

Growing the Roses of Victory Despite Life's Painful Thorns

When I lived in Scotland, I had the most beautiful roses in my garden. I love God's creation. What starts out as an ugly thorn bush is transformed into a beautiful rose bush. Abraham Lincoln said, "We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."

As I was enjoying the beauty of the roses in my garden, my husband walked up, and I said, "Bill, look at these beautiful roses." He said, "What about the thorns?" I couldn't believe it. How could he be thinking about thorns looking at this beautiful rose! Then he said, "Roses bloom in season, but thorns are always there."

As I pondered these words, the Lord whispered to my heart, "The real woman grows roses from the thorns of life." As I continued to ponder these words, the Lord began to reveal truths from His Word in overcoming disappointments and discouragements, the thorns in my life. These thorns are rooted in rejections, jealousy, comparing ourselves with others, imaginary or real.

Life is full of pain, but misery is optional to the woman of God. A real woman does not deny the trials and challenges of life, but she uses them to grow roses. The real woman is the woman who is born again, filled with the Holy Spirit. Her heart is yielded to God, her mind is being renewed and her body is surrendered to God as she learns how to live in a dark world walking in the light. God is focused in bringing our hearts (spirit), minds and bodies in line with His Word and His purpose, which will give us the strength to face the persecution and opposition we face in this world.

Situations that come into our life are warning signals that we

need to adjust our lens in how we view life. Like the oil light in your car, if it comes on, you know you need to stop and check the oil level. If you are feeling confused, you don't understand what is happening around you, you need to stop and check your oil level. The real woman is filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit. When was the last time you checked your oil level while on your knees?

We all have dreams and expectations for life. We dream about that perfect man who will sweep us off our feet and all those perfect children, a successful career and ultimately, a long and happy life.

When real-life challenges start to batter your dreams, and things are not as easy as you thought they would be, you can become weary in the battle. You are betrayed by a friend, someone lies about you or you lose your job, which has many negative effects in your life. We start to question our desires and wonder why God is taking so long. *Does He really love me?* These thoughts bring us to a place of temptation. Do we really trust God?

These storm clouds can cloud your hope with disillusionment and change your focus and anticipation of your dreams. Your hope is deferred by these clouds of doubt, creating an unhealthy climate around you with a stormy forecast for your future. Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life."

A deferred dream is not a failure; it is an opportunity for a divine encounter with God. This is a place where we learn to wait upon the Lord. Isaiah 40:31 tells us, "But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

Waiting is one of the most difficult things to do for those who have put their total trust in God. This season of our life

is where character is formed, giving us the strength to endure in our time of temptation. When we choose to wait, we are saying, "Lord, I trust You." Waiting is the process of allowing God to work in us for His good pleasure (See Phil. 2:13). What He does in us as we wait is more important than what we are waiting on!

As you are walking in this season trusting God, you will develop endurance. Godly character is being formed in you, bringing you to a place of hope. And hope will not disappoint. This is a time when you have to make a choice to trust God and declare His faithfulness.

A healthy rose bush not only produces more blooms, but it is also better equipped to ward off disease and insects that try to kill its root system. Roses can learn to survive without fertilizer, but they struggle and usually just produce one inferior bloom a season. They tend to adapt to their neglect and grow wild, losing their sweet fragrance and deteriorating quickly. This is what happens to us when we lose hope. We have to use the fertilizer, the hurts and heartache of life, to grow roses.

You have to give up the illusion that you deserve a life that is problem-free. This is false hope and living in a fantasy world. You are not born again to survive, but to overcome. "For whoever is born of God overcomes the world, and the victory that overcomes the world is our faith" (1 John 5:4). Our faith in God will move the mountain.

Faith is walking on the water of His Word that is revealed to you. Faith is light that empowers you to walk in His path and receive your miracles. When you "see" the truth of His Word, the truth will set you free. God's Word in your heart brings light and life to any situation you are facing in this world. Confusion is the dust of the world the enemy tries to use to cloud our vision of God's faithfulness.

What God uses to adorn, we call a thorn. Only those who can see the invisible can do the impossible Rise up, daughters. You are born to overcome! {eoa}

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