

HOPE WHEN LIFE IS FALLING APART

by Bill Rudge

No matter what we face, God will take care of us.

Many Christians feel like their lives are falling apart. Loss of loved ones, marriages on the brink of dissolution, wayward children, economic distress, inflammation and pain throughout their bodies, struggles with addiction, emotional stress, panic attacks and loneliness are just some of the issues facing believers today.

Shortly before His crucifixion Jesus told His disciples, "In this world you will have tribulation [trouble, pressure, affliction, difficulty], but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The apostle Peter admonishes: "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). The apostle Paul encourages us that no matter what our circumstances:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6, 7).

Isaiah 26:3 promises, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Let's take a closer look at that verse. When you **truly trust** in the LORD, you will keep your mind **stayed** on Him instead of your problems. And if you keep your mind and thoughts stayed (focused) on Him, He will keep you in **perfect peace** – a peace that surpasses all comprehension (Philippians 4:7).

A young mother of two toddlers lost her husband to cancer. She told me that in the midst of her grief and sadness she has realized how BIG her God is. She praised Him for His blessings in the midst of her intense pain.

I recently talked to a man whose wife died in his arms from cancer 10 years ago, his 39 year old daughter died of lupus 4 years ago and his son overdosed on drugs and died one year ago. Yet he had an amazing attitude of faith and trust in the Lord that transcended his heartache.



This young mother and man, in the midst of trials and tragedies, learned to triumph. Through their tears they fixed their eyes on Jesus. They looked beyond their current circumstances to what eternity holds for them. They realized this world is not their home, but they are merely passing through – hopefully taking as many people as possible with them into the Kingdom. They are awaiting with confident faith, the *blessed hope*, of which Marvin Rosenthal gives us an elegant glimpse:

The blessed hope embodies the fact that at Christ's coming, the believer will be made perfect (faultless) and as a result, be able to stand before God whose

power and wisdom created the universe and who is awesome in His holiness, and yet not be consumed.... The believer will see the full manifestation of the glory of God – not the "back parts" of God's glory as did such a luminary personality as Moses (Exodus 33:20-23) – but the full glow of the intrinsic, eternal perfections of God.

Just think, we will see our Creator face to face as every tear is wiped away; all pain, suffering and death forever banished. We will inherit the "fullness of joy" promised by God and the pleasures of living with Him forever. He will be our God and we will be His people.

First Peter 1:3-9 sums up our trials in this life as well as the joy and hope we can have in the midst of them because of the eternal inheritance awaiting those who believe in Jesus Christ:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of



Photo by Frank Rudge

trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Face with faith the many difficulties experienced in this world because:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. The LORD of hosts is with us (Psalm 46:1-3, 7).

The apostle Paul assured the church at Rome:

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35-39).

Reflecting On God's Faithfulness

by BJ Rudge, Ph.D.

The children of Israel in the Old Testament are a great example of why we should reflect upon God's faithfulness in the past. Whenever they faced a challenge they were reminded to go back and reflect on God who had proven in the past to be greater than any situation they presently faced (see Deuteronomy 5:15; 7:18; 15:15; Joshua 4:19-24; 24:6-13). In fact, this is the reason why the Israelites were to observe the Passover, which was to be a reminder of how God delivered them out of Egyptian bondage (Exodus 12:14-17).

I utilize a prayer journal to help me remember God's faithfulness. All of us know how easy it is to forget things so I started writing things down in my journal. It is encouraging to reflect on past requests and to see how God has responded. Sometimes God did not answer in the way I thought He would, nor in the time frame I wanted, but in each case I am reminded that I serve a God who listens and responds to the needs of His children (Psalm 34:17; Matthew 7:7; John 14:13-14; Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 5:14-15).

I cannot tell you how many times I have gone back to my prayer journal and been amazed at how God has worked in my life. For example, one of the greatest challenges my family had to endure was going through a miscarriage. My prayer journal helped me during that time, as I reflected upon how God brought us through other challenges. What a faithful God we serve (Psalm 36:5; 89:1; Lamentations 3:22-23; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:3). 

Hebrews chapter 11 provides many encouraging examples of the heroes of faith. Also, if you have not read my book *Overcoming the Giants in Your Life*, request a free copy. It will strengthen your faith and encourage you in the midst of challenging times.

