

Weekly Devotions: THE REFINING FIRE OF TRIALS 13

Give Thanks in All Situations

In life's crisis, it is natural to lapse into depression, hopelessness and anxiety. However, for God's children we can experience His peace and joy even in the darkness. For us to have a cheerful and positive spirit we need to learn to give thanks to God. Someone said, "Thanksgiving is the soil for peace and joy to grow." Our choice is either to stay in the darkroom of worry and be miserable or to have a heart of thanksgiving and experience His peace and joy.

In the last 35 years, fighting 2 types of cancer, the loss of vision and hearing among other health problems, God has taught me how to give thanks in spite of my struggles. God taught me: "In the morning, give thanks that I have given you one more day. In the evening, give praise that I have given you strength for the day."

On another occasion when I was lamenting that God has blessed others with energy and good health while I had to cope with so many physical limitations, He said: "Do not look at what you don't have and can't do. Look at what you have and can still do." Indeed God has blessed me abundantly and by learning to be thankful, I have learned to trust Him and experienced His peace and joy.

Read 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Habakkuk 3: 17-19

Paul said God's children should give thanks in both good and bad times. Paul is not saying we should thank God for suffering and pain but we should trust Him in all situations and praise Him for who He is, for His steadfast love and faithfulness.

Paul believes that we should also trust and thank God because He is at work in all situations for our good. A thankful heart is a trusting heart. Trials are times when we learn to trust God and continue to praise Him, in spite of unanswered prayers or when the problem does not go away. For us to give thanks in all circumstances we must trust that God is in control and at work and He knows exactly what He is doing.

Questions to ponder

1. What did Paul say is God's will for all believers (1 Thess. 5: 16-18)? What will prevent you from doing this particular will of God?
2. What did Habakkuk say he would do (Hab. 3: 17-18) in times of calamity? For what do you give thanks in times of loss, hardship and hopelessness?
3. What did Habakkuk say about God in his difficult time (Hab. 3: 19)? How do you lean on God and what does it mean for you to be 'like a deer treading on high places' in your time of difficulty?