a matter of time.

Instead, brace yourself with the word of God and embrace the principles that I share in this book and “*keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, give it all you’ve got, be resolute...*” (1Cor 16: 13, the Message). Fight back! Let the lion in you roar! God is for you and He is working for you today and always. Continue to look unto Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of your faith. Trust Him to help you lead a satisfying and meaningful life right here and right now.

This book discusses eight foundational things you must know when you are going through a tough time or a rough patch. What you know will encourage your heart and keep you focused on the Lord so that you can continually be rooted and grounded in His love. I pray that the Spirit of wisdom will be activated in you so that you will know exactly what to do when it seems as if you don’t know what you are doing.

ONE

God is God

Every child of God must know, embrace, and remind themselves continually and consistently that God is God. He is not a man. This simple yet profound truth is so crucial to our faith. Anyone who will come to God must believe that He is who He is. We read in Psalm 100: 3

Know (perceive, recognize, and understand with approval) that the Lord is God! It is He Who has made us, not we ourselves [and we are His]! We are His people and the sheep of His pasture (AMPC).

We live in a world today that frowns and becomes irritated, upset, and offended at the mention of God's name. People do not want anything to do with Him anymore. We have gradually moved away from Him and His laws. Even, some Christians do not see the need for Him in their lives anymore.

Yet, God is still God (Isa 43: 12; 45: 22). Before everything, He is God. Even, when everything in this life passes away, He will still remain God.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place [our refuge, our sanctuary, our stability] in all generations. Before the mountains were born or before You had given birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are [the eternal] God (Ps 90: 1-2, AMP).

He is very stable and steady. He is unmovable. He is not slow. Not

recognizing Him as the God He is, is to our detriment.

When He introduced Himself to Abraham, He called Himself the “*Almighty God*” (Gen 17: 1). The most powerful One. He created the whole world in six days. He is the source of everything. There is nothing impossible to and for Him.

He is the “*I am who I am*” (Exo 3: 14). That means He can be whoever He wants to be, whenever He wants, and however He wants. He can manifest Himself as anything at any time within the parameter of His *Godness*, character, wisdom, and nature. He does not need anyone’s permission to be who He wants to be. He is also everywhere He wants to be at any time He wants and all at once. He is who He says He is and He wants you to see Him and relate with Him as such.

In Exodus 6: 2, God, introducing Himself to Moses said: “*I am the Lord*.” He is the self-existing One. He is sovereign! He does not need anyone to be God. He existed before everything and everyone. Moreover, He owns everything. I mean everything and everyone came from Him. He is the source of all things (Ps 24).

He does not change because He cannot change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13: 8). He is ever-living. He is not a liar. He is infinite. He is limitless. He is not confused. He is perfect.

He is eternal and the ancient of days. He is “*God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did*” (Rom 4: 17). In other words, He “*makes the dead live again and speaks of future events with as much certainty as though they were already past*” (TLB). He calls things that don’t exist into existence. He has the final say!

He cannot be explained. It will take Him to explain Himself if we are to fully understand Him. He does not change with time. He is no respecter of anyone. He is God and He calls the shot! He is the ultimate!

Your good time or bad time cannot change who He is. He is all in His own class by Himself. He is able, powerful, capable, glorious in holiness, and fearful in praises. He knows. He sees. He hears. He cannot be compared, and should never be compared. He once asked: *to whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike?* (Isa 46: 5).

He has no equal. He has no rival. He is impartial. He does whatever pleases

Him. He is about His glory. He is the only wise God. No one can be compared to Him in love, goodness, showing of mercy, the display of glory, splendor, majesty, the willingness to bless, and power. Moses wrote of Him:

He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments... (Deu 7: 9).

The reason we are afraid most of the time may be because we don't know Him as God. We don't see Him as God. We don't hear Him as God. So, we don't know how to respond or relate to Him as God. We struggle to fathom Him as God.

He enjoined us in Psalm 46: 10 to “*be still and know that I am God.*” So if we don't know that He is God, we will not relax, be calm, settle down, chill, and rest in His goodness. This is the crux of our poor decision, indecision, hesitation, confusion, doubt, impatience, and stress. We don't know that He is God or whether He will be faithful to His word. We don't know the power He carries as God. So, we are not still. Yet, our stillness enhances our knowledge of God.

Because we don't know Him or see Him as God, we react to life with fear like everybody else. We are not calm, cool, and collected. We worked ourselves up so badly that our confidence is rubbed in the mud of life. Yet, the Bible declared that those who know Him will put their trust in Him even in times of trouble:

the LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know Your name will trust in You, for You, O LORD, have not abandoned those who seek You (Ps 9: 9-10).

The reason some of us find it difficult to trust Him is that we don't know Him. Just as in our natural world, you hardly trust someone you don't know.

The reality is that there are times we will pass through the waters or fire. What should differentiate us from others is who we know and whose we are. God is our God. He is our Father and we are His children. This relationship—father-children—should determine how we respond to the issues of life that we face.

This God is your shield, protector, covering, and defender. Your exceeding great reward (Gen 15: 1). The Psalmist reflected thus in Psalm 18: 2

The Lord is my rock, and my safe place, and the One Who takes me out of trouble. My God is my rock, in Whom I am safe. He is my safe-covering, my saving strength, and my strong tower (NLV).

God is the champion of your cause and He has promised to be with you during tough times and rough patches. Therefore, you need to know that when you are going through whatever you are going through, God is God and He is with you. He is real. He is not limited by anything; even your unbelief. He will do what He needs to do when He needs to do it and however He wants.

Sometimes, what makes it difficult for us to trust Him is because we humans think that God is subjected to our weakness and is limited by time and space. So, we think that He is too slow and we tend to give up when what we want does not come *when* we want it. We conclude that God does not want to do it, or it is not within the parameter of His will, or He cannot do it.

We have forgotten that God is in heaven and He does whatever pleases Him. It might not please us but whatever He is doing satisfies Him. He enjoys it and derives glory out of it. It might not be what we want for ourselves, but it is what He wants for us. We might think it is too late, but God thinks it is perfect timing. We are reminded in Isaiah 43: 1-5

but now the Lord who created you, O Israel, says: Don't be afraid, for I have ransomed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up—the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, your Savior, the Holy One of Israel... You are precious to me and honored, and I love you. Don't be afraid, for I am with you... (TLB).

God is your creator and He said you should not be afraid when you are going through difficult times because He is with you. These are comforting words that we need to remind ourselves of, assure ourselves of, encourage ourselves with, think of continually, read to ourselves, preach to ourselves, discuss among ourselves, tweet, sing to ourselves, and challenge ourselves with. It will make us relax, restore our confidence, and build our faith.

God is your Helper

He is available to help you in all your dealings. If you forget this, you won't naturally enlist and engage His help as you should. How does it sound or feel that you have God for your assistance and support to face and handle the issues of life? You are never alone. Sometimes, we have allowed ourselves to be paralyzed by fear because we have forgotten that God, our helper is with us and will never leave, forget, abandon, or neglect us. He is our present help.

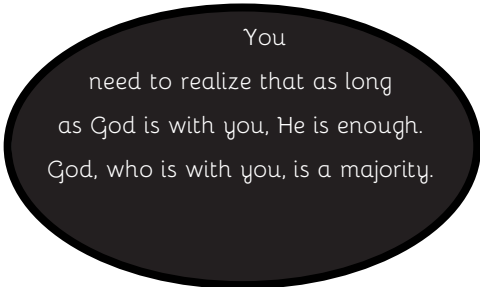
He will help you get through what you are going through. Always remember that your helper is your Maker. He is also the Maker and Creator of heaven and earth (Ps 121: 1-2). He knows how to move things around—in your favor—or away from you. If you don't know this, you will run helter-skelter or from pillar to post. You will eventually become frustrated and run yourself aground.

He is your connection and connector. He knows everyone everywhere. He is more than willing to help you as you surrender to and engage Him. Unfortunately, when we are going through a rough time we tend to think that we are alone, helpless, and hopeless. However, from the Scriptures, we see the Lord who is available to us as we rely on and call Him for help anytime (Heb 13: 5-6).

To help someone is to make it possible or easier for them to do something. God will do His part to help you. He will also make it possible or easier for you to do your part. Sometimes, God will step into the scene and do everything for you if He knows that you are incapable of doing it. His help extends beyond your strength, ability, and capacity. His help means that no stone will be left unturned. This is one of the reasons we pray.

To help also means to relieve someone of the burdens associated with doing a task so that they are not overwhelmed by its complexity.

God helps those who cannot help themselves but recognize their need and ask for His help. He will ease the burden of life. He will strengthen you so that you are stronger than your tough times. One



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God, who is with you, is a majority.

of your prayers should be: Lord, help me!

When it seems as if the trouble of life wants to suffocate you, remember that “*God is the strength of your life*” (Ps 27: 1). You can call upon Him right now. He said you can; so, you should, knowing that there is always grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4: 15-16).

In Isaiah 41: 10 He said you should not fear, panic, or be overwhelmed by anything that is going on around you because He has committed, pledged, and obligated Himself to help you. So, you are not helpless, hopeless, or powerless.

*fear not [there is nothing to fear], for I am with you; do not look around you in terror and be dismayed, for I am your God. **I will strengthen and harden you to difficulties, yes, I will help you;** yes, I will hold you up and retain you with My [victorious] right hand of rightness and justice (AMPC emphasis added by me).*

God wants me to remind you so that you can always remember that He “*will help and harden you to difficulties.*” There was a woman in 2Kings 6 who was perplexed because of her tough situation. She appealed to the king—the most powerful person in the land at the time—for help, but he *could not* help her.

then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, “Help, my lord, O king!” And he said, “If the Lord does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?” (2Kings 6: 26-27)

The king didn’t have what it takes to help her. Have you ever been in a situation where everyone you think would or could help you didn’t have what it takes? Or that everyone you contacted was in the same boat as you? It is about time you reached out to the One who is unlimited and inexhaustible. His resources can never be used up. Trust God because He is enough:

O Israel, trust the Lord. He is your helper and your shield. O priests, descendants of Aaron, trust the Lord. He is your helper and your shield. All you who fear the Lord, trust the Lord. He is your helper and your shield (Ps 115: 9-11, NLT).

