

**I want to tell you about three men whom God used mightily - and how God used failure to produce godliness in each of them.**

We hear so much talk today about how to be successful. It is time the body of Christ learns to recognise the scriptural pattern God uses to produce His chosen servants. And the hard truth is this: Pain, torment, sorrow and failure have produced the men and women of God who have stirred their generations.

**Consider Job, the man who failed in his motives.** Job said, "I have never harmed anybody - I know I have been righteous." Although Job was a godly man who shunned evil, it is evident he was convinced of his own righteousness. After reading the book of Job, you'll wonder how God could have had such high regard for a man who was so proud of his own goodness. Yet God knew what He was doing when He allowed satan to prove and test Job for a season.

**Consider also David, the man who failed in his morals.** Can you imagine such a steadfast man of valour falling into such blatant sin? How could David have fallen so low as to indulge in adultery - and then commit murder to cover it up? Can you comprehend that, even after all this, David was still called *"a man after God's own heart"*?

**Consider Peter, the man who failed in his mission.** He had an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and a personal call on his life from the Lord. He was entrusted with the keys to the kingdom. Yet this disciple and friend of Jesus later stood on a hillside weeping, having rejected and cursed the very Christ he so loved.

# The Making of a Man of God

But in spite of his failure, Peter became a man who was miraculously transformed - and who served as God's spokesman at Pentecost.

**Finally, consider Jesus - the Son of God, who was touched by all of these men's infirmities and testings, and who is touched by ours as well.**

What are the processes used in the making of a man or woman of God? What forces and pressures does God use to produce righteousness in those who love Him? What deep, hard, cold battles must a person face who wants the touch of God? If you really want to know the answer, first be warned: Don't pray, "Jesus, put your hand on me and use me," unless you are willing to face the trials that must come.

For instance, when you read the biography of a missionary who has been mightily used of God, don't expect to find a story of constant romance, adventure, beauty, love, honesty, happiness and victory - not at all!

At times you'll find the deceptive character of Jacob jumping out at you from the pages. At other times you'll read of heartache and discouragement - of people who often cry out, "I'm so inconsistent, so inclined to sin. How can God ever use me?" You'll find stories not of adventure, but of tears and sorrow, of people who cry themselves to sleep. The pages of such books are filled with tears, fears, suffering and failure.

If you desire to become a man or woman of God, I must ask you: Have you spent time on your knees beseeching God that Christ be formed in you? Have you longed in your soul to become a real follower of God who walks in the Spirit? If you have not been obsessed with your desire to be a man or woman of God, then you have missed the mark entirely. Because your heart and lips should cry out, "Jesus, make me into Your own image! Let me become your bondservant!"

I have never once believed that I have attained this. Yet still, there is one thing I want more than anything in the world: to become a true man of God. I want my living and my dying to bring glory to Jesus.

If you really want to find out about the processes that produce godliness, then study what happened in the garden of Gethsemane. Look at Jesus, the Son of God, because He is our example. All the forces that were arrayed against Job were there in the garden, arrayed against Christ. The tempter who came against David on the rooftop also sought to tempt Jesus in the wilderness. All the tormenting forces that plagued the soul of Peter also mounted an onslaught against our Saviour in the Garden. There is not a trial facing us that Jesus did not face Himself. He is touched by the feelings of our infirmities and afflictions - every one of them. And to be like Christ, we must be willing to face what He faced.

There are three trials that every true man and woman of God eventually will confront:

### 1. A Cup of Pain

**To be a man or woman of God, you must at some point be served a cup of pain.** Listen to Jesus' words in the garden: "*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (MATT 26:39).

Jesus had spent His whole ministry fulfilling the will of the Father. For three years His life and mission had headed straight toward His cup of pain: The Cross of Calvary. Yet you can hear the pathos in His words when He turns to His disciples and says, "*Could ye not watch with me one hour?*" (verse 40). Whatever pain was in that cup forced Jesus to sweat drops of blood and to cry out, "O God, if it's at all possible, deliver Me. I'd rather let this cup pass - it's too heavy a burden for Me!"

As Job was being served his cup of pain, he cried, "*He hath cast me into the mire... Mine eye poureth out tears unto God.*" (JOB 30:19; 16:20). In other words, "I am sorely pained, and I can't see my way!" David said that when he was served his cup of pain, he made his couch a bed of tears: "*I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief...*" (PSA 6:6-7).

Dear saint, I don't know what your cup of pain may be. But many of God's precious ones have prayed for years for their deliverance - and are still waiting for it. I believe in healing; and I believe we will have afflictions. But I also believe in healing afflictions. David said, "*Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.*" (PSA 119:67).

