

Life's Holding Patterns

There are many types of holding patterns. Aircraft holding patterns for landing and take offs. Even the space shuttle has a holding pattern. And, we have spiritual holding patterns.

“Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” Jonah 1:17

Many times God will allow a painful situation or a painful circumstance in our life to “swallow us up.” This time or season in our spiritual growth is a holding pattern.

We cannot move to the right or the left, all we can do is sit. Like Jonah sat in the belly of the great fish. So that God can have our undivided attention, so that He can speak to us.

God put Jonah in a holding pattern because He needed to speak to Jonah's heart. Jonah was all alone. There were no friends to call on, no televangelist hot line, no books to read, no games to play, no cable or Christian TV, no interruptions at all. All Jonah could do was sit and think, to meditate on God and God's word, and to pray. When we are deep in the middle of a difficult situation, God will start talking to us about things that we cannot see or hear any other way.

Some Examples of God's Holding Patterns

1. When you are physically sick and you have prayed, but God hasn't healed you yet. You are in a holding pattern.
2. When you have problems with your children, and you have given them to God at the altar, but God hasn't delivered them yet. You are in a holding pattern.
3. When you have prayed for salvation for a friend or a loved one and they aren't saved yet. You are in a holding pattern.
4. When you are in a broken relationship and you have given it over to God, but it hasn't been restored yet. You are in a holding pattern.
5. When the door slams shut in your face even before you knock. You are in a holding pattern.
6. If you are struggling at work, can't make both ends meet financially and you have prayed about it and given it to God. No answer has come. You are in a holding pattern.

When we are deep in the belly of a difficult situation and there are no interruptions, then God has our attention because all we can do is to sit, think, meditate and pray.

**There isn't a mountain high enough
There isn't a valley low enough
There isn't a river wide enough
There isn't a room dark enough
That God cannot find you!**

All we have to do is start praising, worshipping and praying to God while we are waiting, and remember three things:

1. The pattern has a purpose
2. The pattern has a plan
3. The pattern has a process

So Stop struggling and Start Listening

God will keep you right where you are until you can clearly hear Him say, "I love you."

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory . . ." 2 Corinthians 4:17

The shortest distance between your problem and your solution is the distance between your knees and the floor.

The one who kneels to the Lord can stand up to anything. Jonah found this out.

"Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly." Jonah 2:1

Most men and women of God have been put in a holding pattern at some point in their live. Joseph in the prison, Moses in the wilderness, David on the run from Saul, Jeremiah in the pit and the apostle Paul in the wilderness and in prison. The list is endless. So listen to God say to you, "I love you."

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it.

If God had a wallet, your picture would be in it.

He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning.

When ever you want to talk to God, He will listen.

He can live anywhere in the universe, BUT he chooses to live in your heart.

He sent you a Christmas gift in Bethlehem which was His Son and He gave you eternity on that glorious Calvary Cross on a Friday.

Face it, God is crazy about you.

Why do we have holding patterns?

First is to test us, second is to chastise us, and thirdly, to teach us various lessons.

"But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts." 1 Thessalonians 2:4

This scripture shows us that God entrusts us with the gospel, and then tests our hearts to see if we will be faithful to share the gospel with others. The holding patterns test our faith, not for God's sake, but to demonstrate to us exactly what is in our hearts. God considers our faith to be extremely valuable.

“ . . . that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, . . .” I Peter 1:7

Can God honestly look into your heart and see that it has been tested and tried and proven to be pure?

**“You have tested my heart;
You have visited me in the night;
You have tried me and have found nothing;
I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.”
Psalm 17:3**

When He visits you in the nights, does He find you praying? Does He find you praising Him? What does He find you doing? Does He find you watching worthless TV? Are your eyes set on worthless things? Or are you praying to God?

**“Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,
And revive me in Your way.
Establish Your word to your servant,
Who is devoted to fearing You.” Psalm 119:37-38**

Or are you one of the servants who has to be refined? You love God, you trust in His Son, but your heart spends most of its time taking pleasure in the world.

**“He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And purge them as gold and silver,
That they may offer to the Lord
An offering in righteousness.” Malachi 3:3**

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matthew 3:11-12

Remember, Jonah was commanded to go to Nineveh and to cry out against it, but he refused. (Jonah 1:1-2) What has God told you to do that you are not doing? Perhaps this is why your prayers are not being answered.

