

KEEPING IN TOUCH

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It seems that God goes out of His way to build our character. Have you noticed that? Everyday I hope that my character and Christian walk are OK so that God will leave them alone.

You know how He builds my character? He allows me work with people who are a pain in the neck. He provides me just enough money to make it. He lets me have a tooth ache when I do not have dental insurance. He does not give me everything I ask for. He does not help me get everything done. He allows me to have some kinds of pain. He allows the devil to tempt me. He forces me to face my daily responsibilities and will not allow me to run away for long. He wants me to be accountable to someone. He constantly wants me to trust Him even when I cannot figure it all out.

Let's face it. Life is a struggle.

Check out I Timothy 6:12. "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, remembering that you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

Remember when you ask Christ to be your Saviour? You made a confession that day to trust the Lord for your salvation from the penalty of sin. Well, guess what? We also made a confession that we would trust God to do in our lives what was necessary to make us men of God.

The daily grind is hard. The temptations to mess up are all around us. It is so easy to get discouraged and want to give up.

Think back to Exodus 14:13-14. The Children of Israel were running from Pharaoh & his

army. They came to the Red Sea - the end of the line. They were boxed in, trapped, and scared.

Moses told them to "take their stand & not fear & watch the salvation that God would do FOR THEM that day. Moses said, "The Lord will fight for you."

Each day of my life, the Lord allows tough things to happen to me to strengthen me for the next day. I am ashamed to admit that many times my lousy attitude gets in the way and I grieve the Lord.

A student named Bob shared his story.

"I had three years in Viet Nam. I did not want the U.S. to be there. I did not want to be there. I really hated those people and wanted to run far away from them. Later in my life I had a heart attack. The doctor who treated me here in the States was Vietnamese. He showed me kindness, told me not to worry, and assured me he would take good care of me. I was humbled. I had just finished studying the book of Jonah. He hated the enemy (the Assyrians) and He had run from God & from associating with the Assyrians. God had some work to do in my heart and I did not want Him to. After seeing the doctor a number of times, I told him that his kindness had given me peace, and had shown me that I could love my enemies and forgive those who had caused me great grief. I told the doctor that I felt closer to him and his people because of his kindness to me. We both cried in his office that day. The book of Jonah was written for me because God wanted to build character in me and bring healing to my wounded heart."

May God strengthen you. - Bruce Leary