Don't think just because you have pain that the devil must be attacking you - that you are not living according to the Scriptures, that you have sinned in your life and you're being judged by God. David stated a very simple truth about himself (and us) when he said that had he not been afflicted, he would not have sought the Lord. To say the devil was causing David's pain suggests that the devil was driving him to the Father.

At times I've had to endure physical pain for years. Each time, I have prayed for God to heal me.

Yet through the pain I could feel God was working in my life, driving me to the Cross and keeping me on my knees. And after each painful episode passed, I could say it had been good for me.

Do you want to be a man or woman of God? Do you want the hand of God on your life? Then you'll drink your cup of pain and bathe your bed in tears. You'll weep not so much from feeling physical pain, but from a pain that's much worse. It's the pain of being bruised and rejected by friends - the pain that parents feel when teenagers trample their hearts and become strangers to them. It's the pain that fills the hearts of husbands and wives when walls of silence are built up and first love disappears.

Oh, how tragic it seems: the turmoil within, the difficulties at home, the restless, sleepless nights - knowing that God is real, that you're walking in the Spirit and loving Jesus with all that's in you, and yet still you're being forced to drink a cup of pain. The Bible says, "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous...*" (PSA 34:19). And even though God promises to deliver us from them all, it still hurts when we go through them.

When Jesus was in His hour of pain, Peter approached Him, with a sword in his hand. In essence, Peter told Jesus, "Master, You don't have to go through this! I'll head them off. You go ahead and run - get out while you can!"

A lot of well-meaning Christians are like Peter. They run around with swords, ready to cut off the ear of the devil. They say to those who are hurting, "Run while you can! You don't have to put up with this. God's a good God - you don't have to drink this cup at all! Claim your deliverance and be done with it!"

Beloved, don't try to run from the cup of pain He gives you. Jesus said to Peter, "*Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*" (JN 18:11). You see, Jesus could drink it now because He saw who was serving the cup: it was His heavenly Father.

Even when you don't see the purpose behind your suffering, you can drink the cup of pain when you see the hand of the Father serving

it. It may burn, sear and scare you; it may shake you. But you don't have to be afraid, because the Master holds the cup. You're not drinking death, but life!

### 2. A Night of Confusion

**To be a man or woman of God, you also must face a night of confusion.** Jesus said, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death...*" (MATT 26:38). Can you imagine the Son of God saying this? Didn't He know He was about to claim all victory over hell, death and the grave? Didn't He have an innate sense of guidance and destiny, knowing the Father was with Him? After all, He had told His disciples, "*A little while, and ye shall not see me... because I go to the Father.*" (JN 16:16). He knew in His prophetic vision He would face this hour.

Yet the hardest part of faith is the last half-hour. The night of confusion always comes just before the victory, just before the light dawns. But rest assured, dear saint: Before the power of satan is broken, you'll face your night of confusion.

It will seem that your sense of purpose and guidance has been lost. When David's night of confusion came, he said, "*Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.*" (PSA 143:4). In Peter's dark night of confusion, he became afraid and cursed his Master.

When Job faced his dark night, he said, "*Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.*" (JOB 9:11). A move had taken place in heaven - a checker moved on the board of Job's life - and he responded by saying, "Lord, I haven't trusted in my riches. I haven't hidden my sins. I've been honest; my integrity hasn't left me. Why must I suffer? Why do I have to face this confusion, something I don't even understand?"

Like Job, many Christians cannot understand why they must suffer. They wonder, "Lord, I've not cheated anybody. I'm not seeing another man's wife. I don't have any dishonesty in me. Why should I have to face a night of confusion? Why can't I get clear guidance?"

Imagine the terror of David, the fearless warrior-king ruling a

mighty nation, as the prophet Nathan came to him and exposed his sin. David wrote three beautiful psalms about his night of confusion, when he could not understand why he had sinned. He wrote, "It's too hard for me. My sins have overwhelmed me, and my foolishness has deceived my heart." After all the years of reaching out to God, David could not understand how he could have been so foolish. "Why?" he must have wondered.

Like David, many godly people today face a moral issue in their life - and in their night of confusion they say, "God, why me? My heart was searching after you, and suddenly sin overwhelmed me. It plagued my soul."

Don't think that a person who has been used by God has the answers to these questions. Even the most humble servant of God doesn't hear clearly from the Father all the time. I've known what it is like to face that divine silence, to not hear God's voice for a season.

I have walked through periods of total confusion, with no apparent guidance, the still, small voice behind me completely silent. I've had times when there was no friend nearby to satisfy my heart with a word of advice. All my patterns of guidance from before had gone awry, and I was left in total darkness. I could not see my way, and I made mistake after mistake. I wanted to say, "Oh God, what has happened? I don't know which way to go!"

