

Strength Through Intimacy

We are being prepared for some very difficult times. Times  of shaking, such as those we're experiencing now, show us just how much we are in God's hands and not the other way around.

That's usually the first thing we forget, both in good times and in bad. It's not up to *us*; it's up to *Him*. It's His strength and not our own. That's true of everything in life, and it's especially true where intimacy with Jesus is concerned—which is usually the reason the shaking happens in the first place.

I could tell you all manner of things that are coming, but if you do not know God—I mean, *deeply* know Him and not just know about Him—my speaking would be in vain. Intimately knowing God is vital in this era, and intimacy with Him is always a present-tense noun: a *being* instead of a *striving*. His hands and not our hands. This is what Solomon meant when he wrote:

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases” (Song 3:5, NKJV).

This verse is repeated multiple times in the Song of Solomon. “Do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases”—in other words, we can't make intimacy with God happen on our own.

This is why we sometimes get frustrated with Him. We want Him now. Here. Our way. Our timing. Our style. And then as the shaking strips us bare, we moan, “God, why is this taking so long?”

Others of us are driven by quiet, subtle voices in our heads that whisper, *You should be better than this. God isn't pleased. God isn't happy with you.*

So what happens then? We try even harder. More than ever, we push ourselves to make it happen, to reach that allusive next rung on the spiritual ladder, because then, we think, maybe we'll start to understand what this relationship with God is really about.

But when that isn't what takes place, we get frustrated. We're trying to make something happen, and God knows that if He lets us get what we want, it will kill us later. He doesn't want us to "make something happen" with Him.

Who wants to be married to somebody who has to be talked into it every day? You never find force and obligation in true intimacy.

With God, on a day-to-day basis, the goal isn't *to get there*. The goal is *to be*.

Intimacy, by its very nature, is secret and hidden. It's not because it's shy or ashamed of something or overwhelmed. That's not the case.

Nor is it weak; we would have burned long ago if God's intimacy—His great love for us—was capable of giving up and falling apart. We have given Him plenty of opportunity to forsake us, and yet He loves us still. Therefore, intimacy is a great strength.

Remember that, as the year progresses. Should your world be shaken and should times grow hard for you, remember that. It is my word to you today.

As you *rest* in Him and are intimate with Him, you will find your strength. You will find what you've been looking for, and it will happen as love happens—without striving and without obligation.

About the author: John Paul Jackson is the founder of Streams Ministries International () and a popular speaker at

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