

WHEN YOUR FAMILY FORSAKES YOU, REMEMBER PSALM 27 AND ISAIAH 49
WHEN YOUR FAMILY FORSAKES YOU,
REMEMBER PSALM 27:10 AND ISAIAH 49:15

"When my father and my mother forsake thee, then the LORD will take me up." "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

During a visit to Thailand, I met a teenager whose testimony thrilled my soul. He was selling ties to tourists and was doing a brisk trade. Crowded barges were bringing tourists to the Temple of the Dawn, and each visitor was a potential customer. My wife and I sat on a low wall watching his efforts when, suddenly, between the arrival of boats, he asked, "Sir, are you a Christian?" I assured him I was and asked if he also loved the Savior. Instantly he replied, "Yes, Sir, I gave my heart to Jesus two years ago." His smile disappeared as he continued, "That was when my father put me out of the home."

I was intrigued by his statement, and asked for more information. The boy said, "I attend an American mission, and our missionary told us that unless we witness for Jesus, people will remain in the dark. When I became a Christian, my father was very angry and said: 'I don't want you in my family.' So he turned me out, and I went to sleep in the doorway of an empty shop."

I said, "And now you are selling ties?"

"Yes, sir, and I am slowly saving my money because one day I hope to go to Bible school and learn how to become a missionary." At fourteen years of age he was expelled from his home only to discover he was falling into the everlasting arms of God's love.

David's text was not exactly a promise but a confident expression of faith based upon experience. He was assured of the continuing faithfulness of his heavenly Father. David was reminiscing and remembering times of great danger when he wrote, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living" (Ps. 27:13). He had always attended to the needs of his family and when persecution increased made arrangements for them to stay with the king of Moab (see 1 Sam 22:34). It was probably during those difficult days that his parents became critical because his actions increased their problems. Then David discovered the abiding presence of God was of incalculable worth. God promised never to leave him, and David reciprocated by expressing a desire to live in the house of the Lord forever.

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Many Gentile believers cannot appreciate the warmth and wonder of this text, but every Hebrew Christian knows its deep meaning. When an orthodox Jew accepts Christ as his Savior, the family sometimes holds a funeral service signifying a child has died.

God saw the unbelief which was spreading among Isaiah's despondent brethren and said, "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. 49:14,15). That amazing statement suggests three facts.

God Cannot Cease Remembering Us

No mother could abandon her child unless unusual circumstances compelled her to do so. Unfortunately, newborn children are sometimes abandoned in a street or near an institution. God used this illustration to indicate He could never leave His children. At all times and in all places, God remembers the people who trust Him.

God Cannot Cease Loving Us

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This is even more amazing. There is nothing unlovely about an innocent baby, but there is much that is detestable about men and women. That God loves people who oppose His will and resist His advances is almost unbelievable. That God could love even the people who crucified His Son defies understanding. The Lord said to Jeremiah, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). It is difficult to comprehend the magnitude of this statement, but it indicates nothing can destroy divine love.

God Cannot Cease Helping Us

When David wrote, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up," he used an interesting word. Literally, the sentence says, "Then the Lorn will gather me." The Savior expressed the same truth when, looking at Jerusalem, He said, ". . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. 23:37).

God feedeth the sparrows that fly in the air;
they are never in trouble, but what He is there.
If God with these creatures His blessings doth share,
then we surely can trust such infinite care.

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WHEN YOU HAVE HAD A GREAT EXPERIENCE,
EXPECT PROBLEMS, BUT REMEMBER
2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee."

Paul had many sensational experiences, but he was reluctant to speak of the greatest. He wrote, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;).. . How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter' (2 Cor. 12:24).

Even when he gave his testimony, Paul was more or less in a state of shock. Christians would like to know the details of that remarkable event. Did Paul see the Savior? Did he walk the streets of heaven and converse with glorified saints? Evidently he was instructed not to divulge what had been seen and heard.

Afterward he realized that if he became conceited, his mission to the Gentiles might be in jeopardy. He wrote, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Cor. 12:7). Success is often the harbinger of problems, but humility is the mother of hope.

God's Favor... A Definite Problem

Only strong persons can overcome the danger created by success. Even blind people recognize an inflated ego, a detestable conceit, and the feeling of "being holier than thou." The Lord was wise when He placed a small child among His over-confident disciples and urged them to become childlike. Christian leaders should be aware of the dangers created by pride. When a member of a church lapses into sin, people may criticize. When a minister is guilty of horrendous sin, the damage done may never be repaired.

