

How to Turn Your Trouble Into Triumph

What a gift—to live in our time! Today is a day of great opportunity for women. We can now break through to new positions and levels of authority in all spheres. Women currently lead in every sector of society. We direct schools, universities, corporations, churches, governments and nations.

In the midst of this unparalleled opportunity, there's also great trouble: war, earthquakes, tsunamis, famines and devastating weather patterns. We live in a country divided by every kind of controversy. Unrighteousness is now being legislated so that people can “legally” sin. Call it a day of immense turmoil and pain.

The world has never needed answers like it does today. It needs bearers of good news, healers and deliverers. It needs women who are captured by the very heart of God—women who don't see problems, but see solutions.

Great Expectations

Consider Deborah, a woman who led a nation through times of great strife (Judg. 4–5). When she became Israel's leader, the nation was suffering under the consequences of its own sin.

The people had chosen new gods, and as a result there was war at the gates. An enemy army surrounded them. Life was so dangerous that highways were deserted and people traveled by hidden paths, or they simply stayed at home. Judges 5:7 says that life in the village had stopped.

But Deborah possessed a different spirit than others around her. Judges 5:6-7 recounts the situation: “‘In the days ... of Jael, the roads were abandoned; travelers took to winding paths. Village life in Israel ceased, ceased *until I, Deborah,*

arose, arose a mother in Israel'" (NIV, emphasis added).

What a statement for Deborah to make! She positively and confidently knew that she would turn her nation around.

Deborah perceived mothers to be more than just bearers of children. She saw motherhood as a leadership and problem-solving role extending beyond the family. Women with a true mother's heart are created to find solutions and lead people to victory. Deborah said, "I know I was made for this. I know I can solve this nation's problems." What faith! It was a faith that apprehended the promises of God.

The apostle Paul said, in Acts 14:22, that it's through much "tribulation" we enter the kingdom of God (NKJV). According to *Strong's Concordance*, the word *tribulation* comes from a Greek word denoting affliction, trouble, anguish, burden and persecution. It means to be crowded around by problems or caught in a narrow place where escape is impossible.

This isn't a pretty picture. But Deborah wasn't deterred. She said, "I'm getting in line. This is my day. I was made for this!" Paul's message isn't just for Deborah. It's for us too. Tribulation is our entry fee or ticket into the kingdom of God.

In the book of Hosea, we find that Israel was once again punished and restored. God said, "'There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope'" (2:15, NIV). *Achor* means "trouble." And the "door of hope" isn't just wishful thinking. It is positive expectation.

The Hebrew translation also calls it a "rope." This means that hope wraps itself around the faithful in the valley of trouble and pulls them, through their attitude, to a place of triumph. So, when trouble comes, look ahead for the victory.

This is what Deborah believed. She was energized and confidently expectant. She expected to change her world.

I remember my spiritual mentor preaching on what Paul said in Acts 14:22. Back then I didn't get it. It bothered me so much that one day I took it up with God in prayer.

Suddenly, while praying, God painted a vivid picture for me that helped me understand. That day, I learned this truth: Trouble is the door to a new place in God's kingdom.

Standing up through a season of trouble does something to us that nothing else can do. Strength begins to line our backbone. We begin to understand we're part of a kingdom that will stand firm, no matter how much the world shakes. And the next time we experience trouble, there's within us a greater strength and grace to overcome.

Kingdom Authority

The message of the New Testament is the message of the kingdom. We're part of an invisible, eternal kingdom ruled by the King of all kings. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:10 that every knee, both in heaven and on earth, will one day bow at the name of Jesus, this King of kings.

Most believers have no idea what kind of power and authority is at their disposal. Many women don't comprehend that they're more than just a cultural subset in this nation. Their goal is to live a nice life with great kids, a wonderful husband and good friends. But God intended far more than that.

We are kingdom rulers because God, through Jesus Christ, has delegated to us the authority to administer His kingdom on Earth (Luke 9:1; 10:19). Ephesians 2:6 says that we're both raised up and seated with Christ in heavenly places. We rule and reign through Him (Rev. 5:10).

Often women struggle with this concept because it doesn't seem feminine. We were taught to submit and be nice. It seems foreign to us because we're used to being Daddy's girl—a

dancing princess, pirouetting through life.