God is for you

For the most part, some of us spend more time focusing on what or who is against us that we don't consider the God who is for us and has promised to never leave or forsake us. We think more of what the devil is doing to the extent that it is quenching our faith and draining our energy.

God is for you implies that He is your support system. He is your backbone. He is working in your favor and He is moving everything around on your behalf. He is making decisions that will favor you. He is representing your interests.

He is fighting for you. He is on your side. He is rooting for you. He believes in you. He is for you whether you are there or not. He is for you in the boardroom, bedroom, courtroom, classroom, emergency room, and everywhere your interests need to be represented and protected. He is for you whether you are conscious of Him or not. Paul the Apostle asked us in Romans 8: 31

what then shall we say to [all] this? If God is for us, who [can be] against us? [Who can be our foe, if God is on our side?] (AMPC).

How can you lose or be defeated if God has determined to stand by, for, over, and with you? He is God both of the mountain and the valley. The Psalmist declared:

the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage (Ps 16: 5-6, KJV).

He is the one who keeps your interests alive. He will fight for what belongs to you so that you will not be deprived. He will sustain your part in the deal that you are about to make so that you will not be cheated. He will protect your rights and justify you. He will ensure that all the decisions that will be made concerning your life and destiny work in your favor. Because you belong to Him, God will see to it that what belongs to you will not elude you. Remember you are His and your righteousness is from Him, He will make sure that “*no weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn*” (Isa 54: 17).

God is with you

God is with you to deliver you. He will never leave. He is right there where you are in your present situation. He promised to be with you in trouble—your tough time or rough patch (Ps 91: 15). Knowing the ramification of this will cause you to boldly declare what is written in Hebrews 13: 6 “***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?***” (AMPC, see also Ps 118: 6).

He will not abandon you because of your challenges. He will stick with you through thick and thin. Author John Mason reflected: “it’s not the absence of problems that gives us peace, it is God’s presence with us in the problem.”

You need to realize that as long as God is with you, He is enough. God, who is with you, is a majority. He is greater, stronger, bigger, mightier, gigantic, more powerful, and immense than anyone or anything out there. We need to consider the bigness and the greatness of our God who is over all, through all, in all, and above all.

He cannot be defeated. He cannot lose because He does not know how to. You better feel more than a conqueror since God is with you and on your side because you have more with you. You are always at an advantage and you are not alone. You are in the company of innumerable companies of Angels and they encamp around you (Heb 12: 22-23, Ps 34: 7). No one can be successful against you.

There was a time prophet Elisha was faced with an enormous army and his servant was afraid because he didn’t know that God was with them.

*and when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” So he answered, “**Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.** And Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (2Kings 6: 15-17, emphasis mine).*

Start seeing the bigness of your God so that your soul can rest and make its boast in Him. When you understand that God is with you, you are not afraid of what anyone can do to you or what can happen to you because your heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. It does not matter anymore even if the world is turning upside down.

the Lord is my light and my salvation... So, with him on my side, I'm fearless, afraid of no one and nothing. When vandal hordes ride down ready to eat me alive, those bullies and toughs fall flat on their faces. When besieged, I'm calm as a baby. When all hell breaks loose, I'm collected and cool" (Ps 27: 1-3, KJV, the Message).

We also read the proclamation of prophet Jeremiah:

but the Lord stands beside me like a great warrior, and before him, the Mighty, Terrible One, they shall stumble. They cannot defeat me; they shall be shamed and thoroughly humiliated, and they shall have a stigma upon them forever (Jer 20:11, TLB).

I cannot tell you how many times I have had to remind myself of this scripture during my tough times. I tell myself that the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior and with Him in me, on my side, and by my side, I am fearless, cool, and collected. I hope you too can proclaim with all certainty that the Lord is with you like a mighty warrior.

God is your fighter's jet as it were. He is your shield and buckler. He is your protector. He stands against anyone who stands against you and stands with and for anyone who stands with and for you. So, when you are afraid, please give yourself a good shake and remind yourself that the Lord who is with you sees through the dark. Light and darkness are the same to Him (Ps 139: 11-12). He does not sleep nor slumber (Ps 121: 4). He is always watching over you. His eyes are everywhere. He has His hands in everything everywhere. He is always mindful of you and thinking of how He can get the best to you (Ps 115: 12). You are always in His presence. You need to be aware of and pay attention to His active presence so that you can chill.

God is in you

Apart from the fact that God is for and with you, He is also in you. John the beloved wants you to know and remind yourself that “*you are of God and greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world*” (1Jn 4: 4).

I think the challenge we face is that we don’t usually remember that we are of God or that we belong to Him. We always think that we are alone in this world. We tend to look at what is around us and fail to look at who is within us. The God of the universe is in you right now. His anointing is in you:

but the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him (1Jn 2: 27).

Don’t forget you are the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 3: 16; 6: 19). You housed the Bread of Life. God lives in you and He is at home inside you right now (Jn 14: 20). He will speak to, show, and direct you.

Everything He is lives in you. That means it is your responsibility to live from inside out and not outside in. He is at work in you to strengthen, embolden, and empower you (Phil 2: 13). He will help you build your confidence so that you are not intimidated by the enemy around you. He is in you so that you don’t get discouraged, give up, and quit. His kingdom—righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost—is within you as well.

This knowledge and understanding will change your perspective about yourself and the dynamic of things around you forever. It will help you generate excitement, enthusiasm, courage, power, and momentum. It shifts the pendulum in your favor.

No matter the challenges you are facing in your life today, I want to remind you that God who is your helper is in, with, and for you. He is greater, stronger, and tougher than your tough times and rough patches and He will see you through them all.

TWO

God is Faithful

The desire to know God more should be our lifelong quest as God's people. It should also be a part of our daily prayers. We need to understand God and embrace His promises. We also need to know His nature and character especially when we are going through a tough time or a rough patch. The good news is that God wants to be known. He loves us to know Him. He loves to make Himself known to us individually and in a personal way.

No one can know everything there is to know about God. We can only know Him in parts. The reason He does this is to help us depend on Him and be interdependent on one another. And as we come together as His body, we can share our revelation and experiences of Him to increase our understanding of Him together. So that we can know Him collectively. If God has not done this, we, humans, interestingly will use what we know about God to control and manipulate others.

We know that God is love, good, holy, righteous, and just. We spend time talking about these attributes and more. One aspect of God's character and name that we don't always emphasize is His faithfulness. God does not only exhibit faithfulness but He is also called "*Faithful and True—trustworthy, loyal, incorruptible, steady*" (Rev 19: 11, AMP).

Moses, a faithful servant of God described Him to the Israelites in

Deuteronomy 7: 9 as **the Faithful God**. Someone who they can hold on to, rely and depend on because He is stable, steady, secure, sure, durable, and everlasting:

Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments...

What does it mean when we say that God is faithful? It means He is true, reliable, dependable, unwavering, unfaltering, resolute, persistent, committed, dedicated, unswerving, firm, trustworthy, steadfast, stalwart, constant, devoted, consistent, unchanging, and unmovable in His commitment to us.

His faithfulness makes it impossible for Him to deny Himself. It ensures that there is no variableness or shadow of turning in Him. His faithfulness makes Him predictable as God because He will not act contrary to or be inconsistent with His nature. He is immutable.

That implies that you can count on Him, rely on Him, lean on Him, and rest in Him. You can put all your eggs in His baskets as it were and leave them there because they are safe with Him. God's faithfulness then means that you cannot fail. This is how reliable He is.

God's faithfulness is also the foundation for your faith, conviction, and action. So, if you don't know that God is faithful, you will find it difficult to have faith in Him. His faithfulness helps you too to develop the strength of character, faithfulness, reliability, and consistency. God's faithfulness makes Him committed to loving, being good, and gracious to you consistently. Psalm 100: 5 revealed:

For the Lord is always good. He is always loving and kind, and his faithfulness goes on and on to each succeeding generation (TLB).

God is faithful to and surrounds Himself with His faithfulness (Ps 89: 8). He is faithful to His word and promises (Ps 119: 86, 138). He is faithful to His people (Ps 31: 23; 101: 6). His faithfulness is steady and continuous. His faithfulness is everywhere you look (Ps 36: 5; 89: 1-2, 5).

His faithfulness is great (Lam 3: 29). Faithfulness is the hallmark of His character, the emblem of His person, and the essence of His being. For God, to be unfaithful is to stop being God.

O Lord God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness surrounds You [as an intrinsic, unchangeable part of Your very being] (Ps 89: 8, AMP).

Psalm 119: 89-92 also declared:

Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven [standing firm and unchangeable]. Your faithfulness continues from generation to generation; You have established the earth, and it stands [securely]. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all things [all parts of the universe] are Your servants. If Your law had not been my delight, then I would have perished in my time of trouble (AMP).

Do you see the connection between God's faithfulness and preservation? His faithfulness makes the earth continue and to sit firmly in place until now, serving His purpose. That means when you understand that God's faithfulness never goes out of fashion, is up-to-date, cuts across time and space, is beyond our existence, flows from one generation to the next, and new every morning, you will come to know that your trouble times and those rough patches are not going to last forever. They are not meant to destroy you but to refine and redefine you. God's faithfulness should help you to endure hard times as a faithful soldier of Christ.

Author John Kachelman reflecting on God's faithfulness asserted: "memories of God's faithfulness should be unailing as the morning's light, as bright and joyous as the sun's rays, as brilliant and sparkling as the morning's dew, and as sweet and invigorating as the morning's air... Every morning, even if it is cloudy, brings us a reminder of God's faithfulness."

In 1Corinthians 10: 13 we read that because God is faithful, none of us will be tested beyond what we can handle. In the same vein, we know that as we go through life, He has already provided a way of escape for us to come through the trouble times. He also strengthens us to go through whatever we are going through right now. In other words,

His
faithfulness helps you too
to develop the strength of character,
faithfulness, reliability, and consistency.

God's faithfulness "is the way of escape that empowers us to overcome every difficulty we may experience" (TPT margin).

