

TOUGH TIMES PRODUCE TOUGH PEOPLE



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Tough Times Produce Tough People

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Introduction

The only people I know who have not gone through faith-trying trials since becoming believers are people who have not been believers very long. Virtually every seasoned believer I know have gone through times when they were up against the proverbial wall and had no where to turn.

If you can identify with what I am saying then this book is for you. We tell the story of Hezekiah facing 200,000 trained and armed soldiers and how he responded to them. While we are telling that story we will weave in the story of New Hope Community and how God brought us through many trials to fulfill his plan for the people of that community.

I invite you to wrap your heart around the concept of going to the temple to seek the face of God that we present in this book. We have found that whenever you face insurmountable odds while attempting to do what you are convinced is the will of God then you must go to the temple, or to your place of prayer and seek the face of God until he comes through for you. God will answer, after all, it is his plan being threatened by the circumstances.

You will read about the power of having a dream. You will also be told to expect dream busters to come at you to destroy your dream. You will learn to be a dream builder and finally read what all people with a dream need to know.

Sit down, relax and get ready for a faith building experience.

Chapter 1

Tough Times Will Come

If you think you have it bad, imagine waking up one morning to find that you are surrounded by 200,000 enemy troops (This story is found in Isaiah 36-37, 2 Kings 18-19, 2 Chronicles 32).

That is exactly what King Hezekiah saw one morning when he looked out the window of his palace. The commander of the Assyrian army had Jerusalem surrounded and was at the gate to the city demanding surrender. Talk about tough times!

The Assyrian armies were on the move and conquering everything in their path. Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, had a massive, well equipped army. Every tribe and kingdom that stood in his way was conquered and enslaved. Now they are at the gates of Jerusalem and they are threatening destruction. What Hezekiah and the Jewish people do right now will determine their history for hundreds of years.

If Hezekiah was given the choice he would not choose his present circumstances, but he didn't have a choice. His enemy was at the gate and he was facing tough times.

We must remember that regardless of our faith, we will at some point face tough times. There will be insurmountable odds lined up against us and we will be faced with discouragement. In fact, it seems that there is always the opportunity to become discouraged and give up. There will be times when it seems there

is no way out; the enemy is at the gate with 200,000 soldiers they all have swords and spears and all we have is a few hundred men with pea shooters.

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That was the situation for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In fact it was so bad that when the commander of the Assyrian hosts, offered to make a deal with King Hezekiah he said that if they surrendered he would give them 2000 horses, if Hezekiah had enough men to ride them. Jerusalem was in bad straights. They couldn't even feed the horses, much less mount them.

According to Isaiah's record The commander challenged the inhabitants of Jerusalem on their strength as military strategists (36:5). He challenged the value of their alliance with their one ally, Egypt (36:6). And he challenged their faith in God (36:7).

Against an ordinary foe the Assyrian commander would be correct in his statements, but he did not understand the Jews. He did not understand the source of their strength, and he certainly didn't understand their faith in Jehovah.

Then to add insult to injury he claimed that the Lord God had spoken to him and told him to march against Jerusalem and destroy it (v10).

What do you do when 200,000 soldiers are at your gate saying "God sent us to destroy you?" Do you call a council of war? Do you consult with the elders? Do you depend upon your army of pea shooters? If you are wise in the spirit you will do what King Hezekiah did.

There was a time in our ministry when we were facing tough times. We prayed and fasted while we were seeking the will of God and his leadership. Then someone came to us with what they said was a word from God for us. Basically the word was that the problems we were facing had come because we were not seeking God but were going our own way and if we did not repent and begin to seek him we would have our candlestick removed.

Their enemy did not realize the source of Jewish strength or their faith

Have you ever been there? You are in the middle of a tough place, you have been crying out to God in every way you know then someone comes along and tells you judgment is coming if you don't repent.

Chapter 2

Where to Go When Tough Times Come

When Times Are Tough Go to the Temple

When Hezekiah heard what was happening he “went into the temple of the Lord” (37:1). He didn’t go to the temple to hide, he went there to seek the face of God. What do you do when the times are tough and there is no possible way out? You hold on! You pray! And you don’t give up!

Tough Times Don’t Last – But Tough People Do! I wish I had thought of that statement, but I didn’t. It’s not mine, it’s Robert Schuler’s. He was given a special word when he was speaking at a convention of farmers.

