

“When Your Soul Hits the Wall”

March 24, 2019

Isaiah 50:10- “Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on their God!”

Psalm 42- TPT

Over 500 years ago, St. John of the Cross wrote *The Dark Night of the Soul*, describing the activity of God in the deepest part of us (i.e., our soul) during our darkest moments.

- “Trials” are momentary frustrations (“Bumps” in the road—people hurt, things break)
- “Dark nights” seem prolonged & painful—marked by Disappointments, Delays, and Devastations (“Walls” that seem formidable and final)
 - Ask those who don’t believe in God, why? They point to their “walls”
 - Ask those with deep trust in God, when? They point to their “walls”

Several things to keep in mind:

- Not every “wall” is external—the “walls” in our soul can be our greatest hindrance
- Though it may feel like the pressure is coming from outside—it can be God calling us to recognize & release lies, limitations, & deeply rooted issues inside us!
- “He who began a good work in you—is deeply committed to complete it!” (Phil. 1:6)

CORE: “Walls” that threaten to dampen, divert, or destroy us—God can use to deepen us!

1. Deepen our DEPENDENCY on Him.

Matthew 5:3- “Blessed are the poor (ptokos) in spirit”

Ptokos- absolute dependence on another for survival

“in spirit”- totally dependent on His mercy—not our own merit

PRIDE can be a significant (yet subtle) stronghold in our souls. Fruit of pride:

- Quickly judging others
 - “Judge not” (Matt. 7:1)—strong accusations based on shallow knowledge
 - “Judge righteously” (Jn. 7:24)—equitably and redemptively
- Easily offended

NOTE: As our soul deepens in dependency, we are so grateful for His mercy. Releases us from quickly judging and to getting easily offended, because we have better things to focus on!

NOTE: Don’t judge people based on one season of their life! [In one season, DAVID was an overlooked son—in another, an honored king! RUTH was begging in a field—later she owned the same field! MORDECAI was shamed outside a palace—later reigning in that palace!]

2. Deepen our AWE of Him.

Acts 2:43- *“Everyone was filled with awe” (“A deep sense of holy awe swept over everyone” TPT)*

One of the hardest things to be released from our soul is the DESIRE TO CONTROL. (*i.e., doing all we can to get others—even God—to do everything just the way we like it!*)

As awe deepens:

- We see that God is *“past our finding out” (Romans 11:33)*
- We see that He’s not an object we can manipulate or command
- We find rest in the reality that—we lack a full understanding of all God is doing!
- We come into a holy *“brokenness”* of a tamed stallion trusting its master, knowing:
 - God is in control
 - He is always worthy of our trust

3. Deepen our CAPACITY TO WAIT for Him.

In the *“dark nights”* we are confronted with our soul’s driven desire to “make something happen”—fearful, often frantic, in our self-will—trying to run ahead of God.

i.e., such impatience caused King Saul to lose his throne—disobeying a clear command from the prophet Samuel to “wait seven days” to offer a sacrifice before going to war. (1 Samuel 13).

ABRAHAM- waited 11 years for a promised son; grew impatient, taking matters into his own hands, birthing Ishmael through his servant Hagar. Grieved and humiliated, he was forced to wait another 14 years for Isaac, His *“dark night”* transformed him into a *“father of faith.”*

MOSES- arrogantly tried to be a deliverer by murdering an Egyptian. After 40 years of waiting, he became a godly leader and *“the meekest man on the earth” (Numbers 12:3).*

DAVID- after defeating Goliath, spent 13 years running from jealous King Saul—losing his family, reputation, and all financial security. In the wilderness, became *“man after God’s heart.”*

HANNAH- after years of infertility, unanswered prayers, and mocking from her husband’s second wife—gave birth to Samuel, the prophet who transformed a nation.

Psalm 130:5-6 TPT- “This is why I wait upon You, expecting Your breakthrough, for Your word brings me hope. I long for You more than any watchman would long for the morning light. I will watch and wait for You, O God, throughout the night!”

4. Deepen our ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE.

We can subtly trust temporary things—more than we value eternal things.

*“What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.”
(1 Corinthians 7:29-31) NIV*

NOTE: We rarely realize how attached we are to something, until it is removed from us!

Our “false self” finds its identity in the attachment to temporary things. (*i.e.*, “When we cannot release our attachment to something, we are way past enjoying it. We now idolize it!” -St. John of the Cross)

Our “true self” finds its identity in valuing Jesus far above anything else! (*i.e.*, “I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.” (Philippians 3:8 NIV)

CLOSING THOUGHT:

*“...weeping may stay for the night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.” Psalm 30:5 NIV*

- Life can be hard. “Dark nights” can happen to any of us.
- “Dark nights” don’t last forever
- Our Father is amazingly trustworthy—and powerfully present—able to take situations threatening to destroy our souls—and using them to deepen us, strengthen us, and draw us closer to His heart!