

Where Can You Turn When Your World Turns Upside Down?
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What Is Real Faith?

By Nancy Missler

The Need to Be Fully Persuaded

So often at the bottom of our struggles in the dark night is doubt and unbelief. It certainly was with me. We measure the validity of a promise by our own earthly standards which, of course, leave us wide open for doubt. *Doubt affects everything we think, say and do.* How can we trust and have faith in God today, if we don't think He has been faithful to His promises of yesterday?

We can't! Doubt in God's faithfulness not only causes us indescribable inner torment, it also prolongs our agony.

When I am totally honest with myself and I peel away all the garbage, I realized that I had trusted God, yes, *but not to the point of abandoning all my earthly sources of comfort and security*. I had faith in God, yes, *but not to the point of setting aside all other supports and laying them at the cross*. I had relied upon God, yes, *but not to the point of accepting that fact that I didn't understand what God was doing, and trusting Him anyway*. I still had my own human expectations, my own presumptions and my own ambitions, and when these "supports" began to be taken away, I crashed. Big time!

Nothing reveals our true selves like the advent of hard times! In order to expose what is hidden below the surface of our pleasant religious exterior, God often must turn up the heat.

All of us want to be able to see and understand what God is doing in our lives; why He is doing it; what the outcome will be; and when exactly the end will occur! This, unfortunately, is not faith, but simply presumption on our part. Real faith is **not** seeing, **not** understanding, **not** feeling and **not** knowing. Real faith is simply trusting, no matter what we see happening, no matter what we understand to be true, and no matter what we feel like, that *God will be faithful to His Word and perform His promises to us in His timing and in His way*.

This is the kind of faith that Abraham possessed, who "...staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being *fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.*" (Romans 4:20-21 emphasis added)

Faith is allowing God to be God. Faith is allowing God to do in our lives all that He needs to do (good or bad from our point of view), in order to accomplish His perfect will. Faith is allowing God to strip, flay and crucify us, if that's what is needed to accomplish His will in us. *Faith is simply accepting God's night seasons as part of His will towards us*. Job came to know what true faith was all about when he said, "though [You] slay me, yet will I trust [You]."

The turning point in my life came when I finally realized that abandonment to God's will and having human expectations cannot coexist in my soul. *Abandonment to God's will is laying everything down at the foot of the cross and leaving it there, whereas, human expectation is picking it back up again and running with it*.

Knowing God's Will

God's primary goal and purpose for our lives is that Christ may be formed in us and lived out *through us*. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be *conformed into the image of His Son.*" (Romans 8:29) God knows that this transformation is the **only** thing that will lead us to the "fullness of Christ" and the "abundant Life" that we are all seeking. Therefore, because He loves us so much and wants us all to experience His fullness and His Life, He must remove anything in our lives that stands in the way of accomplishing His will.

I am personally convinced that ignorance of God's will is the origin of much of our troubles. One of the purposes of this book, then, is to help us see and understand that these night seasons **are** from God's hands and **are** His will to help form Christ in us. The darkness that He allows into our lives is "Father-filtered" and is good. This is the process that He uses to "replace us with Himself"—to purge our souls of sin and self so that He **can** fill us with His fullness and give us His Life. If we could only view, just for a moment, our spiritual lives from God's perspective, we would see that the darkness He allows is truly an act of His Love. This night of faith will not

only produce a cleansing of our soul and spirit, but also a peace that passes all understanding and an intimacy with the Creator of the universe that we have never known before.

“I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.” (Acts 2:25)

So, don't read any further unless you are longing, as I am, to see “*the Lord always before [your] face*” because this way of faith is **not** easy. It will confound your logic, destroy your schedules, annihilate your religious attitudes, frustrate your patience and probably alienate some of your acquaintances. It's certainly not the kind of faith that the world teaches. It's not even the kind of faith that some churches teach. This kind of faith demands all from us and requires great love for God. *But, by learning to have **faith in the night seasons**, we will be headed for the summit of Life where we **shall** “see” our Beloved face to face.*

Joy in the Morning

All of God's promises in His Word are true. *However, His way of accomplishing these promises in our lives is regulated by our faith and our unconditional abandonment to His will.* We need to have the faith to allow God to be God.

As I am learning to stay unconditionally abandoned to God's will and allowing Him to do in my life all that He needs to do in order to reproduce Himself in me, He is radically changing my life from the inside out. I am beginning to experience a peace that truly passes all understanding and the blessings of His abiding presence—the fullness of Christ. There's a joy, a rest, an intimacy with Jesus and an empowering of His Spirit that wasn't there before. I have fallen so in love with my God, that I, too, am beginning to see Him “always before my face.”

It seems the more I learn to live for the moment and truly be abandoned to His will, the more I am witnessing God beginning to fulfill every one of those magnificent promises that He gave me up on that mountaintop in Big Bear so many years ago.

Truly, weeping does last for a “night,” but oh what joy awaits us in the morning! (Psalm 30:5)
As Jeremiah says, “There is hope in [the] end.” (31:17)

Will We Trust God?