Robert Schuller tells how he had been called to be a key note speaker at a convention of Midwestern farmers. Just before he was to give his prepared speech the moderator told him that he should not come out light hearted telling funny stories because virtually every person in the audience was facing bankruptcy caused by drought. They didn’t need humor they needed answers.

Shocked at the reality of the tough times his audience was facing he had to abandon his prepared speech and turn once again to God for the word for

his audience. He began by telling the story of his own hardships from his family home and farm being destroyed by a tornado to his difficulties in building the church in Garden Grove to the tragedy that nearly took his daughters life and left her with an amputated leg. Dr. Schuller knew a little about tough times.

With the sad news being given, and having been able to gain an identity with the tragedy facing his audience, what would he say now? What could he say that would change the somber mood of the crowd and give them hope?

***Tough
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People Do***

From somewhere deep inside his spirit came the lion like roar of these words, ***“Tough Times Don't Last, But Tough People Do!”*** Those near bankrupt farmers heard this word as if it were the voice of God and came to their feet with applause. Yes, times were tough and for many it was as tough as it had ever been; but in that instant, as if God had planned it all along, they rose with renewed hope and courage. They realized that as bad as it was, and as tough as it was; they were badder and tougher!

When we face our own impossible time; When the enemy is so much bigger than us; When we are fighting the very elements of nature itself; When we are in a place where only God himself can make a difference – then He will! All we have to do is go to the temple of the Lord.

Just like Hezekiah, Schuller went to the temple of the Lord by seeking God for his word and in turn God brought his temple to that audience by giving them a word of hope and faith. Sometimes the only answer is

just to go back to the temple.

Jesus told his disciples that if you are facing a mountain that you cannot go over or around, then pray, believing, and that mountain will be moved (Matthew 17:20).

***When tough
times come
there's just
one place to
go- go to the
temple***

Don't be moved by the mountain. Don't look at the enemy and think it can't be done. Don't consider the circumstances and believe the nay-sayers who

would never venture to risk everything in a venture of faith. Don't give up. Don't ever say, "I give up". Tough times will pass away; they will eventually leave and those who live believing, trusting and obeying God will conquer. Tough Times Don't Last Last, But Tough People Do.

Chapter 3

The Way Dreams Are Given

When God calls men and women to seek his face he shows them his heart. If we are open with God and seek his will, he will open himself to us and give us a dream.

All of Israel were possessed by a dream that was more than a thousand years old. God had promised Abraham the land of Canaan long before his descendants came to Jerusalem. Every Hebrew child was taught that they were special to God and that he had given them the land as an everlasting home. They were born and raised with the confidence of knowing that as long as they lived in faith they would possess the land.

***When God
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Hezekiah was made King of Judah at the age of 25, but it was not his youth that set him apart from other kings. It was his dream. He dreamed of restoring Jerusalem and the people of promise to the glory that God had intended for them.

2 Kings 18 records, “Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow

him, he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. And the Lord was with him; he was successful in what ever he undertook.”

He did not stop at restoring the Temple. He commanded the groves of idols to Baal to be torn down. Not only did he restore worship of Jehovah, but he also prohibited the people from worshipping false gods. He dreamed of restored glory.

It was with this dream and hope that Hezekiah went to the temple to pray. From deep in the resources of his faith Hezekiah knew that if he could make contact with God and hear his voice, they would be victorious.

Hezekiah sent messengers to the prophet Isaiah asking him to inquire of the Lord to see just how he would send victory. Isaiah’s answer came back, “This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard... I am going to put a spirit in him [Rabshakeh] so that when he hears a certain report, he will return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.”

Look at how the picture changes. From 200,000 angry soldiers threatening destruction from outside the gate to empty fields with nothing but the settling dust to indicate they had been there. It is especially important to note that not one soldier raised a sword. Not one mother of Jerusalem received word that her son would not be coming home from battle. Not one child of Jerusalem lost a father to war. God simply “put a spirit on” the enemy and they left.

When tough times come, and tough people pray, God gives dreams and visions. When godly men and women pray, seeking the will of God, he reveals his

heart to them. When God reveals his heart, great faith and **hope are sure to follow.**

The dream of New Hope Community began in February of 1995. While in my office in prayer and study one morning a phone call came. The call was from a lady that owned a rather large motel that was run down and not making it. She wanted to talk to me about taking over the motel for our ministry.

