

When You Feel Like a Rubber Band Ready to Snap

I spend several days a week lifting heavy weights and doing all sorts of crazy new exercises in the gym. Sometimes, I forget to stretch and end up with muscles so tight I can barely walk two days later. That soreness makes me want to skip the next workout. You might say my muscles are “weary in well- doing.”

Lately, I’ve found myself in God’s gym—lifting heavy spiritual weights and doing all manner of uncomfortable new exercises. I don’t have to worry about the stretching part. He’s doing that too. God’s stretching is sometimes as painful on our souls as working over a sore muscle—I’m reminded of Lurch from *The Addams Family* on that medieval-looking stretching machine in the dungeon—but it leaves you with a spiritual capacity great enough to move into the next season He’s ordained for you.

These words from the Lord, which I recorded in my devotional *Mornings With the Holy Spirit: Listening Daily to the Still Small Voice of God*, helped me understand God’s heart in the stretching:

“Will you fully yield to Me? Will you submit to My will even when it looks contrary to Your will? Will you allow Me to stretch you in this season? I want to enlarge your capacity to hold spiritual things, but that means letting go of carnal things to make more room for Me. It means cultivating a new harvest of My fruit in your heart. I want to let My gifts flow through you, but that means you must release the things that hinder My love. Will you allow Me to stretch you? Will you decrease so Jesus can increase in your heart?”

One thing I’ve learned in times of pressure is that there’s pressure from the inside—what I call Holy Ghost pressure—and

pressure from the outside the comes from people, places, things (and some of those “things” include demons). It’s easy enough to resist God in the name of resisting the devil just because you don’t like what’s happening and assume the assignment came from the pits of hell. I’ve seen others lay down and let the devil walk all over them in the name of yielding to the Holy Spirit. Don’t do that! Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what is of Him and what is against His will for your life. Yield to God, resist the devil.

Here’s another thing I’ve learned about pressure. Whether it comes from the hand of God or the enemy, if you’ll just keep pressing through the pressure you’ll not only gain strength, the pressure will eventually let up. Don’t give up. God knows how much you can handle and He won’t let the enemy press you past what you can bear, either. Through the pressing, you are building spiritual strength and character that will serve you well on the next phase of your journey.

God has purpose for everything He does. Take confidence knowing that He’s stretching you so that you can hold more of His power, gain more of His wisdom, more of His character—more of Him. He wants to increase your influence and enlarge your territory. This is my prayer. Maybe it will help you too:

I say yes to You, Holy Spirit. I say yes to Your will and Your ways even when I don’t understand Your work in my life. I ask You to enlarge my spiritual capacity, to enlarge my heart to love You more, and to help me surrender all that is getting in the way. {eoa}

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