

# Navigating Through Life's Storms

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Recently I received an email from an airline employee who is facing further cutbacks in pay and the possibility of a strike. There is anxiety, but even more so, there is perplexity and discouragement, as airlines have made promises that are being broken and trust in relationships is deteriorating. In addition to all this, there are volumes of information through emails, letters and even calls giving the latest discouraging news about the perverseness of people. If you take and absorb this long enough, life becomes more perplexing, cynical, bitter and frustrating. It won't take long for a person to feel there is no way out. They are trapped in their circumstances and trapped in prevailing attitudes. What do we do

and how should we live in light of these things?

As a Christian, do you see yourself stuck in the middle of this, or are you operating with a worldview that is bigger than what you can see and understand? I do not mean to imply, nor do I believe, that the Christian faith is a blind leap in the dark. Actually, it is a step forward in the light. Christianity is more than my perception of things, and it is bigger than me making choices based on my reasonable understanding. Though I may see things clearly, I do not see them in their entirety. Only God does! That is why it is important to live in the light of God's truth, which guides us through the rough terrain of life. In tough times, we can get into more problems by craving for facts and data in order to try and understand it all. We never seem to have enough information and fall short of grasping it. At times we even ask God to show us why. God has not promised to tell us everything we want to know about life and its circumstances. However, He has promised to provide what we need to know in order to respond appropriately, even if we do not fully understand. We are told in 2 Peter 1:3-4 that God has granted to us everything *needed* for life and godliness. How? Through a true knowledge of Him. Does this mean that a true knowledge of God is better than gathering facts and data to live by? Yes, that is what it means. Not that getting information is bad or contradicts God's way. It may or may not. However, living with a true knowledge of God gives us a viewpoint that instructs us how to live in any situation, even when we do not have all the facts.

Just ask any aviator, they will tell you that flying using your senses is extremely dangerous and can even be fatal. The tendency is to interpret the present circumstances by what you see and how your senses perceive it. When a pilot flies by using the instruments, he or she is showing that he uses something greater than his own perception to navigate his or her flying. They know that the instruments do not eliminate the turbulent conditions around them, but they can navigate through it or around it. *So how are you navigating spiritually through the turbulence of the airline industry? Are you spending an enormous amount of time trying to figure it all out, or are you learning more about the true knowledge of God in the midst of the storm?*

There is a better way! It is God's way of navigating through problems. It is much more than "positive thinking." It is thinking God's way, which is taking steps to learn true knowledge about God and to apply His directions in the midst of problems. How does this work? For example, when everyone around you finds pleasure in blaming and bashing people, you resort to God's way of praying. This means praying even for those who mistreat or curse us (Romans 12:14,17-18). That does not mean we have to agree with what they do, but neither does it mean we can simply ignore them and not pray for them. God's way of navigating us through situations starts by our taking steps to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). When we are being overcome with evil it means one of two things. Either we are doing nothing, acting as though these people do not exist and neglect to do good. Or we are hungry for any and all information that would verify our suspicion of them. The kind of zeal for knowing the rare facts about mean people often takes us beyond praying for them, to slander them.

The faith that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4) is a faith that believes God sees everything in perspective. Even though we do not know what He is up to, we know He is up to something. He may allow us to face loss (Hebrews 10:32-36) or face the consequences of our own choices (1 Peter 2:20). It may not be good or seem good at that moment, yet we are told that He is working all things together for good (Romans 8:28). God places greater value on our response to adversity than our comprehension of it. How we allow ourselves to navigate through it means the difference between the fruit of the Spirit or the deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-23). The fruit consists of love, joy, peace, patience, etc; while the deeds of the flesh are strife, jealousy, dissension, anger and more. All too often our earthly responses to difficult people lack heaven's compassion and concern. That is why the Apostle Paul declared that knowledge puffs us up with pride, but love builds up others.

As a Christian, when you go to work how do you see your spiritual responsibility? Is it defined by bringing a few spiritual activities into work? You know what I mean, maybe witnessing to a few people,

or helping a co-worker in need. If you do a good deed now and then, you are OK. But I have watched these kinds of people in the face of adversity, when circumstances get tough and perplexing. They resort to figuring out things on their own. Their response may be a little better than the average person, but their attitude is not. I have heard them tell me that their faith is in the God of the Bible, whom they personally know. Yet, they have a hard time displaying and explaining their faith in the difficult and perplexing circumstances of work. For them, explaining their faith means somehow portraying to those around them that everything is cool and calm and they have it all figured out.

God does not need us to defend who He is and what He is doing! What God wants is to stretch our faith through adversity so we will seek Him and gain a true knowledge of Him. When the perplexing storms of life drive us to seek God, the people around us at work will get a clearer picture of Him as they see Him guide us.

*“But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”*

1 Peter 3:14-15