Be assured that God's faithfulness will prevent you from getting stuck during your hard times. Because of His faithfulness, you can rest in His wisdom and stay focused, not give up, or become unfaithful in the process. Despite the infestation of sin, the mess we have made, our irresponsibility, and the perpetuation of unfaithfulness in our world, the earth is still here because of the faithfulness of God who made and kept on sustaining it in the first place. It will still continue one day at a time until the consummation of all things. We read:

*We all experience times of testing, which is normal for every human being. **But God will be faithful to you.** He will screen and filter the severity, nature, and timing of every test or trial you face so that you can bear it. And each test is an opportunity to trust him more, for along with every trial God has provided for you a way of escape that will bring you out of it victoriously (1Cor 10: 13, TPT, emphasis mine).*

Understanding God's faithfulness can help us to be hopeful and empower us to endure knowing that He is true to His word. Just because He is faithful, He will fulfill all His promises (1Thes 5: 24). Therefore,

Let us seize and hold tightly the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is reliable and trustworthy and faithful [to His word] (Heb 10: 23, AMP).

You can discover your confidence in His faithfulness. You can rely on His reliability. You can develop your ability in His capability. You can remain committed to Him because He is the faithful God who is committed to you. You can hold on to Him. Your faith can also rest in His power and integrity.

THREE

God is Good

The third foundational truth to know when we are going through a rough patch or tough time is that God is good. Sometimes it is very difficult to believe this, especially when it seems that there are no traces of His goodness or echoes of His mercies around us. When it seems as if God's hands are shortened to deliver, or His eyes are too heavy to see us. When things appear to be going *south*. Like Gideon lamented: “*O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?*” (Judges 6: 13).

It is very easy for some of us to say—shout and sing—that God is good when everything is rosy, going well, and there are no hiccups. However, we must know that God is good all the time, bad times notwithstanding. We need to be careful not to allow the bad times to blind us to God's goodness. Despite all hell breaking loose, there will always be something to thank God for. Prophet Nahum declared:

The Lord is good, a strength and stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows [He recognizes, cares for, and understands fully] those who take refuge and trust in Him (Nah 1: 7, AMP).

God is good and He is a hiding place, refuge, place of safety, stronghold, defense, and a fortress in tough times. He will not cave in, abandon you, reject, neglect, or dismiss you. He will continue to watch over you.

God by nature is good. “*You are good and do only good; make me follow your lead*” (Ps 119: 68 TLB). The Psalmist in Psalm 86: 5 reiterated this: “*you’re well known as good and forgiving, bighearted to all who ask for help*” (the Message).

God is well-known for being good. But you must experience Him to know how good He is. The psalmist encouraged us to *taste* God—to try the flavor of something so that you can perceive the true essence of the thing—so that we can understand His goodness (Ps 34: 8). When you taste something, you can make a better judgment of it. You can try God and see for yourself that He is good.

Unfortunately, some people have based their experience of God on someone else’s taste buds. No! You’ve got to develop your taste buds, check Him out for yourself so that you can thoroughly see, perceive, know, and conclude for yourself that He is good. It is in the process of tasting that you can have a preference, an inclination, and desire for Him. If only you will taste Him as you go through your tough time and rough patch, you will see His goodness like never before.

Because of His goodness, we can experience His mercy, kindness, forgiveness, deliverance, love, and compassion. Hallelujah! Author and pastor A. W. Tozer reflected: “the goodness of God is infinitely more wonderful than we will ever be able to comprehend.”

Remember a good person out of the good treasure of His heart brings about good things (Lk 6: 45). Likewise, God who is naturally good can only bring out good things even in bad situations because that is all He is and all He is thinking about. God does good because He is good. He cannot be tempted with evil because there is no evil in Him. God, revealing Himself to Moses in the wilderness said:

“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth...” (Exo 34: 6).

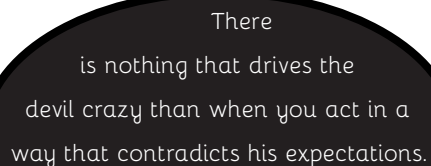
He abounds in goodness. His intentions are pure towards us even when we are experiencing tough times or rough patches. He plans to give us a future and hope. We are to always thank Him because He is good and continue to remember His goodness, no matter the situation we find ourselves (Ps 107: 1). So, don’t stop singing about God’s goodness with the voice of triumph even in your storm.

There is nothing that drives the devil crazy than when you act in a way that contradicts his expectations. It upsets, confuses, defeats his purpose, and wounds his ego when you trust instead of doubting, bless instead of cursing; sing instead of crying; rejoice instead of sorrowing; obey instead of disobeying; laugh instead of weeping, and see the best in people instead of seeing the worst.

It throws him off balance when you forgive instead of blaming; give instead of hoarding; hold on instead of giving up; or repent instead of condemning yourself. It mesmerizes him when you lift people instead of putting them down; seek restoration instead of revenge; love instead of displaying apathy; show kindness instead of punishment; surrender instead of having your way; acknowledge God instead of relying on your understanding; practice compassion instead of condemnation; wait instead of being in a hurry, or sing God is good all the time instead of blaming Him for what has gone wrong in your life. The devil is threatened when you rest in God's love instead of getting perplexed about what you can't change. When you are not anxious or obsessed about what you will eat, drink, or wear.

The reality of life is that sometimes we cannot explain, know, understand, figure out, or rationalize why things are the way they are or why things happen this way or that way no matter how hard we try. Or why bad things happen to good people or life is harsh on some people while some find it easier. However, the truth that will remain constant throughout our life here is: God is good! He wants us to rest in His goodness and nature. He keeps His promises forever. He does not doubt His own ability to bless, heal, save, and deliver. He does not, will not, and cannot contradict Himself.

We serve a God who is all-knowing, all-powerful, all-together-good, and everywhere present. As we mature in the things of God, we understand that His goodness may not be the absence of pain and suffering, but He is good despite them. He permeates through the sufferings to reveal His goodness. That means He will reveal His goodness in and



There
is nothing that drives the
devil crazy than when you act in a
way that contradicts his expectations.

through our sufferings because of His power, wisdom, and love. First-century theologian Augustine of Hippo asserted: “the highest good, than which there is no higher, is God, and consequently He is unchangeable good, hence truly eternal and truly immortal. All other good things are only from Him.”

The devil’s primary goal is to make you doubt God’s goodness when you are going through a tough time. He knows that if you start doubting His goodness, you can stop trusting Him with all your heart and stop hoping in His mercies and promises. He is also aware that

“the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy” (Ps 147: 11).

So, he will do everything possible to prevent God from deriving that pleasure from your life. He will frustrate you if you allow him. The psalmist reminded us:

the Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. The Lord preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy (Ps 145: 18-20).

Some people think that God is setting them up for failure. They think that God is the architect behind their woes. The devil has used this to confuse, discourage, and caused them to be bitter and angry at God.

Many have accepted the doctrine of suffering, so they are not enjoying the good life that God has provided and procured for them through Christ. God has redeemed you from the power of your enemy so that you can enjoy His life.

God is so good that the whole earth is full of and fill with His goodness according to Psalm 33: 5. Although the earth is the habitation of the wicked one, God is still the one who made this earth and He has decreed that His goodness will be towards His creation, especially those who love Him. *“The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works” (Ps 145: 9).*

Even in times of trouble, God is still good. His goodness leads to repentance and encourages us to amend our ways (Rom 2: 4). The extent of His goodness means that even in your worst days and tough times, He converts every bad situation to your good because He has your best interests at heart. He works with

your good, bad, and ugly circumstances to reveal His goodness and ensure that all things end up working for you. When we know this, we can rejoice in hope and be patient in difficult times. We can at the end confidently proclaim and echo what apostle Paul wrote:

so we are convinced that every detail of our lives is continually woven together to fit into God's perfect plan of bringing good into our lives, for we are his lovers who have been called to fulfill his designed purpose (Rom 8: 28, TPT).

Did you just read that? God's perfect plan is to bring good into our lives and He will use even the troubles and tough times to achieve that. His perfect plan is to reveal His glory in us which is the essence of His goodness.

God's wisdom and goodness were revealed in the story of Joseph throughout his journey. God supernaturally transformed for good what his siblings meant for evil for him (Gen 50: 20). Just maybe the job loss is working something far more glorious than the hardship you are facing right now. Maybe the inconveniences you are facing right now are propelling and thrusting you forward. Just maybe the disappointment is for something better. Maybe those closed doors are opening new realms of possibilities or opportunities for you.

When you look at life through God's perspective and lens, you will find solace and comfort in His wisdom even when you cannot fully understand everything that is happening. As His child, God will use your difficult circumstances and trial times to set you up on a higher pedestal of life. When you eventually look back, you will not miss the opportunity to boldly, confidently, majestically, and powerfully proclaim: "*No doubt about it! God is good—good to good people, good to the good-hearted*" (Ps 73: 1, the Message).

Therefore, when you are going through tough times, you need to remind and tell yourself that God is good. Don't despair or be discouraged. You might not feel like it, the situation and circumstances around you may not look like it but when God is done and all is said and done, you will see His wisdom in all He does. Because He would have caused, formulated, set up, arranged, orchestrated, established, and instigated all things to work together for your good. Amen!

FOUR

God Cares

It is important to understand that you have a God who cares for you more than you can care for yourself or the people who love you can care for you. He has a special interest in your well-being because He is responsible for you. He has a soft spot in His heart for you. You are more valuable to Him than anything else. He pays greater attention to you, down to the last detail.

This is why you are invited by the Apostle Peter to “*let him [God] have all your worries and cares, for he is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you*” (1Pet 5: 7, TLB). So, learn to “*pile your troubles on God’s shoulders—he’ll carry your load, he’ll help you out*” (Ps 55: 22, the Message).

God sits on the throne of grace and He supplies abundant grace to help in times of need. He is inviting you to come to Him because He cares. He wants you to pile anything troubling you—worries and stress—on Him because He is enough to carry it. His care is an expression of His goodness and love. So, let Him have all those worries so that you can live free.