“If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? . . . Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Hebrews 12:7 & 11

It is NOT pleasant to be in a holding pattern. Jonah did NOT enjoy being in the fish's belly. But afterwards he obeyed the Lord and a whole city was saved as a result.

Unfortunately, we seem unable to learn much during the good times of our lives. We learn the most during the difficult times. That's just human nature, and God understands us through and through. He designs each holding pattern specifically for each one of us as an individual. God knows what He is doing! We may not like what He is doing in our life, but we can always trust that He KNOWS what is best for us.

This is what the Lord has to say to you this month:

**“Come now, and let us reason together,’
Says the Lord,
‘Though your sins are like scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool,
If you are willing and obedient,
You shall eat the good of the land;
But if you refuse and rebel,
You shall be devoured by the sword;’
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” Isaiah 1:18-20**

God is looking for obedient hearts. For obedient hearts receive the answers from God.

“And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” 1 John 3:22

As you can see from this scripture verse, obedience is crucial to answered prayers. Even Jesus learned obedience, and He learned it through difficulties, not during good times.

**“ . . . though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.”
Hebrews 5:8**

Brothers and sisters, search your hearts right now. Stop what you're doing. Meditate on the Lord. The situation you are in, the trials that you are enduring – are they the result of God's testing? Or is He chastising you? Do you want out of the difficulty? The closest way to the throne room of God is on your knees. It's time to pay reverence to God. Take courage, God has not deserted you! He still loves you! The apostle advised us to do this during a holding pattern:

“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.” Hebrews 12:12-13

Let us heed the wise words of Peter, who was both tested and chastised by the Lord, and was found to be faithful in the end.

“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” 1 Peter 1:13-21

Tragedy Has Come Again

As we are writing this newsletter, it has been one week since the space shuttle Columbia came apart over Texas. Our prayers and our sympathy go out to the family members of the crew. We have heard that the commander of the crew was a true Christian. Praise God! God was with them to the very end. Let us not forget that we are living in some terrible times. Our nation is on

a heightened security alert with possible terrorist attacks against hotels and apartment buildings. What will it take, I boldly repeat myself, what will it take? What will it take for America to wake up. Churches are splitting and separating. Everybody claims to believe in God, but ? Christians are busy destroying Christians.

We are facing war on two fronts, both with Iraq and possibly with North Korea. President Bush announced that Saddam Hussein has given commands to his army leaders to use the chemical weapons that they have in the event that America invades. We must pray as we have never prayed before for the protection of our men and women in the armed forces! It is time to encourage them, not discourage them.

If you live near to a military base, we challenge you. What are you and your church doing to reach out to those in uniform AND their families during this difficult time? Remember, wives/husbands and children are left behind as their spouses go overseas. They will need your support and help.

January in California

We want to praise God for a wonderful trip to California in January. We spoke for ten days in a row in Pastor Jim Smith's church, Word of Grace, in Lompoc, CA. The Holy Spirit moved, and people were blessed. We were too, as the people reached out to us in love. We quickly came to feel like they are part of our family.

On Friday, Daniel met up with some bikers in Santa Barbara. He gave them his "Get Out Of Hell Free" cards, and they were so intrigued they looked up our web site and saw the advertisement for the meetings. As a result, eight of them rode up to Lompoc for the meeting on the following Monday. Everyone enjoyed meeting with them. Daniel was in heaven while we were in California. The weather was so wonderful there were bikers everywhere. Daniel was able to witness and hand out his cards to many of them. If you are ever in California, this is a good church to look up and pay a visit to.

Standing Against Satan's attacks

You remember reading in our last newsletter about how Satan has a host of demon spirits just waiting to attack us. It is vitally important that we are meticulously careful in our relationship with the Lord so that He can warn us when we are coming under attack. If we are not in steady communication with God, then the attack can progress to a very dangerous point and a lot of damage can be done, before we even realize we are being attacked. Why? Because the demons are invisible. They can influence people and circumstances long before we realize what they are doing. If we are not alerted to their activities, they can accomplish much damage before we become aware of our need to pray to stop their activities. When we finally do realize what is going on, it may be too late to prevent the damage that has already occurred.

God wants to be able to warn us in advance of a coming attack so that we can pray to prevent it. But, if we are not in steady communication with Him, He cannot warn us. How can we be sure to maintain this communication? The most important part of our lives is our daily quiet time. Time we spend reading our Bibles, and talking to God. You will notice that the most difficult thing in the world to do is to maintain a consistent daily quiet time. Everything will conspire to hinder you. But it is absolutely vital to your very existence that you do so. You need to spend a minimum of one hour per day reading and studying God's word, and praying.

