

God's Direction for Difficult Times

Exodus 14:19,20

Pr. 3:5-9 "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Feb. 9th AM

REFLECTION: We've been looking at some "Principles for Problems."

➤ **Number One: Remember Who Brought You Here: (Ps. 37:23)**

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way."

➤ **Number Two: Be More Concerned With God's Glory Than Yours. (Ps. 115:1)**

"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory,"

➤ **Number Three: Face the Problem, but Focus on the LORD. (1 Cor. 3:18)**

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

➤ **Number Four: Calmly Give God the Time and Space to Work. (Isaiah 30:15,16)**

"For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee:"

➤ **Number Five: Take the Next Practical Step of Obedience. (Ex. 14:15)**

"And the LORD said unto Moses, ...speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:"

PRINCIPLE SIX: Practice (Envision) the Presence of God. (Ex. 15:19,20)

One of the unfathomable attributes of God is that

1. God is always Present. Ps 139

Ps 139:6,7 *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? (See also Pr. 13:3)*

A. Most of the time we're unaware of this, but God occasionally reminds us.

1) Hagar in Gen. 16:13 *"Thou God seest me! ... Have I looked after him that seeth me?"*

2) Jacob in Gen. 28:10-22? Vs 16 *"Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not."*

3) Moses? Heb 11:27 *"By faith he forsook Egypt, ...:for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."*

B. God "manifested" his presence to Israel through a Pillar of cloud/Fire Ex 13:21

1) This pillar was a visible reminder of His: Presence, Protection and Direction.

a) It served as a second check on Moses' leadership.

b) What type of "2nd check" do we have today to ensure our spiritual leaders are following God?

Acts 17:11 *"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*

2) When they "needed" God the most,

He appeared to "leave them". Ex 14:19-20

a) What might they have been thinking? (See Vs 11)

b) What was God actually doing? Ex 14:20

Observations: 1 Cor 10:11 *"all these things happened unto them for ensamples"*

1) We will seldom (if ever) be able to clearly see God (1 Tim. 1:17)

So We must take the promise of His presence by Faith.

2 Cor 5:7 *"For we Walk by faith, not by sight"*

Remember Doubting Thomas in Jn 20:25 *"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe!"*

After seeing Jesus, Jesus told him: vs 29 *"because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."*

2) There will be times in which we can't even sense God's presence.

Israel could easily have misinterpreted the cloud's departure as God's judgment.

What we often think of as cruel, is actually kind. (God was actually protecting them!)

It's easy to forget in the darkness, what we learned in the light!

See Job 23:8-110

3) What we do in such seasons of silence tend to shape us!

a) These are God's "Trust Tests" Job 23:10-12,14,16

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept... Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. ... 14 he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: 1

6 For God maketh my heart soft...

b) Sometimes we'll know God's "Songs in the Night" (Ps. 42:8),
and sometimes His silence or even "Sorrow". (Ps. 30:5)

God Marks across some of our days, *"Will explain later."* Vance Havner (Jn 13:7)

NOTE: It was during the "Night" that God parted the Red Sea. (Ex. 14:21)

c) When we walk through difficult times it's easy to get distracted by the
circumstances and lose the awareness of God's Presence and Peace.

Remember Peter in Mt. 14:30.

Isaiah 41:10 *"Fear thou not for I Am with thee Be not Dismayed for I am thy God. I will strengthen Thee; yea, I will Help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."*

"Brother Lawrence" (Nicholas Herman) was a 17th century Soldier who became a French monk at 50. He was assigned KP duty which he initially resented. He began to take Col. 3:23-24 so seriously that it transformed his attitude toward work: *"whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward ...: for ye serve the Lord Christ."*

The book "The Practice of the Presence of God" is a compilation of some of his
correspondence with the abbot of Beaufort.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

1. Remind yourself of God's Promised Presence. (Ps. 139; Phil 4:5,6; Ps. 41:10; Heb. 13:5)

2. Visualize God's Presence in your mind. (Deut. 33:27; Ps. 23:1; Mt 28:20; 2 Tim. 4:16,17)

3. By Faith, Enter God's Presence in Prayer. (Ps. 100; Phil. 4:6,7; Heb. 4:12-16)

4. Reflect God's Presence in your conduct. (Gen. 16:13; Acts 4:13; Exodus 34:30)