



It is easy to have faith when our lives are going well but not that easy to retain that faith when our lives become very difficult, but we must always strive to overcome all adversity with our faith intact.

WHO EXPERIENCES THE DARK NIGHT?

We have all experienced dark episodes in our lives, times of discouragement and disappointment and loss. We have all had times when we've faced the natural painful consequences of our own foolish mistakes. There are seasons, though, when people who love God – who are serving Him faithfully – go through extremely difficult, dark times. When that happens, it is easy to question whether God really cares or not.

As we have experienced, that God allows the dark night to happen to His beloved children, and especially those who are the most faithful, the most loving, and the ones who want all of Him. Again, remember Isaiah 50:10, *"Who is among you that feareth the Lord that obeyeth the voice of his servant that walketh in darkness and hath no light?"*

Great sons and daughters are made by great trials. Pain, sorrow and failure are what produce men and women of God. Those with the greatest dreams are often the ones who receive the greatest trials. Eternal lessons seem to require hard places. As scripture declares, the way we are made "perfect," or whole or complete, is by suffering or by barring ourselves from sin and self (Hebrews 2:10). First, All Mighty God takes away all our external and internal supports other than Himself, then He can strengthen our inner man, enabling us to experience His fullness – that fullness of Himself we so desperately long for.

The dark night of the soul happens to people who have already accepted God; those who have already given their lives to Him; those already filled with His Spirit; those who have already dedicated their lives to Him; those who have already asked for intimacy; and those who have already been set aside for God's purposes. Yet, like Job, people who are truly serving God and are in the center of His will can go through very dark times.

Why Does God Send the Dark Night?

There seems to be three things that God is looking for in each of our lives: *our faithfulness, our conviction, and the acceptance of His most beloved son Jesus the Messiah.*

God wants us, to demonstrate our true heart. Will we be obedient in all things? (2 Corinthians 2:9) Will we obey Him, even when we can't see Him or feel Him? Will we hold on to His truths even though we don't understand what He is doing? Peter writes: *"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"* -1Peter 1:7

Can we all catch that? The trials of our faith are *precious*. They are never empty or meaningless, but are destined to have great value both in our personal lives and in the future Kingdom. God wants believers who have faith like Job, and who can utter like he did, "Though You slay me, yet will I trust You."

When Job sought the Lord to know why the bad things were happening to him, he got no answer from God. And it's often the same with us. God only tells us that He *does* have a plan for our lives and, even though we don't understand what that plan is or how it is going to work out; we must trust that He always has our best in view.

When seasoned believers enter this dark night, they are no longer in the beginning stages of learning about the *reality* of Gods love and power. Those foundational bricks have been already laid. When dark nights come, we must learn to rely upon our Father in spite of our circumstances, in spite of our logic and in spite of our human reason. We must trust that only God knows what is best for our lives; therefore, whatever He allows into them He will use it for our good.

God is teaching us that all that matters in this life is knowing and loving Him. He wants us to love Him and rely upon Him regardless of what we desire, regardless of what our intellect is saying and regardless of what we are feeling. He wants us to be able to echo what Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 4:8-10:

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

For those who love God and His Messiah Jesus and are dedicated to Him, it is worth any temporary suffering or difficulty or dark time that God puts in our path. And even during these terrible trials, when things look so very dark, we can still "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," (1 Peter 1:8) because we know that even then (and especially then), All Mighty God is doing wonderful, precious work behind the scenes.