

## FELT LIKE GIVING UP LATELY?

“I just can’t go on anymore. I can’t make it, even though I try so hard. It’s hopeless. Why try?”

Churches are full of hurting people who can’t seem to find relief from their problems. There are loving parents who have been deeply wounded by the deception and delinquency of children who were once tender and good. The abandoned wife whose husband rejected her for another woman is hurting. The children who lost the security of a family are hurting. The teen whose heart has been trampled on by his girlfriend is hurting. The one caught in the bondage of besetting sin is hurting. Those suffering with physical illnesses are hurting.

In one way or the other we all are hurting. Each of us must endure the pain of bruised and broken heart. It is an inescapable part of life. Yet to hear some preachers you would think that everyone is getting instant answers to prayer; everyone is feeling good and living good; anything having to do with Job-like pain and suffering is considered negative living; all that is needed is to pray that one-time, cure-all, solve-everything prayer. But that’s not the way it is for the great majority of sincere Christians. They find that pain, poverty and suffering are their reality, not the world of success, riches and perpetual happiness. They live with heartbreaks, hour-by-hour cruises and are surrounded by an uncertain future, fear, loneliness and depression. How sad it is that such shallow theology is being pushed from pulpits onto the broken and bruised in heart. How insulting it is to the Lord Jesus who became poor and lonely, who died as a pitiful failure in the eyes of the world. How dare the apostles of the positive exclude the Gethsemane experiences of life. The cup of pain, the hour of isolation, and the night of confusion were all part of the Master’s life-style.

What do you say to the wife whose home is coming apart at the seams? She’s been counseled and exhorted to get on her knees and believe God for a miracle. So she fasts and prays and exercised great faith. But in spite of her earnest efforts her wayward husband becomes increasingly hostile, bitter and intent on leaving. Not all marriages are healed through prayer or good intentions. It takes two to make a relationship work, and even though prayer can bring divine power to bear upon her husband’s life, he can still resist God’s efforts and sabotage the solution.

Multitudes of Christian couples are bailing out and giving up on their marriages simply because they have not been prepared to endure any kind of pain, to be content with what they have, to be abased and not always abounding. Many are convinced that their crisis, their pain, their misery is an abnormal state that a real Christian should not be experiencing. The truth of the matter is that the inner battles of the average Christian today are staggering in intensity and proportion. Thousands upon thousands are involved in situations too hard to comprehend. The apostle Paul himself stated that he and his co-workers were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life: (1 Cor. 1:8). We all have seasons of despair and discouragement. We all, at times, feel that we have failed. We have all thought about giving up, packing it in, and walking away from it all.

How can we learn to hold on and live one day at a time? We can begin by giving up the notion that there are short cuts or magic cures. Nor will God come down and do the living for us. And as for the Tempter, he will go right on deceiving and accusing until the day God throws him into prison. What then is the balm for the broken heart? Is there healing and hope for deep inner hurts? Can the pieces be put back together and the heart made even stronger? Can the person who has known such horrible pain and suffering rise up out of the ashes and find a new way of life? Yes! Absolutely yes! And if not, God’s Word would be a hoax and God himself would be a liar. Let me share a few simple thoughts about how to cope with your hurt:

1. Stop trying to figure out why and how you got hurt. All that matters is your willingness to move on in God and trust His workings in your life. Get rid of the anger. God never

promised any of us a painless way of life. He promised to help bear the pain and to give us the strength to get back on our feet. Lay off of the guilt trips. Stop blaming yourself and trying to figure out what you did wrong. It only intensifies your pain.

2. Remind yourself of God's perfect, faithful and unconditional love. God is not in the business of condemning His children-failures or not. Our Heavenly Father watches over each of us with an unwavering eye. Every move is monitored. Every tear is bottled. He identifies with our every pain. He continues to love us in our wounded and crippled state. Don't panic. Don't despair. In love, at the right time, He will send His deliverance. When we have learned how weak we really are and to trust Him more, He will stoop down in compassion and gently help us back to our feet.
3. When you are hurting the worst, allow yourself to cry. And keep on crying until the tears stop flowing. But let those tears come only from the hurt, and not from unbelief or self-pity. Jesus wept. Peter wept bitterly! He carried with him the hurt of denying the Son of Man. He walked alone on the mountains, weeping in sorrow. But those bitter tears worked a sweet miracle for him. Christ will never say, "Get hold of yourself! Or buck up!" He will only embrace you in His arms and hold you tight.
4. Remind yourself you will come out of it: live or die, you belong to the Lord. Life goes on. You may feel rejected. You may feel abandoned. Your faith may be weak. You may think you're down for the count. Sorrow, tears, pain and emptiness may swallow you up, but God is still on the throne and he will come to you. He will give you His grace. Grace to endure or grace to move from this life to His loving presence.

Encourage yourself in the Lord. When the fog of pain and confusion surrounds you, lie back in the arms of the Lord Jesus and simply trust Him. He wants our faith and confidence. He wants you to cry, "Jesus loves me! He is with me! He will not fail me! He is working it out right now! I will not be cast down! I will not be defeated! I will not lose my mind or direction! God is in my side! I love Him and He loves me!"