That's some positive confession to make, you say. But you too will face that kind of confusion when God begins to test your commitment to Him! Thank God, it is only a dark night, and it will pass - because the Lord desires to make our path clear.

### 3. An Hour of Isolation

**Finally, as a man or woman of God you must face an hour of isolation.** These words came from the lips of Jesus, God's own Son: "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" (MATT 27:46). Job said of God, "He's become cruel to me. I cry in the day and I rise in the night, but He hears me not." David said, "*I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind...*" (PSA 31:12). He also

cried out, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me?*" (PSA 22:1).

The hour of isolation comes when it appears God has hidden His face, and none of your friends truly understand what you are going through. But, you ask, does God really hide His face from those He loves? Is it possible He lifts His hand for a short while, to teach us trust and dependence? The Bible answers clearly: "*God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.*" (2.CHR 32.31).

I can honestly say Jesus has never been more real to me than He is today. But I can also say there is nothing you can do when you get on your knees and discover the heavens are as brass. You cannot pray to break through. You feel nothing but emptiness and defeat. And your heart cries out, "Oh God, where are you?"

Does that sound strange to you? Have you never faced this? Then you have never truly been to the Cross or Gethsemane. God says, "*In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment...*" (ISA 54:8). But He also says, "*Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;*" (PSA 103:4). He promises He will extend tender, loving mercies in our times of isolation. Job said in his hour, "*He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*" (JOB 23:10). David said in the midst of his hour, "*I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever...*" (PSA 89:1). His faith remained intact; nothing could touch it. And Peter, on the day of Pentecost, rose above his miserable failure to stand confident as he preached, "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;*" (ACTS 2:16).

We know these were all men of God. The Bible says God acknowledged the righteousness of Job. And He handpicked David, saying to the prophet Samuel, "This is the one - anoint him!" We know God's hand was on Peter as well. Yet each of these men experienced great testings.

But what does all this have to do with you and me? Here is one practical application:

After one of my evangelistic meetings in San Francisco, a cer-

tain young man walked into the prayer room. I had met him years before when he attended one of my crusades, and he had cried and prayed and walked out of the prayer room with true joy in his heart. But now he looked totally forlorn; I had never seen such a sad young face in all my life.

The young man said, "Mr Wilkerson, I don't know which way to turn. I have no joy, and God seems to be far away. I'm being tempted, and I'm afraid I'm going to backslide and lose my touch of God. I walk the streets in fear and trembling!"

I put my hand on the young man's shoulder and said, "Son, this is your hour of trial. God is testing you to see what is in your heart. Will you repent, accept His forgiveness and keep coming to the Light? God has not forsaken you."

Suddenly tears began streaming down his cheeks. He said, "You mean God really isn't mad at me after all?" No, I answered. Then he asked, "Is my restlessness and despair the result of some terrible habit in my life?" I said, "You'd have to answer that." He replied, "No, I don't think so."

Then suddenly he began to see the light. It was not God's fault - it was his own neglect of prayer and hunger for the Word! At that moment, the Spirit of the Lord began to minister hope to him, and he raised his hands and praised the Lord: "Take me through, Lord. Restore my faith!" When I left him, he was thanking God for bringing him back to a solid commitment. The Holy Spirit was beginning to shine forth in him again.

There is a gospel song that says, "Standing somewhere in the shadows you'll find Jesus..." That song must have been written by a tested man of God.

You see, the battle I face in my ministry is not in my home; I have a loving wife and wonderful children. I have thousands of friends around the country who appreciate my ministry; my battle is not there. I have never loved the Lord more than I love Him now. I have never desired God more in all my life.

But the more I pray, "God, use me - open my eyes so I can see Your glory," the more I can feel the enemy's forces arrayed against

me. I feel myself crushed as Jesus was, and I cry out, "Oh God, I can't endure it. Take away this cup of pain!" Like David, I want to say, "*Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*" (PSA 55:6).

### I Know in Whom I Have Believed

I know what it means to pray for - and then receive - the thousands of dollars needed to sustain this ministry. I've known what it means to walk for a whole year with Jesus leading me every step of the way, His voice behind me saying, "David this is the way." I know what it means to get out a pad and a pencil, and to ask God questions and have Him answer them for me.

I've stood before people in government and city officials, prophesying the words that God had given me. Then I've immediately turned around to face nights of deep, dark confusion when I didn't know which way to turn. I've made multiple mistakes that cast me down in despair, and I've cried out, "Oh God, where are You?"

I've gone into my prayer closet for three or four weeks at a time and said, "I've got to be broken." And I've felt nothing but my own grief, coldness of heart and the heavy silence of heaven. Yet through it all I sensed God was at work. "Just hold steady," I've heard the Spirit say to me: "Ride out your storm!"