God's Forethought. . A Desperate Prayer

Throughout the history of the church, scholars have speculated concerning the nature of Paul's "thorn in the flesh." Some of the earliest church leaders thought it to be a severe earache, or deafness,

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but the consensus is that Paul suffered from very poor eyesight
which caused continuing problems. His difficulties became so se-

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vere that he had no time to boast about the revelations given in
paradise. When his problems continued, he desperately prayed for
help, and when answers were not forthcoming, he repeated his re-
quest. The Lord always answers prayer, but sometimes says, "No."
When the apostle sought an explanation, God replied, "My grace is
sufficient for thee." Christians should always remember God is too
wise to make mistakes and too loving to be unkind.

God's Faithfulness... A Delightful Promise

'My
Lord,' and
drinking
heaven

"The other evening I was riding home after a heavy day's work. I
felt very weary and sore depressed, when swiftly and suddenly that text
came to me: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' I reached home and
looked it up in the original, and at last it came to me in this way,
grace is sufficient for thee.' And I said, 'I should think it is,
burst out laughing. I never fully understood what the holy laughter of
Abraham was until then. It seemed to make unbelief so absurd. It was
as though some little fish, being so thirsty, was troubled about
the river dry. and Father Thames said: 'Drink away, little fish, my
stream is sufficient for thee.' Or it seemed that after seven years of
plenty. a mouse feared it might die of famine, and Joseph might say,
'Cheer up, little mouse, my granaries are sufficient for thee.' Little
faith will bring your souls to heaven; but great faith will bring
to your souls." Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Writing to the Corinthians Paul said, "There bath no temptation
taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who
will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will
with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able
to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). When Paul's burdens seemed to be heavy,
he leaned more upon the everlasting arms of God's unfailing kind-
ness. Annie Johnson Hint wrote:

His grace is great enough to meet the great things:
The crashing waves that overwhelm the soul,
The roaring winds that leave us stunned and breathless,
The sudden storms beyond our life's control.
His grace is great enough to meet the small things:
The little pin-prick troubles that annoy,
The insect worries, buzzing and persistent,
The squeaking wheels that grate upon our joy.

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WHEN GOD SAYS NO, REMEMBER HE
MUST HAVE A REASON. ACTS 16:6-7

Now when they had gone throughout Pheyygia and the region
of Galatia and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach
the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed
to go into Bithynia but the Spirit suffered them not.

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One of the most disconcerting things in the world is the idea that God is either deaf or unconcerned with His people. To pray sincerely and apparently not be heard, to serve the Lord and be confronted by an impassable barrier, or to give of one's best and receive no cooperation from heaven is devastating. Inevitably the question arises, "Why has God done this to me?" Unless a person carefully and patiently waits for an answer, his or her soul may become embittered. Families often pray for the healing of a loved one, only to lose that person in death. A wife may pray for the salvation of her husband but face increasing intolerance. When God says no, He has a reason for so doing.

The Mystery of Closed Doors

Paul, the intrepid missionary, had problems! Seemingly, his efforts were fruitless; he had run into a wall! His party had traveled many miles and in spite of many difficulties had reached the populous areas of Asia. Pagans needed to hear the Gospel, but for some inscrutable reason, God had forbidden His servants to preach. Paul was frustrated. Why had the Lord brought him so far only to prevent him from telling the crowds about the Savior?

"They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia." To be forbidden to preach in a village was disappointing, but at least another village could be found within a few miles. To be prevented from preaching the gospel in Asia meant a forced march of more than six hundred miles over difficult terrain before Paul could make his exit from the forbidden area.

"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia" (Acts 16:9-10). When God closes a door in one place, He is often about to open a larger one elsewhere. When Elijah's brook dried up it became evident the Lord desired his presence in Zarephath (see 1 Kings 17:7-9).

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The Misery of Continuing Doubt

Mary and Martha were very proud; Jesus of Nazareth had made their home a stopping place on the way to and from Jerusalem. His favorite food and Martha's expertise transformed every meal into a banquet. Then came tragedy and disillusionment. Lazarus became desperately ill, and his life was in jeopardy. "Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of man might be glorified thereby.

When he had heard therefore that he was sick he abode two days still in the same place where he was" (John 11 :3-6).

