

Keep Your Eyes On The Mountaintop

PROCURING THE PROMISES OF GOD REQUIRES PERSEVERANCE. ARE YOU WILLING TO PRESS THROUGH ADVERSITY TO FULFILL YOUR DESTINY?

Your life is about more than merely existing. You are pregnant with promises from God, and He has an assignment for you! But are you willing to endure the process to procure the blessings that are inside of you?

Joseph is the perfect example of a man who was pregnant with promise and yet had to walk through the processes, trials and hurts of life to attain his destiny. He was the son of Jacob and Rachel (see Gen. 30:22-24). Because Joseph “was the son of his old age,” Jacob loved him more than he did his other children, and he gave him a coat of many colors (Gen. 37:3, NKJV).

Normally this type of coat was given only to the principal heir since it was a mark of high rank. In Jacob’s family, it should have been given to the oldest son, Reuben, who was in line to receive the birthright.

Instead Joseph, the eleventh of twelve sons, was lifted to a place of authority over his brothers at the tender age of 17. Perhaps on the day he donned the coat, he sensed the destiny on his life. Maybe he felt he was going somewhere.

But there were circumstances that would prevent Joseph from walking in destiny. The Bible tells us that when Joseph’s brothers saw the coat on him, they hated him and began to plot evil against him (see v. 4).

As a Christian, you will find that when the enemy sees your blessings from God—when he gets a glimpse of your destiny—he wants to kill it. He wants to destroy the assignment God has

given you, and he will bring people into your life whose only purpose is to hate you and attempt to defeat you.

He will also set up circumstances that are meant to distract and ultimately break you. He will send crises into your life at 5 years old that will keep you messed up when you are 50.

FROM STUMBLING BLOCK TO STEPPING STONE

Like Joseph, I know firsthand what it is like to be rejected, betrayed, abandoned, cast aside and unloved.

Until I was 5 years old, I was Daddy's little girl—and a very happy child. But after my parents separated, my father committed suicide, and for many years afterward, I searched to find love again like the love I had received from him.

When I was 6 years old, I was horribly violated. In the weeks, months, and years that followed, the abuse was repeated again and again. I ran and hid for hours after each occurrence. I took long baths in an attempt to wash away the dirtiness.

Even after I became born again I struggled with my past. I lived like a person who was always expecting something to go wrong.

During the years, I learned an important lesson: God can take a stumbling block and turn it into a stepping stone. Now, instead of pitying myself when people and circumstances come against me, I look at hate and adversity as educational tools. I know that if I can discern the thing that other people hate about me, I will have discovered the thing that makes me valuable.

Another lesson I learned is that adversity always comes when you pursue your destiny, and the amount of success you have will depend on the amount of adversity you face. In other words, you will be rewarded for that which you endure.

It is important to understand that the enemy strategically

schemes for you to be wounded because once you are wounded, disappointment sets in. The prefix “dis-” means “to move away from” or “to deprive of.”

Appointment is your destiny with God. Disappointment takes you away from it. Disappointment often leads to discouragement, and when it does, the enemy succeeds in moving you away from your courage as well. Discouragement eventually leads to death—the death of your vision, your dreams and your destiny.

If you learn to recognize these obstructions, you will develop an attitude toward others that says, “I love you, but you’re not going to kill me!” This will allow you to hold on to your vision, no matter who or what hurts or upsets you.

PREPARE FOR OPPOSITION

And you may be surprised by the source of the attacks, just as Joseph was surprised to be betrayed by his brothers. He didn’t expect adversity to come from his own flesh and blood!

You too must learn to overcome the people who are closest to you. If they rejoice with you, praise God. But if they don’t, you must press on in spite of them. Don’t let anyone deter you from your destiny.

When Joseph went in search of his brothers at Dothan, they saw him from far off and conspired to kill him. Reuben’s intervention spared his life, and instead of being murdered he was cast into a pit and sold as a slave to the Ishmaelites (see Gen. 37:17-27). Eventually, Joseph was taken down to Egypt, where Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh’s guard, bought him (see vv. 28,36).

Joseph had good reason to develop a victim mentality: He was betrayed by his own brothers and sent away from a father and a mother who loved him dearly. He was thrown into a dark, filthy pit and eventually sold as a slave to foreigners.

However, the Bible tells us that the Lord was with Joseph, and

he became a successful man in the house of his Egyptian master. Even Potiphar noticed that the Lord caused all Joseph did to prosper (see Gen. 39:2-3).