By Nancy Missler

God finds new ways every day to ask us, “*Will you trust Me? Will you trust Me to do towards you all that I need to do, in order to accomplish My perfect will through you?*”

In our dark seasons of life, God doesn't ask us to understand everything that He is doing, but simply to trust and believe in His Love through what He is doing.

Brother Lawrence once said:

If He is truly King, then this suffering could not come to [us] against His will. I believe that such things come to us to make us more completely His, and that rightly accepted and borne, they bring great sweetness and consolation into our lives. This suffering is not an enemy to be fought against, but an ally in the spiritual warfare to be gladly received and used. “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” *Therefore, anything, life, joy, pain, death that brings me nearer to Him cannot be bad.* If we are accustomed to living in the presence of God and if we believe that everything comes to us, comes with His permission,

then those two facts will help to alleviate our suffering. (*The Practice of the Presence of God*)

Listen to that again, “*if we are accustomed to living in the presence of God and if we believe that everything comes to us, comes with His permission, then those two facts will help to alleviate our suffering.*” This is another “key” to the Christian life.

Most of us still rate the events of our lives as either a “good” thing or a “bad” thing, but when we’re finally able to merge all the events of our lives into the category of a “God” thing, *then* we will be where He wants us.

God wants us open and pliable to whatever He needs to do in our lives in order to accomplish His will. He wants us not only surrendering the moment to Him, but also surrendering our reactions to that moment to Him. We all need to get to the place where Job was when he said, “Though [You] slay me, yet will I trust [You].” (Job 13:15)

An Example: Diana

Whenever I think about ultimate trust in God, I immediately think of a dear friend of mine named Diana Bantlow. Diana was just two years old in the Lord when she was diagnosed with leukemia and given only six months to live. She had a beloved husband who adored her and two precious children, Hillary, three, and Stephanie, one.

Diana, however, had tremendous faith in God. And, she knew that because God loved her, He would not allow anything into her life that wasn’t “Father-filtered” and that wouldn’t eventually bring Him glory. So, throughout her ordeal, no matter what the circumstances were and no matter how much pain she was in, she continually chose to trust her God and to abandon herself to His will.

Now you know that she must have experienced things like fear, doubt and anger because she was human. But because she loved God and trusted Him unequivocally, she kept making those non-feeling choices—no matter how she felt or what she thought—to do His will.

Even though Diana had enough faith to literally “move mountains,” and had been prayed for many times by the elders of her church, God in His sovereignty, chose not to heal her physically. He knew that the example of her faith and the witness of His Life through her frail condition would affect more lives than anything else. And, it’s true. As I have shared Diana’s story at different seminars over the last 20 or so years, many people have come up to me and told me how they had known Diana and how her life had touched them.

In particular, two nurses from California came up after one seminar and shared how they had both attended Diana in the hospital the last few weeks of her life. They told me that they both had come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior as a result of seeing His Life through Diana, even though she was dying.

They said, as they would go into her room to administer her pain medication, Diana would softly whisper, “No, thank you, my Father is taking care of me.” Then she would go on and say, “And may He bless you abundantly in all you do today.” Both these nurses shared how uncharacteristic this is of terminally ill patients. Either the patient is totally “out of it” (almost semi-conscious) and unaware of what is going on around him, or he is emotionally and mentally distraught as the reality of death approaches. They both said this was not at all the case with Diana. They saw in

Diana a Love, a peace and a joy that “passed all human understanding.” And they yearned to have what she had. Both eventually accepted Christ as a result of Diana’s witness.

As it came closer to Christmas, Diana told everyone that God was going to allow her to go “home” for the holidays. Now she thought God meant her physical, earthly home, but on Christmas day 1974, God took His precious child “home” to the one He had prepared for her from the beginning of time (John 14:2).

We must all get to the place where we can accept even the bad things (from our point of view) as being good, because they are from God. As George MacDonald tells us, “I fear you will never arrive at an understanding of God so long as you cannot bring yourself to see the good that often comes as a result of pain.” God has a plan for our lives and sometimes that plan includes suffering.

In 1 Peter 4:19 it says, “Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

God is the One who warms us in the sun and it is God who sends the rain. It is God who feeds us and it is He who also withholds our food. He sends the winter and He also allows the hot summer days. God, by His Love, does all of the above. “I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things” (Isaiah 45:7).

Our responsibility is simply to yield ourselves to the inner workings of God’s Spirit and know that everything He does in our lives *comes from his Love*. We are being asked to trust Someone who has the power to keep us from all danger, threat and violence. The question is, “Will we trust Him unconditionally to do so?”

“As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; *so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.*” (Ezekiel 34:12)

We might ask ourselves the same questions that Fenelon raises, “Why am I afraid to break out of my chains? Do the things of this world mean more to me than You [God]? Am I afraid to give myself to You? What a mistake! It is not even I who would give myself to You, but *You who would give Yourself to me!*” (*The Seeking Heart*, p. 176.)