God is more than enough! He does not need your help to help you. The question is: are you going to let Him carry your load?

I once watched a movie many years ago about a man who was carrying a heavy load and was given a lift by one of his friends in the heat of the day. He

asked if he would be permitted to sit in the back of the truck because he did not want to put down his load. After much argument, he was allowed to do as he requested. All through the journey, he carried the load on his head in the truck until he reached his destination. When he was asked why he refused to put down his load, he explained to them: “you gave me a lift but not my load.”

This is how some of God’s people still think. Although God has rescued them from their sins and the power of their enemies, they are still carrying their burdens, shame, and guilt through life. Things are still weighing them down and suffocating the life out of them. You don’t need to do that anymore.

Remember, God wants you to pour all your concerns in every area of your life on Him because He cares. So, when you refuse God’s help and care, you are telling God that He can only carry you but not your heavy load.

God’s care means that He will provide you with everything necessary for your health, welfare, maintenance, protection, and overall well-being. Remember that God who is your Father cares for the birds of the air, the animals in the forest, the grass of the field, and all His creations (Mt 10: 29-31). They all look daily unto Him for sustenance and He provides for them all:

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man’s heart. The trees of the Lord are full of sap, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted, where the birds make their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high hills are for the wild goats; the cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers...These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season. What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good (Ps 104: 14-28).

In fact, His care extends to the point where He is moved by everything that concerns you. Whatever you are passing through now is not strange to Him. He knows and He cares.

I’ll make a list of God’s gracious dealings, all the things God has done that need praising, all the generous bounties of God, his great goodness

to the family of Israel—compassion lavished, love extravagant. He said, “Without question, these are my people, children who would never betray me.” So he became their Savior. In all their troubles, he was troubled, too. He didn’t send someone else to help them. He did it himself, in person. Out of his own love and pity, he redeemed them. He rescued them and carried them along for a long, long time (Isa 63: 7-9, the Message).

I want to remind you today that God cares. You do not need to go through tough times alone. He cares enough to never leave or forsake you.

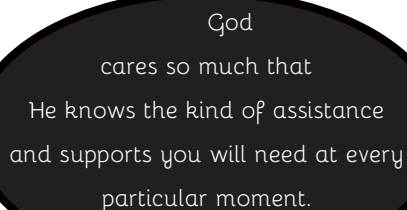
God cares so much that He also sends caring people across your path so that they can assist you. He knows the kind of assistance and supports you will need at every particular moment, and He will systematically and wisely put them in your life to give you a lift. Please understand that they are giving you the lift, but it is up to you to allow them to do whatever God has sent them to do.

Many of us are so naive that we don’t see the good in people. We find it difficult to embrace the help that God is sending our way. Some of us are skeptical and critical. Please understand that God has our best interests at heart because He cares.

Jesus reminded us that God cares for even the minute details of our lives. He cares about the hairs on your head falling (Mt 10: 30, Lk 12: 7). He cares enough to listen to the cry of your heart. He cares enough to feel.

American author Elizabeth George asked: “So why do we worry? Why do we worry about food and clothing? About finances and money? About security and the needs of life? We have Jehovah-Rohi! We have the Lord as our caring Shepherd. When fears regarding the cares of this world set in, we need to confidently lean on God’s promise to care for us. Then we can declare to God, “*Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You*” (Ps 56:3).”

As I conclude this chapter, let me echo the prayer of Apostle Peter:



God
cares so much that
He knows the kind of assistance
and supports you will need at every
particular moment.

after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace [Who imparts all blessing and favor], Who has called you to His [own] eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you (1Pt 5: 10, AMP).

The Living Bible states it this way:

after you have suffered a little while, our God, who is full of kindness through Christ, will give you his eternal glory. He personally will come and pick you up, and set you firmly in place, and make you stronger than ever.

The Message says:

it won't be long before this generous God who has great plans for us in Christ—eternal and glorious plans they are!—will have you put together and on your feet for good. He gets the last word; yes, he does.

The Passion Translation states:

and then, after your brief suffering, the God of all loving grace, who has called you to share in his eternal glory in Christ, will personally and powerfully restore you and make you stronger than ever. Yes, he will set you firmly in place and build you up.

Amen!

FIVE

God loves you

One of the questions that people sometimes ask is: “if God loves me why am I going through a rough patch?” Why is the devil after me? Please understand that you are not going through your tough times because God hates you. The reason the devil is after you is because God loves you. You are the object of His love. He loves you just as He loves Jesus. He wants you to be conscious of His love for you. In fact, you are who He is thinking about right now. His love positions you to truly live in Him.

Some people are full of resentment and anger because of what they are passing through. Many are confused and anxious because they think that life has dealt them with a bad hand. Yet, God wants you to believe that He has loved you with an everlasting love and there is nothing that can separate you from that love. He has engraved you in the palms of His hands (Isa 49: 16). In our modern-day language, we will imply as sociologist and pastor, Anthony Campolo puts it: “God carries your picture in His wallet.” Because you are His.

The troubles you have faced, you are facing, or you will face in life will not and cannot stop God from loving you. Even if you knowingly get yourself into trouble, He won’t stop loving you. God’s love is constant, always consistent, specially reserved for, and unique to you. Saint Augustine of Hippo once said:

“God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.” His love is endless, relentless, persistent, unbroken, unceasing, steady, stable, and unchanging. It is real. He is committed to you because He is committed to Himself. Nothing can and will separate you from God’s love. Apostle Paul convincingly reminded us:

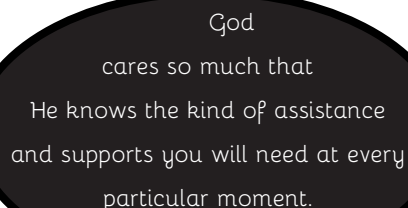
*who then can ever keep Christ’s love from us? When we have trouble or calamity, when we are hunted down or destroyed, is it because he doesn’t love us anymore? And if we are hungry or penniless or in danger or threatened with death, has God deserted us? ...**For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love.** Death can’t, and life can’t. The angels won’t, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God’s love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, or where we are—high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean—nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when he died for us (Rom 8: 35, 38-39 TLB, emphasis mine).*

God’s love is freeing. His love is not overbearing or burdensome. He does not love you so that He can enslave you. One of the characteristics of love is that it frees people to make their choices and provides them with everything necessary to make the right choices per time.

The challenges of life seek to put you in bondage, distract, and sidetrack you from pursuing your God-given destiny and living the very life that God has designed for you. This is why God ensures that because you love Him and are called according to His purpose, all things will work together for your good.

God persistently pursues you with His love to cause you to hope in Him because your expectations are from Him (Ps 62: 5). He also loves you to strengthen your faith and

provides you with the anchor needed to fearlessly face the future. God’s love gives you the ability to stay stable even when everything around you is changing. Remember that your faith is made stronger because God loves you.



God
cares so much that
He knows the kind of assistance
and supports you will need at every
particular moment.

His love for you propels your love for Him (1Jn 4: 19). If you think that God does not love you or will stop loving you, you may start distrusting Him and stop believing Him. This is why He consistently and patiently pursues you in love so that your faith can be made stronger in Him continually.

His love ensures that both of you can enjoy each other. He wants to be continually pleased by you because that is what He made you for in the first place (Rev 4: 11). His love makes your faith come alive and become stronger so that you can continually give Him pleasure. God is delighted when someone believes Him. As televangelist Dr Mike Murdock puts it: "God's only pain is to be doubted; God's only pleasure is to be believed." Remember in Hebrews 11: 6 "*without faith it is impossible to please God...*" To please someone means to satisfy, delight, thrill, give pleasure and make happy. Anytime you accept His love and exercise your faith in Him, you make His day as it were.

The pain of our sufferings in life becomes stronger when we fail to see ourselves as God's beloved and rest in His love. So, when you focus on His love, you don't feel the pain of the suffering. God's love is true and He cannot betray His love for you. Author and speaker Kristin Reeg once said: "when we come to an understanding of how much [God] loves us, we'll be able to truly trust Him no matter what circumstances come our way..."

Sometimes, God's love may not stop you from suffering or being attacked, but it will shield you from its effects. I want to encourage you to allow God's love to propel you to hold on to Him and keep trusting Him no matter what you are facing. Let God's love inspire you to keep going through the valley of the shadow of death instead of staying there. Go through what you are going through with God's strength and courage because He loves you.

When you embrace and accept God's love, you don't condemn yourself. You accept yourself as a person of worth who has been made in His image and likeness. His love does not give room for self-hate either! Love does not allow you to throw yourself away and it does not make an allowance for you to give up on yourself.

God's love is meteoric, his loyalty astronomic, His purpose titanic, His verdicts oceanic. Yet in his largeness nothing gets lost; not a man, not a

mouse, slips through the cracks (Ps 36: 5-6, the Message).

His love is breathtaking, enduring, and all-encompassing. His love empowers you to be all you can be in Him. His love helps you not to self-sabotage. It helps you keep your focus and stay true to yourself. When the love of God is at work, you will always see yourself in the light of His word. His love challenges you to maturity. It fills you with blessed assurance. It helps you to be aware of His presence and be God-conscious always. The founder and president of In Touch Ministries Charles Stanley reflected: “long ago I came to the total assurance that God loves me, God knows where I am every second of every day, and God is bigger than any problem life’s circumstances can throw at me.” It is my prayer that you too will come to that awareness and assurance today.

Moreover, God’s love destroys your tendency to be afraid because there is no fear in love (1Jn 4: 18). That means when you embrace God’s love, you can be free from the fear of people (Ps 27: 1, Pro 29: 25). You don’t need to fear your circumstances because the Lover of your soul is there with you and He is in control. You can be free from the fear of the unknown and of the future because God who so passionately loves you owns the future, He holds it for you, and He is already there.

His love is encapsulating, and it is ever-increasing. Writer and theologian, C. S. Lewis once remarked: “though our feelings come and go, God’s love for us does not.” When you embrace God’s love, you will embrace His word. God’s love brings you to the place where you can believe Him for anything because you are so convinced that He is, He is able, and there is nothing impossible for Him.