So Potiphar made Joseph his overseer, putting him in charge of all he had (see v. 4). No matter what the enemy throws at us, God can turn it into good and get glory from even the most dire circumstance or situation.

But as often happens when things are looking good, the enemy—in the form of Potiphar's wife—showed up on the scene. After unsuccessfully attempting to seduce Joseph, she accused him of rape—and once again Joseph was cast into prison (see vv. 7-20).

Still the Lord was with Joseph, showing him steadfast love and giving him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. Soon Joseph was put in charge of all the other prisoners (see vv. 21-22).

CAMPER OR CLIMBER?

Here we need to stop and examine Joseph's personality type. What kind of person could endure so much and yet not break? What made Joseph different?

Imagine yourself in a camp at the base of a mountain along with hundreds of other mountain climbers. Everyone is starting out with the same goal: to climb the mountain. Each person in the camp is given the same opportunity, the same basic equipment and an equal chance to accomplish the goal. But time soon shows us that there are three types of people in the camp. They are:

The Can't Doers. These folks start at the base of the mountain with everyone else, but they never even attempt the climb. They give up before the journey begins. They never do anything with their lives and constantly make excuses about why they shouldn't try to accomplish anything.

If their Daddy was poor, they figure they will be poor. If Mama had diabetes, they figure they'll have diabetes. They don't trust God enough to believe that they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them—so they stay at the base of the mountain, too fearful to step out.

The Campers. These folks begin climbing the mountain but as soon as adversity comes their way or things don't go quite the way they planned, they sit down and settle for second best. Yes, they attempt the climb, but they don't have the faith to hang in, press through and taste the goodness of God.

These are the people who will go out of their way to hold you back. They yell constantly at the folks up ahead explaining why it can't be done. And although they've had a taste of the goodness and an idea of what they are missing, they are too fearful to continue the climb.

The Climbers. These folks start out at the base of the hill with everyone else, but they are determined to make it to the top. They find strength in adversity and desire to taste fully the goodness of God.

If the wind blows cold and hard, they button up and keep on moving. If rocks fall about them, they duck their heads and keep on climbing. They keep pressing, they keep pursuing and they keep praising.

They seek the presence of God, and they are determined to be all He said they would be and to have all He promised they would have. They refuse to hear negative reports and choose to keep their eyes on Jesus. If you're part of this group, expect to catch hell—you'll have to face not only Satan and every devil who comes against you but also the Can't-Doers and the Campers.

Joseph was a climber. No matter what the enemy threw at him, he caught it and turned it into a touchdown. Even when he was in prison, he managed to turn lemons into lemonade.

One night the butler and the baker, who had been imprisoned by Pharaoh, each had dreams. Joseph interpreted their dreams and asked to be remembered when good fortune hit. Though the baker was hanged, the chief butler was restored, just as Joseph had predicted (see Gen. 40:5-22).

For a while, the butler forgot about Joseph (see v. 23). But when Pharaoh had a dream, the butler remembered the help he had received from Joseph and told Pharaoh about it (see Gen. 41:9-13). Joseph was summoned to Pharaoh's court, and Pharaoh was so pleased with his interpretations of the dream that he put his own signet ring upon Joseph's hand, arrayed him in fine garments, put gold chains around his neck and made him ride in his second chariot (see vv. 14-43). Moreover, he gave Joseph the wife of the priest of On to marry (see v. 45).

In time, Joseph was given an opportunity to exact revenge on his brothers, who had been the source of much pain in his life. However, he chose instead to walk in integrity and honor before God, and to bless and do good before all men.

He recognized that his whole life had been in God's hands and that it was God who had sent him to Egypt and preserved his life to be a blessing to His people in a time of famine. When his brothers came to him for food, he told them, "But, as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Gen. 50:20).

So what kind of climber are you? Even if you have been a can't-doer or a camper in the past, it is possible to become a climber. You just have to move from sitting at the base of the mountain and begin heading toward the top. But how?

Discover your destiny. Do you know God's purpose for your life? Learn to unleash the power of the Holy Spirit and unlock the chains that hinder you from receiving the gifts God has for you.

Understand that the enemy will try to abort your dreams. He comes to steal, kill and destroy, but he has no power in your life. Your worship, praise, prayer and obedience can block the enemy from controlling your destiny.

Acknowledge that there is a process you must go through. You cannot get from the bottom of the mountain to the top without the climb. The process—the trials and the tests—qualify you for the promise.

Know that you can endure. Your strength comes from Him who is within you. Ask Him for what you need, and He will give it to you. And don't give up! If you set your sights on the mountaintop, He will make certain you get there.

Read a companion devotional.

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