Get a bound journal and take notes. Write down the thoughts that the Holy Spirit gives to you as you read the Bible. Write down your questions, and then leave space so that you can go back and write in the answers later when God gives them to you. Write down your prayer requests and concerns. When the Lord speaks to you, write it down. This way you won't forget what He has

said to you. When you find yourself in a difficult situation or a dry spot, go back and read through your journals. You often will find an answer God gave you sometime in the past that directly applies to your current situation. It will also encourage your faith. God's word tells us that if we will diligently seek Him, we will find Him. His word also says this:

“This is eternal life, that they may know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

John 12:3

There is nothing in our lives as important as getting to know God! If you don't know God your life will be a disaster, and you face an eternity of darkness. We must learn to hear His voice, and experience His working in our lives. All of this hinges upon your faithfulness in spending time each day studying His Word, and seeking Him in prayer.

I receive a lot of letters, E-mails, and comments from people telling me that they are having much difficulty establishing a daily quiet time. A common complaint is “I just don't get anything out of reading my Bible anymore.” If this describes your current situation, then I have a suggestion for you. You can “jump start” your quiet times by reading a chapter a day of a book of good Christian literature. I have recently come across a book written by R.A. Torrey that is perfect for this purpose. Each chapter is fairly short, and has a lot of meat in it. Enough material that you can spend the rest of the day thinking and pondering about what you have read. It is all about God, His personality and characteristics. It will help you to come to know God personally. The title of the book is Experiencing God's Love – Understanding the Personality of God.

Pastor Torrey worked and lived in the beginning of the 1900's. He had a deep relationship with God and a gift to be able to teach directly about God in simple terms that can be understood by everyone. I highly recommend his writings. If you are interested in this book, you can order it by filling out the form at the end of this newsletter, or on our web site. I would also enjoy some feedback from you about the book.

A Prayer Request

The people who were helping look after everything while we travel have just moved on to other things. This makes it extremely difficult for Daniel and I to travel together. We ask you to pray that God will send us the right person to help us so that we can continue traveling in this ministry together.

New Web Site

We are pleased to announce that we now have a second web site up and running. It is a translation of our original web site into Portuguese. It is www.guerreirosdacolheita.com. A brother in Brazil has not only translated the web site for us, but he is also translating E-mails for us from Brazil. His name is Bruno, and we would appreciate your prayer support for him in this work.

Our books are very widespread in Brazil, and our new book has been translated into Portuguese and will be released in Brazil shortly. This is an exciting new development for us as God continues to expand our ministry.

Make Copies

You are welcome to make copies of any of our newsletters to give to your friends. If you know of anyone who would like to receive it, please send us their names and addresses.

Love Offerings

We are a faith-supported ministry. We depend on your love and obedience to God to continue and expand this ministry. Please send your love offering in the enclosed envelope. We ask you to pray about being a partner with us for \$100 or more each month. We need your help just to stay on the road, and to continue to expand the work God has given us to do.

We deeply appreciate the support that you have sent us in the past. We pray that God will grant each one of you His richest blessings as you give to us.

Testimonies

“Daniel,
We were greatly challenged by your message to witness.” D. from CA

“I normally don’t write to someone who wrote a book that I enjoy. This was the exception. Strange things have happened in my life that included a pastor literally destroying the lives of my family to internet addiction. Those burning questions that I have been asking for 7 years came to light last week in the book He Came to Set The Captives Free. I just wanted to thank you so much for this book. I sincerely hope that it turns the lights on for others as it has done for me.” K. Mck.

“Thank you so very much for sharing your life through your books. I have read the first two in the last month and finished Becoming A Vessel of Honor today. It is so refreshing to finally have the truth about Satan’s kingdom in writing and to view the bible from such a deep perspective. My life makes sense now – thank you! My husband is reading your books also so he may join me on the battlefield. God is faithful!” L.C.

I was surprised recently when I was sent some very interesting testimonies about the books from Juanita Bynum Ministries Bulletin Board. She apparently asked for comments concerning my books, and received a number of very favorable testimonies. I was encouraged as I read them. Praise God! Check it out.

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**Rev. Daniel Yoder
Rebecca (Brown) Yoder, M.D.
Harvest Warriors Outreach Ministries
P.O. Box 65
Clinton, AR 72031**

We are warring to harvest!