Any wonder apostle Paul prayed that you might understand the extent of God’s love:

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph 3: 17-19). Amen!

As we embrace God’s love, we will continue to partake in His divine nature and live in the abundance that He has for us.

SIX

God is in Control

One of the questions many people have asked, are still asking, and will continue to ask is: “if God is in control of the world why is there much evil and suffering?” They asked why bad things are happening to them. They asked why there is so much hate, racism, pain, difficulties, segregation, discrimination, pestilence, deaths, wars, sickness, diseases, bitterness, injustice, selfishness, godlessness, killings, and calamities in the world. Some people even question God’s rationale in creating the world in the first place if everything will turn as bad as it is now.

There are different schools of thought on whether God is in control or not. The truth is God is sovereign! He rules over the affairs of mankind. He controls the course of the world’s events by His wisdom and power (Dan 2: 21; 4: 17). He created the world for His pleasure and He has not left it to the devil to control, He is still in control. It might appear that the devil is having a fun-filled day but at the end of it all, God is still the One in charge. The devil can only go as far as God will let him. The church of Jesus needs to rise to the occasion and effectively represent God as He wants. Because the church is the body of Christ and He wants to maintain and retain His control through her.

Secondly, God has given every human being the power of choice and He has given us the ability to exercise it at will. But as we know, not everyone has God’s

nature and Spirit in them to act in accordance with His will and to His glory. Many people are influenced by the devil the destroyer and waster to act against God's will. This is why there is so much evil in the world today. It will continue to get worst until the end of the world because darkness will cover the earth and gross darkness the people but God's children will shine through it all.

Unfortunately, many Christians are so heavenly conscious and do not care for their primary responsibility here in the earth realm which is to dominate, bring order, and rule the earth (Gen 1: 26). We cannot blame God if we have surrendered the control of the world to the devil. We are the light here and if we refuse to shine, darkness will naturally take over.

Just as I wrote earlier, some things happen, have happened, or will happen to us in life that we can't understand, will never understand, or be able to explain the reason behind them. However, one thing that we need to know and be confident of is that God loves us, He is good, and He works everything out after the counsel of His will and to the praise of His glory (Eph 1: 11).

Moreover, we need to know that this world is the habitation of the cruelty (Ps 74: 20). It is the domain of the devil (2Cor 4: 4). It is the residence of the evil one who hates us—God's children—with a passion (1Jn 5: 18-19).

This is why Jesus asked the Father to keep those who are His through His name because although they live in the world, they are not of it (Jn 17: 15). He also asked us to pray that we will not be led into temptation but be delivered from the evil one because He knows that there are sufficient evil, difficulties, suffering, and pain for each day (Mt 6: 13, 34). So, if you have not been praying for yourself that God will keep you from evil, I want to encourage you to start doing that.

The good news is God is in control of the life of His children who have accepted His Lordship over them. God has a special interest in His families all over the world including you. He deals with every one of us uniquely. You are the most important person in the universe to God. John the beloved reminded us:

we know that none of the God-begotten makes a practice of sin—fatal sin. The God-begotten are also the God-protected. The evil one can't lay a hand on them. We know that we are held firm by God; it's only

the people of the world who continue in the grip of the evil one”
(1Jn 5: 18-19, the Message).

Did you just read that? The God-begotten ones are the God-protected. He hovers over them. He holds them firmly. He is their safety and defense. That means He directs their affairs in a way that makes the most sense to Him. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge Him in all our ways no matter how dark the situation is. God will show up in His time for His glory.

God plans your life with precision and to the T. He makes allowance for your mistakes, errors in judgment, and failures. He puts everything into context as He leads and directs you daily. His plan is that you will not be visited with evil.

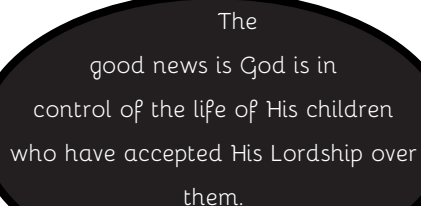
I want you to understand that God is not surprised by everything you are passing through because His Son has entered every detail of our human life. Hebrews 2: 14-16 reminded us:

since the children are made of flesh and blood, it's logical that the Savior took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the devil's hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death. It's obvious, of course, that he didn't go to all this trouble for angels. It was for people like us, children of Abraham. That's why he had to enter into every detail of human life (the Message).

He knows your pains and struggles and He cares deeply for you. He is your refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble (Ps 46: 1).

Having said that, it is important to know that God is not the architect of any bad situations that you have experienced, are experiencing, or will experience

in life. Humans tend to blame God for everything that happens to them even when it is their fault. It might be because of your bad judgment, indecision, disobedience, strife, fear, sin, or the love of money. It can also be because of being impatient or wanting to get ahead without giving



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them.

any preference or consideration to God's will, directives, and timing.

Sometimes, God allows some things to happen because of the counsel of His will and to also prevent something worse from happening. Sometimes, God uses trouble, closed doors, seemingly missed opportunities, or disappointments to redirect our attention to something better. Any wonder the Psalmist confessed: "*it is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes*" (Ps 119: 71).

The reality is that there are some lessons we will never learn until we pass through some things or hard times. There are some things that we are going through right now that will require us to learn patience. There are some things that we are going through at this time that will help us develop our faith muscles. At times, we passed through some hard times to strengthen our experiences so that we can help support others who will go through those circumstances in the future. Everyone has a destiny and God determines how it will play out for each one of us. Therefore, it is very important to trust God through our pain because He is in control of our lives and He knows what He is doing. Rest in His love and goodness "*like a contented child who rests on its mother's lap*" (Ps 131: 2, TPT).

In his letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul the apostle by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote:

for I consider [from the standpoint of faith] that the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us! (Rom 8: 18, AMP).

Things will take shape if you look at and consider—carefully think about or pay attention to—them from the standpoint of faith. You will not struggle with whatever God is doing in your life. Instead, you will surrender to, cooperate with, and allow Him to take you to where He has destined for you (Jer 17: 12, Ps 66: 10-12). You are in God's good hands and He will not run your life aground. He is not a dictator!

God is not confused about your life. He is God and He is in control. He is not an absentee Father who will give you over to the will of your enemies. He is solidly behind you to support, establish, strengthen, and see you through. Remember He is *through all* and He has factored everything you will ever face in life into the equation before you get there (Eph 4: 6). He is able, determined, and

committed to getting you through to the end. Hallelujah!

So, you must know that you are not alone. God is right there with you to make sure that you are not swallowed by whatever you are passing through.

1Corinthians 10: 13 explained:

no test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it (the Message).

The good news is that before you pass through anything, God would have certified and rendered it fit for you to have a safe sail. He will also soften the cushion so that you can have a safe landing. You will not die in your challenges. Whatever God allows, He does it because He sees that it will be beneficial to you at the end of it all. There is a surpassing glory that will be revealed in and through you.

God will make sure that all things work together for you because He is in control of your life. We saw from the story of Job that God gave the devil how far he could go when he tested him. Please know that the devil is not in control. Your difficult circumstances are not in control. Your employer, parents, spouse, and the government are not in control. God who made you is in control and He will ever remain in control of your life because you are His child.

Jesus said in John 16: 33

I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.] (AMPC).

Also, understand that whatever you are going through right now will not and cannot last forever. It is temporal. God designed the entry point as well as the exit point. There is always an escape route. He directs the traffic around your life and destiny. The problem is sometimes we are so engrossed in the problem

that we do not see the way out. We need to keep our focus on Him. Embrace His peace to experience His joy.

This is one of the reasons James the brother of Jesus encouraged us to have a different perspective whenever things are tough and rough. He wrote:

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 (Jm 1: 2-4, the Message).

The Living Bible explained the same scripture thus:

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.

The Passion Translation stated the same truth thus:

my fellow believers, when it seems as though you are facing nothing but difficulties see it as an invaluable opportunity to experience the greatest joy that you can! For you know that when your faith is tested it stirs up power within you to endure all things. And then as your endurance grows even stronger it will release perfection into every part of your being until there is nothing missing and nothing lacking.

As a result, you need to remind yourself continually not to be anxious. Because if you fail to see that God's hand is in everything about your life, you will be anxious and eventually be scared to death.

SEVEN

God owns you

You also need to remind yourself when you are going through a tough time or a rough patch that you belong to God. He owns you because He is your creator and He gave birth to you by His word and Spirit according to the counsel of His own will (Jn 1: 12-13). In other words, you belong to God and He owns you by the virtue of creation and salvation.

He purchased you with His blood (1Cor 6: 20-21). He also translated you completely from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col 1: 13). That means you are no longer of yourself to live for yourself by yourself (2Cor 5: 15). Everything about you belongs to God. You are not only His son, but you are also His heir and a joint heir with Christ (Rom 8: 17).

God chose you for Himself and made you His own.

“but now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine” (Isa 43: 1).

Did you just read that? God said: *“you are mine.”* So, you are His! Can you say that to yourself: “I am God’s! I am His property and purchased possession!” It does not matter what others think. It does not matter what your circumstance

is telling you, what really matters is what God has declared over you. Whenever you are going through a tough time, I want to encourage you to keep reminding yourself that you are still God's. The Psalmist in Psalms 100: 3 declared:

...it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

God made you in His image and likeness without your input and He is responsible for you. You need to continually remind yourself of whose you are good time or bad time notwithstanding. Don't allow that picture to depart from your view at any point in time. Your Maker is very powerful, caring, mighty, able, capable, available, ever-present, ever-ready to help, wise, and ever-loving.

You also need to remind yourself of who He is to you, how He sees you, and what He thinks about you. He is obsessed with you to the extent that He can't stop thinking about you. He knows you in and out as it were. So, His opinion should matter to you and you must embrace and cherish it above everything else. You must use what He says to silence anything that is speaking contrary to and want to contradict how He sees you.

You are God's treasured possession. He chose you by Himself and for Himself. You are set apart for Him. So, whatever you are passing through or will pass through is not meant to crush or destroy you. God has factored everything in because you are His and are set apart for His glory.

