



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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TROUBLE

The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. Psalm 9:9-10

Whenever trouble knocks at the door of my life, I ask myself three questions: 1) Is God trying to tell me something, and I've been too dense to hear His voice so now He's getting my attention? 2) Is the trouble the result of Satanic attack? or 3) Is this difficulty circumstantial--something that possibly I brought on myself, or may have happened simply because I got caught in the wake of a poor economy, or just happened to be in harm's way?

Lots of people go through life beating themselves over the head thinking they are personal failures, or that they surely have done something wrong for this to happen to them.

Be very certain that God does allow some difficulties in the lives of His children--sometimes to show us how strong He is, sometimes to let us know how weak we are, sometimes for reasons we will never know. The book of Hebrews so clearly tells us that the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son (Hebrews 12:6-7). That word *everyone* is all inclusive; none are exempted.

This discipline or correction is not the stern hand of an angry God, but the firm, loving hand of a father. It's just that simple.

There are times when Satan clearly strives to discourage us through difficulty. If you believe there is a God in heaven, then you should have no problem believing that the enemy of our souls is unrelenting in venting his wrath on the children of God.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying that we should be on guard "in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes" (2 Corinthians 2:11). That's not true of many people today who allow the enemy to trip us up in our marriages, our relationships, and our thought lives without realizing that we were not wise enough to sense that the devil was gaining territory in our lives.

When trouble knocks at the door of your life, there are three powerful truths to which you must cling as a drowning man holds to a lifesaver. These three truths can keep you afloat when others are sinking:

1) You must remind yourself that God brought you to the place of trouble. Read the first chapter of the book of Ephesians and notice phrases like this: "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will" (Ephesians 1:4-5).

2) You must remind yourself that God has not forsaken you any more than He forsook Daniel in the lion's den, or the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. Remind yourself of the promise of Jesus, "...Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Then said the writer of Scripture, "So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

3) Remind yourself that God in His own time and in His own way will lead you out of difficulty. When trouble knocks at the door of our lives, we think we are confronted with two choices: solve the problem or run from it. For the child of God there is a third choice: trust Him and live a day at a time. This doesn't mean you sit on your hands and do nothing. But it keeps you from becoming a victim of worry. The God-difference can keep you going when others fall by the wayside. Friend, those words are still true. No matter what your difficulty, trust Him to take you through it.

Resource reading: Hebrews 12:1-13