A great study to help you have a biblical perspective on suffering and affliction is to look up and reflect upon the following verses: Job 13:15; Psalm 34:19; Psalm 119:67, 71; Psalm 120:1; John 16:33; Romans 5:3-5; Romans 8:16-18 and 28-39; Romans 12:12-15; 2 Corinthians 4:8, 9 and 16-18; 2 Corinthians 12:10; Philippians 3:7-11; Philippians 4:11; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 1:3-9; 1 Peter 4:1, 2 and 12-19; 1 Peter 5:7-10 and Hebrews 4:14-16.

The trials and troubles in this life, however severe, are nothing in comparison to the glory that will be revealed to those who are God's children. Romans 8:16-18 conveys this concept clearly:

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

The God who created us and died for us can be trusted with our lives, our futures and our eternity! 

The LORD Is My

Creator who designed me.

Savior who died for me.

God and *King* whom I serve.

The *Rock* on which I stand.

Strength in times of weakness.

Protection in times of danger.

Defender in times of battle.

Fortress in times of trouble.

Light in times of darkness.

Peace in times of distress.

Comforter in times of pain.

Provider in times of need.

Companion in times of isolation.

Multiplier when funds are low.

Healer in times of sickness.

Helper in times of difficulty.

Hope in times of despair.

Bill Rudge

In Memory Of

Bill & Vi Fleming

Phyllis Harvey

Rev. Scott E. Shaffer

September and October were extremely busy ministry months.

Many youth and adults were challenged and encouraged. You keep praying for us and we will keep praising the Lord for all He accomplishes!

The God of the Bible is Creator and sovereign LORD of the universe.

To Him alone do we bow down, submit our wills, dedicate our hearts, offer our praise, devote our worship, and entrust our destinies.

Bill Rudge

The WHYS of Adversities

by Bill Rudge

Bringing Difficulties On Ourselves

We make choices all the time: what we eat, where we go and what we do. Sometimes we suffer the consequences of those choices, such as the young man who called in despair because choices he made require him to appear before a judge who will determine jail time or probation.

Natural Consequences

If I get too close to the edge of a cliff, I am going to fall off. I did not fall because Satan pushed me over or God is punishing me. I violated the law of gravity and suffered the natural consequences.

Spiritual Warfare

There is a real enemy who seeks to defeat and destroy every person committed to Jesus Christ. When we face spiritual warfare, it can become intense. Bizarre things can happen with little or no explanation. At these times we must know the authority we have as believers in Jesus Christ and how to use the armor of God and the sword of the Spirit.

Refining and Molding

Scripture is clear that God purifies and prepares His people. Anyone used by God will go through *wilderness* experiences to be trained to stand in the midst of life's challenges and temptations. Just like a soldier is prepared for battle, believers are trained through difficulties to face any circumstance. It has been accurately stated that there is no testimony without a test.

Discerning the Difference

When adverse circumstances rise up and I go through the "flames" of life, I get on my knees and ask, "Lord, is there sin in my life? Am I reaping the consequences of some attitude or choice I made in disobedience to Your Word and Spirit? If so, I repent. Otherwise, I evaluate whether this is "the rain that falls on the just and the unjust" or am I in the midst of spiritual warfare. Has the enemy targeted me and designed a scenario to discourage and defeat me and thwart God's plan for my life? If this is not the case, I realize that God is doing a work in me and I am going through a season of refining. Therefore, I submit to the process and ask Him to strengthen my trust in Him as He fulfills His purpose to use me as a testimony for His glory. 

Behind the Curtain

by Darlinda McDonald

Pulling back the *curtain*, allows me to give you a glimpse of Bill and Karen's world, hoping to build your faith and encourage you that the God we serve is always faithful. He will never leave us or forsake us. For 40 years Bill and Karen have directed a faith ministry. Many times they did not know how the needs would be met, but in some amazing ways they were. There is no human explanation for how God has provided year after year and enabled them to build three ministry centers on faith without a penny of interest being paid. The Lord has intervened and protected in the midst of some hopeless situations.

Bill and Karen do not own a vehicle or a house. Bill has virtually no retirement and opted out of Social Security in the early days of the ministry because of limited funds. In reality, if Bill walked away from the ministry today, he would be a street person. He has not been wasteful but a wise steward who has chosen to invest most of his resources in a Kingdom that will never pass away. What we see is temporal but what is not seen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Because the God of the Bible has been so faithful in his past, Bill can trust Him with his future. In Bill's words:

In the 40 years of this ministry much of the time I have not had hospitalization on myself or my family. My wife faced cancer by doing alternative treatments which we had to pay for personally. But once again the Lord was faithful and provided through the generosity of friends and family.