*"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him."*

ISA 59:19

Some of you are going through the flood right now. You know what I'm talking about when I say the heavens are as brass. You know all about bathing your couch in tears. You've been served your cup of pain, and have endured a night of confusion and an hour of isolation - cut off by everyone you know and love. Nobody can touch that need in your heart!

I once had a woman come to me after I preached this message. She said, "Mr. Wilkerson, when I came to church this morning, I walked in acting happy and carefree. But when you talked about the cup of pain and the hour of isolation, I began to weep. I realized I was just putting up a front. My husband has

left me and my home is in turmoil. I've had to cover it all up. I've used it as an excuse to hide. But now I know - I'm being flooded!"

That woman was broken before the Lord. I prayed with her for God to keep her faith strong, and she left with the true joy of the Lord in her heart.

Dear saint, I believe that when a man or a woman of God is in the making, enemy forces will come against him with great fury. But he can stand up and say, "*For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" (2.TIM 1:12). That's the time to take your stand! You don't have to laugh or rejoice, because you may not have any joy at the moment. You may have nothing but turmoil in your soul.

Years ago, I was sitting in the backyard when I had a Sunday off, I was reading my Bible and getting a message from the Lord. I felt His Spirit in a mighty way, and I was just praising Him. Just about that time, I looked across the street and saw Gwen talking to a neighbor whom, for some time, she had been trying to win for the Lord.

Some other women were there, and they wanted Gwen to drive with them around the block to look at a certain house that had just been painted. I saw Gwen get in the car with these unconverted women and suddenly, in one moment, a spirit came over me - and it wasn't God's Spirit!

"She shouldn't do that!" I thought. "The Bible says to come out from among the lost and be separate. Why in the world is she going with them?" I stomped into the house and kicked a chair, saying to myself, "She ought to know better!"

Gwen was gone half an hour, and the longer she was gone the more I seethed. When she finally came in the door, I was ready for her. "Gwendolyn Wilkerson, I am a man of God, and I'll not have you running around with ungodly friends in this neighborhood."

Gwen was dumbfounded. My voice got louder and louder as I spoke. She started to cry, and suddenly I heard what was coming out of my

mouth. I stopped and said, "Honey, you know this isn't me. The flood has come, the devil is trying to swamp me! Please just give me half an hour. I have to get with the Lord right now!"

I went into my study and got on my knees. Then I cried in repentance, "Oh Lord, I was just worshipping You moments ago. I don't know what has happened, but I've been flooded. Forgive me!" I had not been living in sin. In fact, I had been basking in the anointing and praising the Lord. I couldn't understand it!

As I prayed, I felt the enemy flood in again, trying to crush my spirit. So I said, "I claim the cleansing of the Blood of Jesus," and I began praising the Lord: "Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent, reigneth. Hallelujah, the wicked one cometh and toucheth me not..." "*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*" (2.TIM 1:7). The more I praised, the madder the devil got.

Did the devil leave then? No! I felt no glorious victory. I could still feel that depressing spirit - but I knew God was still with me, because scripture says, "*The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.*" (PSA 29:10). The Lord seemed to speak to me, "Don't get excited, don't panic. You need do nothing. Just ride out the storm. Commit all things to Me."

I went back to Gwen and said, "Honey, my spirit still hasn't settled, and it will probably be a while yet. But forgive me, please. I'm sorry!" I went outside and took a little walk. The devil knew he couldn't get me disturbed - so he finally left! The flood subsided and I started singing the praises of God.

### Dear Saint, Do You Know What This Flood Is All About?

Perhaps someone reading this is in the flood right now. I'll not pray that God delivers you from your cup of pain - but I will pray that your faith won't fail, because Jesus prayed that for Peter (see Luke 22:32). He knew that Peter's trial was God's way of strengthening his faith!

Are you going through a great testing in your life? If so, stay in the Word. Run to the Lord and spend time shut in with Him. Stop trying to think your way through it, and

rest in Him. Those who get to the cross must go through Gethsemane. But after the weeping and sorrow, joy comes in the morning.

Beloved, Christians tell me their sad stories of lost love, prolonged sorrows and illnesses. Often it seems as if their trials will never end. They seem to be locked in hopeless situations. They experience pain, rejection and very little happiness. Or the happy times are

so few and far between that they begin to question the Lord: "Will this dark night ever end? Am I destined to a lifetime of trouble?"

Oh, precious, troubled saint - God has not forgotten you. He has bottled every tear you have ever shed. You must make Him the joy and hope of your life. You must let His Spirit change you, so that circumstances can't hinder you anymore.

God does His best work when He's changing us. That way, whatever comes, you will learn to rest above it all - seated with Him in heavenly places. **Remember: you are the object of His incredible love!**

by David Wilkerson  
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