*you can be sure of this: The LORD set apart the godly for himself.
The LORD will answer when I call to him (Ps 4: 3, NLT).*

His life is your life and He is committed to Himself (Col 3: 3, Ps 27: 1). So, He is committed to you for life. His commitment to you is unparalleled and unequalled. I would to God that we will understand this, embrace this truth, and walk in its reality.

God has chosen you before the foundation of the world. Before the disappointments you have faced, are facing, or will face. He chose you to

You belong to God and He owns you by the virtue of creation and salvation.

help you. He chose you to support you. He chose you because He wants the best for you. He chose you to love you. In fact, you are the apple of His eyes.

In 1John 4: 4 Apostle John the beloved made an outstanding revelation and a declaration that we should take to heart. He wrote:

little children, you can be certain that you belong to God and have conquered them, for the One who is living in you is far greater than the one who is in the world (TPT).

You are from God. You are of God. You belong to Him. You have a place in Him. You fit into Him. You are perfectly placed in Him. You are a part of Him. You are a member of the body of Christ. You are His temple, property, the object of His pleasure. In Him, you live, move, and have your being (Acts 17: 28). So, be careful how you see yourself, how you present or represent yourself, and how you relate to yourself.

He knows you personally and intimately. He knows everything there is to know about you. He knows your strengths, weaknesses, what you are afraid of, what you can bear, what you care about, and your breaking point. He knows when you are about to give up. He knows what you need when you need it.

God knows the numbers of the hairs on your head and none will fall without His knowledge (Mt 10: 29-31, Lk 12: 6-7). He knew you before you came to know Him. For example, He told Jeremiah: “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...*” (Jer 1: 5). God also speaking through the prophet Isaiah said:

sing for joy, O heavens! Rejoice, O earth! Burst into song, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on them in their suffering. Yet Jerusalem says, “The Lord has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us.” “Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you! See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands... (Isa 49: 13-16).

Because God owns you, He is acquainted with all your ways. He knows every step you take before you even think of taking them.

Lord, you know everything there is to know about me. You perceive

every movement of my heart and soul, and you understand my every thought before it even enters my mind. You are so intimately aware of me, Lord. You read my heart like an open book and you know all the words I'm about to speak before I even start a sentence! You know every step I will take before my journey even begins. You've gone into my future to prepare the way, and in kindness you follow behind me to spare me from the harm of my past. With your hand of love upon my life, you impart a blessing to me. This is just too wonderful, deep, and incomprehensible! Your understanding of me brings me wonder and strength (Ps 139: 1-6, TPT).

He knows when you need to rest and He makes Himself available so that you can rest in His comfort and take solace in Him. He shields you from *sunstroke and moonstroke* (Ps 121: 6, the Message). He knows how to comfort you because He is your comforter. He will comfort you when you are going through a tough time and a rough patch. He will come alongside you and walk beside you as your counselor, encourager, companion, strengthener, and consoler. He will comfort you by protecting you from the strife of tongue (Ps 31: 20). What a comforter!

He will comfort you by singing over you in love. He will speak words of faith over you to exhort, persuade, encourage, challenge, instruct, stir, and refresh you so that you will not give up and quit (Zeph 3: 17). He will fill you up with His faith so that you can stand and walk tall when everything around you is falling apart.

God also comforts you with His peace. The good news is that you have His peace right here and now because He has given it to you (Jn 14: 27). You can live a settled life in the midst of your storm and not be upset by your troubles.

Any wonder Paul the Apostle wrote to thank this God of all comfort:

blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God...
(2Cor 1: 3-5).

Amen!

EIGHT

God can do it

We need to remind ourselves and be grateful that nothing, absolutely nothing is impossible for God to do. He can do what seems impossible to us just because He can. God has the power to get you out of your rough patches and keep you going during your tough times. We need to see His power, ability, strength, and presence instead of our circumstances.

The Psalmist narrated his experience of God's power and deliverance in Psalm 40: 1-3

I waited patiently for God to help me; then he listened and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out from the bog and the mire, and set my feet on a hard, firm path, and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, of praises to our God. Now many will hear of the glorious things he did for me, and stand in awe before the Lord, and put their trust in him (TLB).

We need to ask ourselves the same question the Lord asked Abraham and Sarah when they laughed after He told her that He would bless them with a son in their old age. God asked them if there is anything too hard for Him to do.

“where is Sarah, your wife?” They asked him. “In the tent,” Abraham

replied. Then the Lord said, “Next year I will give you and Sarah a son!” (Sarah was listening from the tent door behind him.) **Now Abraham and Sarah were both very old, and Sarah was long since past the time when she could have a baby.** So Sarah laughed silently. “A woman my age have a baby?” She scoffed to herself. “And with a husband as old as mine?” Then God said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say ‘Can an old woman like me have a baby?’ **Is anything too hard for God?** Next year, just as I told you, I will certainly see to it that Sarah has a son” (Gen 17: 9-14, TLB, emphasis mine).

Nothing around Sarah could support God’s word to her. Nothing about her circumstance gave any credibility to God’s power. Not her body or her husband’s body. To her, the situation looked more than impossible: both were very old, and she was long since past the time when she could have a baby.

In fact, according to our human calculation and computation, every natural clue revealed that she *could not* have a baby anymore at that age. She has no reference point. She has passed her prime and she has stopped menstruating. It is a hopeless situation. So, she did what many of us would have done in that situation: she scoffed and laughed as if God did not know what He was talking about. She thought to herself: “*you’re right, a woman my age have a baby!*”

Fortunately for her, God, who made the promise could do what looked impossible and would not lie because He cannot. Don’t look for a reference point when you are dealing with God. God does what He does because He is God. He is His only reference point. God was committed to blessing Sarah. He said: “*I will certainly see to it that Sarah has a son.*” The good thing is that in the process of time, Sarah came on board with God’s agenda:

she considered God who had given her the promise to be reliable and trustworthy and true to His word (Heb 11: 11, AMPCE).

And God who can do all things

visited Sarah exactly as he said he would; God did to Sarah what he promised: Sarah became pregnant and gave Abraham a son in his old age, and at the very time God had set (Gen 21: 1-2, the Message).

Did you read that? God did ***“exactly as he said he would at the very time God had set.”*** Praise the Lord! Just a reminder, He is still the same. He will also see to it that His words come to pass in your life.

Moreover, Abraham also found it difficult to *see* what God was saying. He did not believe the first time God spoke to him. The Scripture revealed:

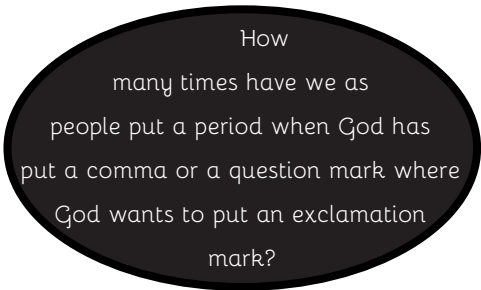
then God added, “regarding Sarai your wife—her name is no longer ‘Sarai’ but ‘Sarah’ (‘Princess’). And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and make her the mother of nations! Many kings shall be among your posterity.” Then Abraham threw himself down in worship before the Lord, but inside he was laughing in disbelief. “Me, be a father?” he said in amusement. “Me—100 years old? And Sarah, to have a baby at 90?” And Abraham said to God, “Yes, do bless Ishmael!” “No,” God replied, “that isn’t what I said. Sarah shall bear you a son; and you are to name him Isaac (‘Laughter’)” (Gen 17: 15-19, TLB).

He had written off the situation and he did not want God to be embarrassed. He wanted to help God. So, he asked God to bless Ishmael instead. In essence, Abraham asked God not to worry about any other child. He had one already and that was enough. He wanted God to concentrate all the blessings on Ishmael.

God repeated His intention to fulfill His promise to Abraham and Sarah.

“no,” God replied, “that isn’t what I said. Sarah shall bear you a son; and you are to name him Isaac (‘Laughter’)” (Gen 17: 19).

How many times have we as people put a period when God has put a comma or a question mark where God wants to put an exclamation mark? How many times have we looked at the difficult situations that we faced and concluded that it is impossible because things have not lined up and are not lining up with what we have planned? How many times have we doubted God because we don’t have any reference point?



How many times have we hastily concluded that something is impossible because it hasn't been done before or that it is taking longer? How many times have we decided that because we are incapable of doing anything about our circumstances things cannot change and we make our temporal conditions permanent through our unbelief? How many times have we with our attitude and unbelief told God that He should not worry anymore because we have found another alternative? This is what Abraham was telling God.

For the record, we are dealing with God who can make ways where there is no way. He can change times and seasons. He can make anything happen even at the last minute. He can turn deserts into fertile and watered valleys. He can feed the hungry. He can bring something out of nothing. He can dry up rivers and turn good land into deserts as well. He can make rich or make poor. He can kill and make alive.

He has no limit and cannot be limited by anything because He created everything out of Himself for Himself. He can exceed your wildest imagination. He can do exceeding abundantly above anything you can ask or think.

Everything holds up in Him. He is before everything. He can lift the poor from the dirt and the hungry from the garbage dump and set them among important people (Ps 113: 7-8). He can make the barren have children.

I love the story that took place between the prophet Elijah and king Jehoshaphat in 2kings 3. King Jehoshaphat had contacted the prophet wanting to know if God would give them victory over their enemies because the odds were stacked against them. From the look of things, they did not have a fighting chance because their enemies were many and more powerful. But because God was involved, He spoke through the prophet to assure them of victory:

“now bring me someone to play the lute.” And as the lute was played, the message of the Lord came to Elisha: “The Lord says to fill this dry valley with trenches to hold the water he will send. You won't see wind nor rain, but this valley will be filled with water, and you will have plenty for yourselves and for your animals! But this is only the beginning, for the Lord will make you victorious over the army of Moab! You will conquer the best of their cities—even those that are

*fortified—and ruin all the good land with stones.” **And sure enough,** the next day at about the time when the morning sacrifice was offered—look! Water! It was flowing from the direction of Edom, and soon there was water everywhere (11-20, TLB, emphasis mine).*

Praise God!