Daily we face challenges and obstacles in life and in ministry, and have a tremendous burden of caring for thousands of people worldwide who contact our ministry and are facing financial, physical, and spiritual difficulties. Only the Lord can sustain us with the stresses we face daily. But He sustains by His Word and by His Spirit and through the support of our faithful ministry friends.

Thanks for being a part of this modern-day miracle as God continues to use Bill and this ministry to impact lives locally, nationally and globally. Bill plans to work in ministry until the Lord takes him home or He returns. Bill trusts Him to keep him healthy until his mission is completed. 

Holy Land Adventure 10

A great Christmas gift for yourself or a loved one!

Register before December 31st for the February 18 - 27 trip of a lifetime. You will be blessed on this adventure, mission and pilgrimage to the very land God chose to reveal Himself through His Son and the location where most end-time events will occur. For more information e-mail brm7@me.com or call 724-983-1223.

RESISTANCE

by Bill Rudge

Giants and obstacles are like exercise. Exercise works because of resistance. The greater the resistance, the bigger and stronger your muscles become. The more giants we face, the more character and spiritual muscles we develop.

Often, what I have wanted God to deliver me from was what He used to make me stronger. Something happens in the *wilderness*, the *valley*, and the *desert* that does not happen on the *mountaintop*; God builds character, strength, faith and determination as He molds our lives to accomplish His will.

On the way home from seeing a specialist after my son tore his ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) for the second time while playing soccer, with no alternative but extensive knee surgery, I told him that, "Trials, obstacles, and difficulties put iron in our blood and make us strong as nails."

For about 10 years during our early Christian lives and ministry, Karen and I lived in extreme poverty. It looked as though we would never have anything. Over the years we faced many hard times, difficulties, obstacles, impossible circumstances and *giants*. But the Lord somehow always intervened in His time and way to enable us to overcome them.

I often wondered why, throughout my Christian life and in our ministry, God permitted so many difficulties. We seemed to do everything the hard way. Yet, God has taught me the reality that all things work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). I have walked with the Lord more than 45 years, and I can honestly testify to the truth of this Scriptural promise.

I am glad we have persevered through our impoverished beginnings and many hard times. Since the Lord has greatly blessed my life and ministry, no one can say that I only serve Him for all the blessings He has given me. I served the Lord when we had nothing; with no hope of *ever* having anything, and I serve the Lord when He blesses. I *will* serve Him if He takes away everything He has given to me. 

"Faith is not lack of doubt, but pressing forward in spite of it."

Bill Rudge

We have received excellent responses from the many groups and individuals who went through our Ultimate Challenge Obstacle & Fitness Course this past summer and fall. We also had tremendous responses from our fall school assemblies. Pictures and write-ups will be in future newsletters.

Special thanks to everyone who helped with the obstacle course, school assemblies, speaking engagements, special projects, radio broadcast sponsorship of the Middle East station, and the many individuals, businesses and churches who provided financial support. May you be blessed knowing that you are helping us touch countless lives.

Another Financial "Miracle"

A few months ago we were facing another impossible situation to meet all expenses without dipping into emergency funds.

No news from Karen is good news regarding finances. But on Thursday, April 27, 2017 Karen informed me that we were in need of over \$3,000 to cover the remaining expenses to end the month. We prayed with Audrey Colombo before she went to the post office to pick up the mail Friday afternoon, April 28. She returned with several envelopes. One was from a faithful supporter who sent her monthly \$100 donation.

Enclosed in the envelope was an additional gift of \$3,000 (\$1,000 in honor for each of three different women). Her donation and the additional funds that came in that day were a tremendous blessing and provided all the needed funds. Just think, God had that check in the mail before we even asked and it arrived on the last day possible (as we do not get mail on Saturday or Sunday).

If it had not been for our consistent monthly supporters, and occasional donors, we would not have been in a position to meet all the needs through this unexpected \$3,000 donation.

In the 40 years of faith ministry, many times it looked impossible to meet all the expenses, but God has always provided. He has repeatedly used the gifts of our ministry friends – which proved to be the exact amount needed at just the right time – often the very last day. We praise the Lord for His faithfulness and thank our ministry partners for their sensitivity and obedience to His Spirit. Words are inadequate to express our appreciation for God's continued acts of wonder and your generous and sacrificial giving in making this ministry possible.


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Ministries