It was incredible! Jesus had disregarded their appeal for help. Their Friend had refused to respond to their appeal. His preaching was more important than their pain! Could He not have come to their aid? Nothing would have been lost; the people would have followed Him, and His speech could have been concluded in Bethany. It was significant that even when He did come a few days later Mary still sat in the house. Delayed blessings sometimes transform despair into delight

The Meaning of Certain Directions

The Wise Men were elated! Their long arduous journey was fulfilled with indescribable joy! They had seen the King! The scholars, who had been sufficiently wise to understand the message in the sky, had been even more wise to worship in a stable. Now, as had been previously arranged, they were ready to return to King

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Herod. The camels were rested, and the luggage was packed. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, God said, "No." Those travelers were wise not to argue with the Lord. It became evident the new directions possibly: (a) preserved their lives because Herod might have ordered their execution; (b) prolonged their happiness because they did not participate in any plot to kill the infant Christ; (c) protected the Child who would be the salvation of a lost world.

They were in alignment with the will of the Almighty. When God said, "No," the lions were stilled as Daniel entered their den. The waves could not fall on the Hebrews who were fleeing from Pharaoh. It is wise to remember God always knows what He is doing. It is better to praise Him than to pout!

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WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED TO COMPROMISE,
REMEMBER PROVERBS 3:5-6

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not
unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways
acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

It has often been said if a man does not stand for something, he will fall for anything! Some people are like reeds shaken by the wind. They yield to pressure from any direction! Perhaps that explains why corruption can be found in all walks of life. An official whose integrity remains unchallenged is a rare soul. The Bible describes Balaam as a prophet who compromised when a king offered to make him a wealthy man. From then on his increasing love for riches ruined his judgment, and even his donkey was wiser than he. Other important men exhibited similar tendencies and forfeited their claim to greatness.

The Wise Man... Solomon... who Became Sinful (1 Kings 11 :4-5)

Few people inherit fame and fortune, but of those who did Solomon was probably the most famous in the ancient world. He was born a prince and reared in luxury. Yet his excessive wealth seemed insignificant when compared with his wisdom. His phenomenal judgments and success in all matters of jurisprudence became known internationally. It was no great surprise when the Queen of Sheba came to verify the truthfulness of the reports circulating in her country.

She said, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (1 Kings 10:6-7). It will forever remain a tragedy that the king who reached unprecedented heights of magnificence should be seduced and relegated to a realm of inexcusable shame. It was written of him, "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites" (1 Kings 11 :4-5). Solomon leaned completely upon his own understanding, and his compromise ruined his integrity.

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The Wealthy Man... The Who Became Sad (Matthew 19:22)
He was the most admired citizen in town. Young, considerate, and

WHEN YOUR FAMILY FORSAKES YOU, REMEMBER PSALM 27 AND ISAIAH 49 exceptionally wealthy, he owned a great estate and was generous to his employees. He was deeply religious and lived according to the highest standards of morality. Guileless, sincere, and yet aristocratic, he was a man of exceptional credibility. "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. 19:16).

The listeners who heard the Savior's reply probably frowned. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matt. 19:21). The young man was stunned! Momentarily, he saw strangers living in his beautiful home and heard new voices issuing orders while he, staff in hand, walked along dusty roads wondering how and where his next meal would be coming from. Revulsion shook his body. The Teacher was forcing a choice. What should he do?

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Matt 19:22). Poor man! He compromised. Although he desired to walk with Christ, he turned and went the other way. He did not realize Jesus was testing him, even as God tested Abraham when He asked that Isaac be sacrificed on Mount Moriah (see Gen. 22). Unfortunately the rich young ruler remained a wealthy pauper. Anything that takes precedence over Christ is too expensive no matter what it's worth!

The Weakening Man ... Demas.... Who Became Side-Trackd
(2 Timothy 4:10)

Christians would like to know more about Demas who was mentioned three times in the epistles of Paul. Philemon 24 reveals he was a fellow-worker with Paul, Mark, Luke and Aristarchus. The letter to the Colossians informs that he was still with Paul and Luke, but nothing more was said of him There was no commendation either of the man or his work.

The message to Timothy tells how he became a victim of worldly pleasure and deserted his companion. These phases in the life of Demas might be summarized as serving, sighing, and slipping! He became disillusioned as day after day he ministered to a prisoner in chains. Rome had many attractions; the gaiety of the city contrasted strangely with the gloom of the cell. The lust of his eyes and the yearning of his soul increased until finally he abandoned his friend.

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Deep sorrow filled the soul of the apostle when he wrote, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10). Demas sought for pleasure, but lost his peace. It would be interesting to know his thoughts when his turn came to meet the Savior.

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