

Dear Partner,

As we journey through life seeking to walk in the will of God, we often encounter circumstances that make it seem like God's Word is not true. This not only applies to the written Word of God (the bible), but also at times it seems those things we were sure God spoke to us personally in the past will never come to pass.

This can be said for every person who truly believes that "God cannot lie" and holds fast to His Word no matter what the circumstances say. I don't understand everything. To be honest, I often have few answers for people who are going through circumstances that "seem" contrary to what God has said. If I took some time to share with you some of the mountains Sue and I, and the rest of our family, have gone through ... and are going through ... you would most likely say the same to me. But none of those circumstances changes God or His Word.

I take courage from the Word of God. For example, one of my favorite chapters is Hebrews chapter eleven which I call the "Hall of Faith." Noah preached righteousness for about one hundred years while building the ark declaring that God's judgment was coming in the form of a flood. ONE HUNDRED YEARS of preaching yet he had not a single convert to get on the boat with him and his family. Not even an uncle or a cousin. Nobody! I wonder how discouraging that was and I wonder if he felt like a failure during year ninety nine while he was still preaching, with no converts, and no evidence of a coming flood. He kept building and preaching anyway. He was not a failure and God's Word was true. Thank God Noah held on to the Word of God in spite of contrary circumstances!

When Joseph first received the vision of his parents and brethren bowing down to him, it was a true prophetic vision of what was to come. Yet the manifestation of that vision did not occur until twenty two years later! Did you get that? Twenty two YEARS! And most of that time, Joseph spent his life as a slave and in prison. I am sure the devil attacked his mind every single day with the same old question he first used in the garden of Eden ... "Hath God said?" Joseph's mind had to be bombarded every day with thoughts like, "Had a vision did you? Where is your God now? You never heard God in the first place. Look at your circumstances. Your God has failed you. Everybody who is not following God is better off than you. Why did you ever choose to obey God in the first place? You should just reject God and live like the world." On and on and on it goes. Does any of that sound familiar to you? It sure does to me. It sure does to just about everybody I know who has truly decided to fully follow God no matter the cost. Yet the vision was of God. God's Word did come to pass. The great "Hall of Faith" is full of men and women who would not stop believing God's Word no matter the contradictory circumstances. And then in the next chapter we come to the greatest of all ... our Lord Jesus Christ!

**Heb 12:1-4** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (2) Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. (4) Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

From the world's point of view ... Jesus was a total failure. An uneducated hillbilly from the despised town of Nazareth. A man whose ministry ended in shame and death. A man who did not conquer nations, build temples, nor live in luxury and power. On the measuring line of what the world esteems as successful, Jesus was a complete failure. Yet from God's perspective, Jesus is the greatest conqueror of all time. He did conquer nations, build temples (made without stone), and He now sits at the right hand of God with every resource of the universe at His disposal. (I would call that rich and powerful, wouldn't you?) But Jesus had to live by faith during His earthly sojourn just like He has called us to do. His circumstances were very difficult. He was mocked, threatened, challenged at every turn, rejected and crucified ... yet He held fast to every Word of God. We must forever remember how he overcame the temptations thrown at him by the same enemy we face:

**Mat 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

That is how we live. No matter the circumstances. We are the sons and daughters of the living God, trusted by heaven to follow God's leading on earth. When God leads us we do not always "know where we are going" while we are on the journey, but like Abraham of old, we completely trust the One who is leading us there.

Sue and I love you and appreciate you. We thank God for your generous and giving heart. God bless you!

Your friend and co-laborer,

*Gary Carpenter*