However, we're to be fully women and fully feminine, displaying a wonderful heart filled with love. Being kingdom releasers and enforcers should never cancel out our femininity.

Remember, God made male and female to rule this world. In Genesis 1:26, God said, "'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion" (NKJV). God further said that male and female are to bear fruit, fill the earth and subdue the earth (v. 28).

He didn't say this to the man and then tell the woman to just listen in. He said it to mankind—male and female, simultaneously and without any qualification. This is what you're to do ... no explanation and no exemptions.

This should get our attention. God didn't first say to live a nice life, have a nice family, go to church and be good to your neighbors. He didn't tell us to take notes while He talked to our male counterparts. No!

God gave women (along with men) a mandate to fulfill. This was before Adam and Eve married, had children and fell into sin.

A primary rule of biblical interpretation is the "law of first mention." This involves the importance of examining the first appearance in Scripture of a particular doctrine or principle in order to understand it fully.

Genesis contains "laws of first mention." In essence, everything in the Bible is found in Genesis in seed form. For instance, man was first told to take dominion over the earth in the book of Genesis. This is a "first mention."

Acts 3:21 states that Jesus must remain in heaven "until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through his holy prophets." So, before Jesus returns, male

and female must be restored back to the relationship God originally designed for them. They must learn to take dominion over the earth.

The Hebrew word for *dominion* is *radah*. It means “to prevail against, to reign, to rule over and to take.” It’s a root word that means “to tread down, to subjugate and to crumble off.” Through Christ, we’re to take dominion by breaking through (crumbling off) every obstacle, hindrance and wall that prevents us from ruling.

There’s nothing neutral about this word “dominion.” It’s radical, confrontational, warring and filled with authority. It’s encouraging, empowering, compelling and forceful.

It’s also overwhelming, perplexing and, in one sense, frightening. In fact, wars have been fought over this word. Dominion draws a line in the sand. It pinpoints the difference between a Christian captured by modern-day cultural mind-sets versus one that’s broken through to a true biblical identity in Christ.

Divine Destiny

Women have power and authority in Christ. Jesus said, “‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations’” (Matt. 28:18-19). *Authority* in this passage means “delegated authority.” God, the Father, gave to Jesus, the Son, all authority and legal rights to rule.

In Ephesians 1:22, all things were put under His feet. Through His victory, Christ (the second Adam) took back influence over the earth from Satan. Christ is the head and we’re the body.

As the body, we’re also the eyes, ears, mouth, hands and feet of God. This means that we have both the power and clout to change the atmosphere around us. We can overcome every obstacle that stands in the way of God’s destinies for us.

We are part of that unseen kingdom, and we're called to reign with the King of all kings. We have authority to rule in our homes as mothers and power to raise great kids who fulfill their destinies. We have influence in the workplace, wherever God positions us.

God has placed us on Earth to administer, release and enforce His kingdom. Luke 17:20-21 tells us that the kingdom of God doesn't come from careful observation because it's within us.

Judges 5, "'Awake, awake Deborah; Awake, awake, sing a song!'" (v. 12, NASB). It sounds like a crying out to Deborah, telling her to open her eyes and, literally, to wake up. She had been spiritually asleep, and she needed to see what was going on around her.

To *wake up* means "to lift up and to stir." This is what Deborah was doing when she said, "'Until I, Deborah, arose, until I arose, a mother in Israel'" (Judg. 5:7). Woman of God, wherever you're assigned—at home or in the workplace—awaken! Lift up and stir. You are to take dominion and rule. Cry out to God to open your eyes. Ask Him to show you how to bring all that's within your sphere into the order of God.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, restore righteousness, destiny, love, healing, deliverance, wisdom, counsel and peace wherever you are. Send every warring power that fights against God on its way. Take your place and rule in the midst of your enemies.

You and I are made to take dominion, to awake, to arise and to stand up tall through the power and authority of Jesus Christ. Whatever's in our hands, we have the right to cause it to flourish.

Our nation isn't unlike Deborah's. It's waiting for women to awake, to open their eyes and to say, "I can change what's been put within my realm." Awake, awake! You're far more

powerful than you've realized. Arise, stand up and take your place. Change your sphere! Bring it under the lordship of Jesus Christ, mighty women of God!

Read a companion devotional.

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