God is incomparable, unparalleled, unsurpassed, unmatched, unique, unrivaled, outstanding, and remarkable. No word in our vocabulary can accurately, correctly, properly, appropriately, fittingly, suitably, acceptably, rightly, perfectly, exactly, or precisely describe or explain Him. We are so finite in our understanding of Him and we cannot fully comprehend His acts or why He does what He does. He takes Himself to explain Himself.

James Fowler founder and director of Christ in You Ministries once remarked: “God is independent, autonomous, and self-generative. What God is, only God is! His attributes are exclusive to Himself. Only God is God! God is exclusively God both in His being and in His activity. God’s primary function is to act as the God He is. He never acts out of character and He consistently expresses every facet of His character.” Hallelujah!

God never acts out of character! He is good and He cannot *not* be good. Any wonder Paul the Apostle reminded us in 2Timothy 2: 13 that God cannot deny, negate, disallow, repudiate, bar, hinder, or prevent Himself from being good and faithful. He cannot be false to Himself.

God told Prophet Jeremiah:

I am the Lord, the God of all mankind; is there anything too hard for me? (Jer 32: 26-27, TLB).

In every situation you find yourself, you must admit just as Jeremiah did:

O Lord God! You have made the heavens and earth by your great power; nothing is too hard for you! (Jer 32: 17, TLB).

I wonder what your response will be if God asks you the same question. I have come to understand that anyone can give a good answer when things are going well. But wait until people start to feel the pressure of their situations that

will not change for the better or the prayers that seem not to have an answer or the negative circumstances that look as though there is no end in sight. It is then we can actually know if our praise is genuine or just a makeshift.

Please understand that your situation will not make God a liar. He is still the God of all flesh and there is nothing too difficult for Him to do. How I pray that we will grab this revelation and allow it to sink deep into our subconscious mind! How I pray that God will help us not to stagger at His promises, but be like Mary who believed God even when the situation looked very impossible.

then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God... Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word." (Lk 1: 34-35, 38).

When Abraham regrouped, the Bible stated he was fully convinced that what God had promised He was also able to perform:

...as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations" in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform (Rom 4: 17-21).

The good news is that if you too can dare believe God and respond to Him in faith, you can be sure, convinced, and certain that you will experience His possibilities as well (Mk 9: 23).

NINE

Your Response

Your response when you go through tough times matters. Please understand that God will do His part because He is God who loves and cares for you deeply. He is committed to making all things work together for your good. You need to cooperate with Him in the process by responding in faith and not fear. Faith is a requirement for the delivery of God's promises.

Furthermore, you must know that “no obstacle will ever leave you the way it found you. You will be better, or you will be worse” according to pastor and author John Mason. You must, therefore, guard the loins of your mind and continually focus your attention on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith so that you can endure to the end. God's plan is that your faith will not fail because He has promised to reveal His glory in and through you. Here are some things that I will encourage you to do when you go through those tough times and rough patches.

1. Pray

Prayer is not an activity in futility. It is connecting with God on a higher pedestal that is beyond the natural realm. Prayer is the key established way that God appointed to make your needs and requests known to Him.

God always expects you to pray in season and out of season. In other words,

pray when things are great and when things are not great. Prayer is what we do not what we only talk about. The Apostle James the brother of Jesus charged us in his epistle: “*is there any afflicted, let him pray...*” (Jm 5: 17). That means you don’t just talk, complain, blame others, shame, or condemn yourself because of what you are going through, but pray. Don’t call for a pity party, pray. Don’t excuse yourself, pray. Don’t let your situation discourage or paralyze you, pray. Don’t sleep, pray. Pray fervently and ferociously. You become more proactive as you pray continually. Declare what you want to see and not what is happening.

Many of us usually focus on what we are going through, we tell God how bad our situation is and how it is getting worse by the day. We spend all our energy concentrating on the problem and not focusing on the solutions. Yet, God has called us to be problem solvers with Him. Prayer is, therefore, one of the avenues we solve and resolve life’s problems. We create through our prayers.

God reminded us through the prophet Jeremiah to call upon Him in the days of trouble (Jer 33: 3). The Psalmist also echoed God’s commitment to answer us in the time of trouble: “*call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me*” (Ps 50: 15).

David shared his experience when things were tight for him:

*in my distress I called upon the LORD and I cried to my God for help.
From His temple He heard my voice, and my cry for His help reached
His ears* (Ps 18: 6).

He knew what most of us don’t know according to Psalm 27: 5

*for in the day of trouble He will hide me in His shelter; He will
conceal me under the cover of His tent; He will set me high upon a
rock* (TLB).

God is ready to set you up higher than your challenges as you pray to Him.

Jesus prayed for Himself during His darkest hour and the Bible said that the angels ministered to and strengthened Him (Lk 22: 42-43). He was able to go through what He went through. He also prayed for Peter that he will be strong to withstand the attack of the devil. He prayed that Peter’s faith would not fail. He also prayed for his restoration (Lk 22: 32). Peter also cried to Jesus to rescue

him from sinking when He walked on water and Jesus did (Mt 14: 30).

In Psalm 107, we read the record of different people who went through different difficult challenges—lack, homelessness, hopelessness, helplessness, fatigue, confusion, misery, slavery, suffering, sickness, instability, threats, distress, and storms, etc—at different times. However, they all had one thing in common: *“they cried unto the LORD in their trouble[s], and he delivered them out of their distresses...”* (vv 6, 13, 19, 28). They knew that *“the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry”* (Ps 34: 15, 1Pet 3: 12). They prayed because they know that God has a way of making a way where there is no way (Isa 43:19).

What are you waiting for? Some of us are still waiting for someone else to pray for us. God wants you to approach Him boldly in prayer. So, don't wait until someone begins to pray for you, learn to pray for yourself. Like Apostle Paul, pray all manners of prayer in the Spirit:

pray with my spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me], but I will also pray [intelligently] with my mind and understanding (1Cor 14: 15, AMPC).

It is very important to develop confidence in the integrity of God's word. This is the assurance that we have when we pray:

ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened (Mt 7: 7-8).

John the beloved revealed God's commitment, passion, ability, willingness, and readiness to answer us:

and this is the confidence (the assurance, the privilege of boldness) which we have in Him: [we are sure] that if we ask anything (make any request) according to His will (in agreement with His own plan), He listens to and hears us. And if (since) we [positively] know that He listens to us in whatever we ask, we also know [with settled and absolute knowledge] that we have [granted us as our present possessions] the requests made of Him (1Jn 5: 14-15, AMPC).

2. Believe that you are coming out

I want to remind you that your afflictions are but for a moment and they won't last forever. You need to know that you are coming out. It is not a dead-end. Tough times are not meant to last, but tough people do as observed by late pastor Robert Schuller. Your tough time is meant to be a temporary knockdown, not a knockout. Be ready to get back up again. Apostle Paul wrote:

these troubles and sufferings of ours are, after all, quite small and won't last very long. Yet this short time of distress will result in God's richest blessing upon us forever and ever!" (2Cor 4: 17, TLB).

Your belief helps you put things into perspective. When we compare our struggles with eternity, they are but light, fluffy, and insubstantial. They are not weighty, and they are meant to pass. However, when we are going through them it may seem that they will last forever, and we may not have any break. But when we look at them from God's perspective, they are quite small. The Message Bible puts it thus: "*these hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye...*"

They are small potatoes because they are not a match to what God has set to do in your life. Therefore, don't cave in or give up because

"many hardships and perplexing circumstances confront the righteous, but the Lord rescues him from them all" (Ps 34: 19, AMP).

No matter what you are passing through today, here is the word of assurance that I want you to continually speak over your life: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (Ps 27: 14). Please understand that your belief determines your expectations and interpretation of your situation.

I want to encourage you not to doubt God's promise to get you out of your difficult situation. Just as Abraham held on and did not stagger, walk unsteadily, spaced out, or wobble at the promise of God through unbelief, please do the same. The Bible recorded:

when everything was hopeless, Abraham believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he couldn't do but on what God said he would do. And so he was made father of a multitude

of peoples. God himself said to him, "You're going to have a big family, Abraham!" Abraham didn't focus on his own impotence and say, "It's hopeless. This hundred-year-old body could never father a child." Nor did he survey Sarah's decades of infertility and give up. He didn't tiptoe around God's promise asking cautiously skeptical questions. He plunged into the promise and came up strong, ready for God, sure that God would make good on what he had said"
(Rom 4: 17-24, the Message).

Abraham decided to live on the basis of what God said He would do. This is what I believe is the foundation of a die-hard faith: living based on what God said He would do.

Those who believe that they will see the manifestation of God's glory in their lives always do. So, if you believe that you are coming out, you will actually do. So don't make decisions out of fear that will do you in (Isa 28: 16). Trust God through the process and be patient. Don't complicate and make a mess of things because anything you are passing through now "*is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*" (1Cor 4: 17). Do you believe this?

3. Watch what you speak

What you continually speak over your life or allow others to speak over you is very crucial to your deliverance in life, especially during your difficult moments. Your world goes in the direction of your words. Many people have self-sabotaged themselves because of the negative words and decrees they continually and consistently proclaim over their lives. You are a spirit being and your words are Spirit-coded.

Your words are seeds, they carry life and they will grow where they are planted. They are potent and will produce results. In the same vein, Angels respond to the voice of your words (Ps 103: 20, Num 14: 28). We are encouraged to pay attention to our words because angels are God's ministry spirits that have been called to minister to us the heirs of salvation (Heb 1: 14). King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 5: 6 reminded us:

suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy

voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? (KJV).

Your words can determine your experience. There is a relationship between your words and breakthrough and sustenance. Don't set any destruction into motion because of your confession.

Your mouth is the launching pad of your destiny. You can trap or liberate yourself with your mouth (Mt 12: 37). The reason is that with your mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom 10: 10). Your words have creative power. Your deliverance, for the most part, is in your mouth. Please do not let your mouth sink you. Let your words reflect your faith and not fear.

We are encouraged to "*hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*" (Heb 10: 23). The reason is that Jesus is the High Priest of our confession (Heb 3: 1). He represents us before God and keeps our words active. You want to ensure that your words are what He can work with. Your confession—saying the same thing as Jesus—will quicken Him to work for you. When your words are in synchronization with His, you will not be denied.

