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## Blooming Through Battles

Every champion has felt it, has had to overcome it, has had to fight through it and had to look it into the eyes of defeat and not give up. I can't think of a person that I know who hasn't had to travel through a difficult time in their life and choose not to give in to failure. As believers, in the power of God and the Word of the Lord, we always stand for victory. We know that Jesus has defeated every enemy at the cross and has given to us that same victory. The enemy will use all types of persecution to get you to change course, to find an easier route.

It can seem odd if hard times do come into our lives and it can feel like we are failing because we know of the victory already purchased for us. Yet the Word never describes the promise of a trouble-free life as a sign of faith. Faith in God is not the absence of difficulties, but faith is what we use to walk through those hard times. Especially when the enemy confronts us with unfair persecution.

*"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified."* 1 Peter 4:12-14

Some struggles in life are very personal and tough, and it's important to keep our hope of victory alive as we overcome them. It's easy to feel alone in the midst of a battle but God never gives up on us, and that's why it's essential for us to never give up on Him. Isaiah 35:1-2 says *"The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing."*

God has given us a path of hope that allows us to bloom even while we are going through battles. There is a barren desert in South America called the Atacama Desert, which is one of the driest places on Earth. It looks like every other dessert in that very little grows there, and it's even compared to the scenery of Mars. That is until the very odd times that rain does show up. When those small droplets of water fall onto that arid soil life begins to bloom seemingly out of nowhere. Some seeds of the most beautiful flowers are hidden beneath the dirt the whole time and are brought to life with the touch of rain.

From this example, we can find in scripture a path of hope and victory through difficult times so that we too can bloom when it seems impossible. There are numerous testimonies of believers who came through impossible odds and found their answers in God. Goliath's challenge is what caused the faith inside of a young David to blossom and it's that faith that brought forward a true victory.

On an early morning and with nowhere to run, the servant of the man of God found that an army had surrounded the city with horses and chariots. He didn't see what the Prophet Elisha could see until God opened His eyes to see what was surrounding them in the spirit which was a mountain of horses and chariots of fire. Faith came forward like a flower in the desert and boldly said: ***"DO NOT FEAR"***! (2 Kings 6:16)

Being pursued by the Egyptian army, it looked as if Moses made a tactical error with no place to run. With the sea at their backs and mountains to their south, it was only a matter of time before they were to be slaughtered and then faith rose up and instructed him to strike the waters with the staff in his hand. A great miracle happened as it was the waters that destroyed the enemy and they walked on the dry ground.

All of these miracles came amid great opposition and were victories of faith in God. These were not achievements of man's ability or strength but of simple faith in God to keep standing against the warfare. God did not cause the battles, but He did provide the path of victory through the battle. You may feel as if you have been in some dark days, but there is always light.

As the New Testament church grew it was the believers who came from the Jewish families that were under great persecution, they could go back under legalism to avoid their struggle, but that would mean renouncing Christ. The writer of Hebrews was clear that there is no salvation outside of Jesus and not to let the battle sway them from their belief. Then the writer gives a path for them to rise through the persecution and to stay on course. It reads in Hebrews 6:7-8 *"For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned."*

The interpretation of this verse is telling us how to guarantee victory against overwhelming odds of persecution. How to bloom where it seems impossible, and how to have faith rise up through the struggle. The rain in the verse represents the severe persecution that was coming against them. Then it says that if we have cultivated the soil; when the rain comes, it will bear useful herbs and blessings from God.

Cultivating our soil is the path to victory! Spending personal worship time with God, praying in the Holy Ghost, and speaking the Word of God, are all things that I do to keep my heart in God. So, when the rain of struggles come into our lives we do not need to fear because that rain will cause faith to bloom from our hearts and victory will come!

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