So, no matter what you are passing through, keep your mouth from speaking evil. We are told: "*whoever wants to embrace life and see the day fill up with good, here's what you do: say nothing evil or hurtful*" (1Pet 3: 10, the Message). Because life and death are in the power of the tongue (Pro 18: 22). Therefore, confess God's word of deliverance and you shall have what you say. Jesus, the Son of God taught us this principle of faith in Mark 11: 23

for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith (KJV).

There is a correlation between what you are saying and what you are seeing. I wonder what you are saying. I wonder what you are seeing.

4. Keep your mind fixed on the Lord

Life's challenges often distract us from focusing and pursuing what is most significant. Challenges can also prevent us from sticking to our commitment and our confession of faith in the goodness of God who has loved us with an

everlasting love. It is important to pay attention to what we are thinking because it will affect our moods and perception. It can sway us away, get us depressed, anxious, and kill every good thing in us.

Negative thoughts kill inspiration and hope. The Bible says that a broken spirit dries up the bone (Pro 17: 22). Instead, keep on meditating upon the Lord because it will help you keep your focus and mind on Him. Here is God's promise: "*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You*" (Isa 26: 3).

You need to keep your thought in submission to God's word and not allow it to run rampant because if it is not tamed it will cause you to be all over the place. You need to meditate on the word of God if you want to deal wisely in life. Meditation helps you weigh your words and propel them through your mouth. King David shared his experience with us...

I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah... but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings" (Ps 77: 1-12, KJV).

As you meditate on God's goodness, you will recollect what He has done in the past and that will help you to encourage your heart in the Holy Spirit. You can also be assured that He can do it again. Meditation also helps you to acknowledge every good thing in you which is necessary for building up your most holy faith (Philemon 6).

Moreover, as you meditate on God's work, He will cause His peace to stand a guard over your mind, reassure your heart, thoughts, feelings, settle you down, and displace worry from the center of your life. Amen!

5. Be grateful and rejoice in the Lord

Paul the apostle who had his own fair share of difficult times said we should:

thank [God] in everything [no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks], for this is the will of God for you [who are] in Christ Jesus [the Revealer and Mediator of that will]
(1Thes 5: 18, AMPCE).

Praise God through your storm with the voice of triumph. Your praise is your reflection of your trust and confidence in God's integrity. It is a declaration that God is for and with you. It is acknowledging God's hand in the affairs of your life in spite of what you are currently experiencing. Your praise gets God involved in your situation because He dwells in the praise of His people. Your praise helps you change your focus from the problem to the bigness and the greatness of God.

Please remember that nothing you are passing through is a surprise to God. You need to praise not because of the bad experience but because God is in control and He is working out everything for your good after the counsel of His will. He will make a way where there seems to be no way.

Be grateful to God because He is birthing new possibilities and realities through your pain. God is with you in your storm. Here is the commitment of prophet Habakkuk:

Though the fig tree does not blossom and there is no fruit on the vines, [though] the product of the olive fails and the fields yield no food, though the flock is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the [victorious] God of my salvation! The Lord God is my Strength, my personal bravery, and my invincible army; He makes my feet like hinds' feet and will make me to walk [not to stand still in terror, but to walk] and make [spiritual] progress upon my high places [of trouble, suffering, or responsibility]! (Hab 3: 17-19, AMPCE).

6. Be patient

Impatience is costly and deadly. It will cause you to abort your destiny and incapacitate you from looking forward with great expectations. It will cause you to leave the place of promise prematurely. Apostle Paul encouraged the saints in Rome to "be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble, and prayerful always" (Rom 12: 12, TLB).

You need patience to help your faith.

For you have need of patient endurance [to bear up under difficult circumstances without compromising], so that when you have carried out the will of God, you may receive and enjoy to the full what is promised (Heb 10: 36, AMP).

Patience helps you to rest in God and not to wound yourself up unnecessarily. Patience causes you to be steadfast in life. It causes you to abide and submit to God's wisdom and His love. Impatience causes restlessness, confusion, frustration, hopelessness, lack of concentration, and learned helplessness.

You need to be calm and not be all over the place. Patience helps you to be brave and look towards the future with faith because eventually, you will "become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way" (Jam 1: 4, the Message). You "will lack nothing" (KJV) when you allow patience to have its full work in you. Patience and faith will help you obtain whatever God has promised (Heb 6: 12).

7. Rebuke the devil

Not every trouble you face is a result of the devil's works or attack. There are some things that God allows to develop your character, bring you to a place of maturity, promote you, or open you up to a new season and higher level that you will not be able to attain otherwise. However, there are some things that the devil makes happen because of what he stands for.

The meaning of the devil or satan is someone who stands to oppose and withstand you using everything he has in every way possible. He is an antagonist. His primary assignment is to stop you in your track if you let him. He brings about different adverse events to cause unfavorable situations in your life. He can cause the raging of the sea.

He can use anything or anyone to achieve his aim. He can influence your family, friends, spouse, employer,

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employee, customers, or government to stand in your way to antagonize, upset, irritate, provoke, rattle, enrage, and/or aggravate you. He can pretend to be an angel of light to deceive people. So, you need to be careful and be aware of his tactics, strategies, schemes, plans, methods, approaches, tricks, antics, or maneuvers, so that he will not take advantage of you or get an upper hand.

The devil is your arch enemy. You need to understand that you are not fighting against flesh and blood (Eph 6: 12). Therefore, renew your mind with God's word and empower your heart with His love and stop hating people who might have yielded their bodies as instruments in the devil's hands.

Please understand that you are not commanded to negotiate with the devil, it is not a safe thing to do. You don't play with him or strike a deal with him. You don't persuade or tolerate him. You don't entertain or discuss with him. You don't act friendly towards him because he does not see you as one. You are commanded not to give any place to him (Eph 4: 27).

Resist him in the faith in the name of Jesus and he will flee from you. Jesus rebuked the devil and He has given you the power and authority to do the same. Stand your ground and resist him and he will lose ground to you. Apostle Peter told the Christians of his day to

...resist him, be firm in your faith [against his attack—rooted, established, immovable], knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being experienced by your brothers and sisters throughout the world. [You do not suffer alone.] (1Pet 5: 8-9, AMPC).

You are to stop him and crush his head with the truth. In other words, you must at all times drive the truth into the head of the devil. Please understand that your weapons are not physical, they are spiritual.

The Apostle Paul reminded us in 2Corinthians 10: 3-6

For although we live in the natural realm, we don't wage a military campaign employing human weapons, using manipulation to achieve our aims. Instead, our spiritual weapons are energized with divine power to effectively dismantle the defenses behind which people hide. We can demolish every deceptive fantasy that opposes God and break

through every arrogant attitude that is raised up in defiance of the true knowledge of God. We capture, like prisoners of war, every thought and insist that it bow in obedience to the Anointed One. Since we are armed with such dynamic weaponry, we stand ready to punish any trace of rebellion, as soon as you choose complete obedience (TPT).

You must also allow God's peace to garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Knowing that

the God of peace will come down on Satan with both feet, stomping him into the dirt. [So that you can] enjoy the best of Jesus!
(Rom 16: 20, the Message). Amen!

8. Help someone else in the process

One of the things some of us do when we are going through any tough times or rough patches is to isolate, withdraw from people, and stop being a blessing. Yet, God wants us to have a different mindset, attitude, and approach. He wants us to reach out and give. Not close up and be tightfisted. We can get stuck if all we do is to receive and not be a giver. God wants us to help others during our tough times.

Joseph served selflessly when he was going through his tough time. He helped his master organize his business, helped others interpret their dreams, and ensured that everyone around him succeeded. David also helped others during his stressful time.

When you refuse to give a helping hand, you will limit how far your hands can go. No matter how little it might be, please learn to contribute and continue to help people. Be a blessing wherever you find yourself. You might have lost your job, so while looking for another one or looking for something else to do, use a part of your time to re-organize and re-strategize. You can also volunteer in your community or church. Don't spend your time in bitterness, criticizing, or condemning yourself and others. Rather, become a ladder and a bridge, not a wall to people: *knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free (Eph 6: 8).*

I want to encourage you to shift your focus from yourself and look for

different avenues to help someone else in the process. Help people interpret their dreams. Be a connector. Be there for others. Offer to help and use everything at your disposal to help. Encourage, motivate, and inspire others. Help others through their tough times as well. Provide stability for people. Also, intercede and pray for them. Be what the Prophet Isaiah said:

A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, And a cover from the tempest, As rivers of water in a dry place, As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land (Isa 32: 2).

God has called you to be a blessing to others, don't allow your difficult times to deprive them of that blessing they can experience through you. God is glorified as you become a blessing to others. Please know that it is always a blessing to be a blessing. King Solomon charged us:

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, "go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," when you have it with you (Pro 3: 27-28).

As a Christian, God chose you to be:

His workmanship [His own masterwork, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us] (Eph 2: 10, AMP).

So do not allow anything to debar or deter you from carrying out that work to the glory of God's name knowing that there is a reward for doing what He has assigned for you to do (Col 3: 23-24).

Conclusion

We have looked at different things you must know and do when you are going through a difficult time. I want you to consider what I have written and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

I pray that you will have a fresh revelation of who God is so that you can experience Him afresh and enjoy Him anew. I pray that God will reveal you to you so that you can truly know yourself. I pray for you today that your faith will not fail. I pray that God will help you to be wiser than your enemies. I pray for the strength to endure so that you can experience the best of life. I pray that you will not die in the wilderness of life. I pray that God will make a way for you and show you the way out. I pray that God will also open your eyes to see the way out and give you the courage to do what He is asking of you.

I pray that you will experience God's timely help. I pray that you will go forward in spite of anything that wants to hold you down, hold you back, or stop you in your track. Like the kingdom of God, you too will advance forcefully and gloriously.

I pray that the God of peace will swiftly pound satan to a pulp under your feet. I pray that God who has enough power to prevent you from stumbling will keep you from falling through His name, and present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 1: 24). Amen!

About the Author

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