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During the period of about a month while we were seeking for guidance, God began to give us a dream. We saw families who were broken, hurting and having no hope coming to a place where their hope could be renewed, Their dignity restored, their hurts healed and their dreams fulfilled.

I saw a residential program where families had a home. A place where there was no hunger and everyone had adequate clothes. I saw a place where people would receive training in responsibility and accountability, where a work ethic would be practiced; drugs and alcohol would not be allowed and Christ would be offered as the answer.

God gave us an opportunity to live out that dream. We were given control of the motel in January of 1996. We changed the name to Pathfinder Inn and it became the home of New Hope Community (NHC) Project. NHC was a community project of families committed to the lifetime process of restoration and reconciliation. These were homeless families and a very high percentage were drug and/or alcohol addicted. A majority of them came from dysfunctional

families and as a consequence they were raising dysfunctional families.

Our dream for each family was to provide an environment that was conducive to change and challenge them to being committed to the process of positive change. Our vision was to support their decision to live drug and alcohol free. It was to see them grow from homelessness to having an apartment, and eventually to own their own home.

Our dream for each family was to provide an environment that was conducive to change and challenge them to change

For over a year before we began NHC Jane and I were ministering in a large apartment complex. The owners allowed us the use of an apartment for Bible Studies and children's programs. At one point we were ministering to over 110 people in that one complex.

The one thing that bothered us in that work was that we were willingly serving, but there was no lasting fruit being established. Every morning in my early prayer I would pray for a harvest of souls. My prayer continually was, "Lord, give me souls for my hire." Many would listen and recite the sinners prayer, but very few came to a place of life changing commitment to Christ.

Every day Jane and I would go over to the apartments to minister. Jane kept bags of groceries in the back of our car and gave them away daily. We gave and gave but weren't seeing very many become established believers. Then Bobby and Michelle came into our lives.

Among the first people to respond to our ministry in the apartments was a young couple with two small boys. Every week we would give them some groceries. I was also writing a short inspirational pamphlet each week and I would deliver a copy with the groceries. When we started a Saturday morning puppet show Bobby and Michelle would drop their two young boys off to see the puppets.

The puppet show! What an experience! We would have 40 children from ages 2 to 8 in an apartment living room to see a puppet show that Jane scripted each week. I would be holding a child in each arm one would be attached to each leg as I narrated the show. People would drop off their toddlers with wet diapers and sometimes worse!

Bobby and Michelle would drop off their boys then disappear. When we finally found them they would have some kind of an excuse but we didn't find out until later what was going on.

One day when I came by their apartment Bobby met me at the door and wanted to talk. He said, "Paul, that paper you dropped off last week was about me. When I read the part that said God kept taking us in the same circle until we learned the lessons we needed to learn I realized that was me. We go through this cycle of getting an apartment, then messing up using our money for drugs and becoming homeless, then getting an apartment and starting the cycle over again. Paul, I want to change, how do I do that?"

That day I began to learn about the people we had been ministering to. Bobby and Michelle were methamphetamine addicts. They were also dealers. When they dropped their boys off and disappeared they were either selling drugs or using drugs.

I found out that between all of the government programs that were supporting them they were bringing home more money each month than Jane and

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I were and they had far fewer expenses than we did. On top of that we were buying their groceries for them so they could sell their food stamps to buy drugs.

It was from our experience at that apartment complex that God began to build in us the dream of New Hope Community. We would find people who had lost hope, people whose dreams had been shattered, and offer them new hope.

The time we spent ministering at the apartments was a time of training for the work we would do at the motel. Without the lessons we learned there we would not have been able to survive the work we were about to enter.

Chapter 4

The Lifetime Process

The Lifetime Process of Reconciliation, Renewal and Restoration

One of the lessons I learned in my journey of faith is that there is no quick and easy fix for sin based lifestyle. Oh yes, I hear you say, “What about salvation. Don’t you believe God forgives us of our sin and changes us at salvation?” My answer is absolutely. If salvation was all we got we would certainly share in the eternal life that God offers, but I am talking about something besides the sin we’ve committed. I’m talking about the behaviors that have become patterned into our lives that are causing our Christian walk to become ineffective and leaving us short of attaining the joy of the Lord.

Paul was talking about this in Philippians 2:12 when he wrote, “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” He is not talking about working to attain salvation but rather once you have become saved he says we should continue to work on developing a godly lifestyle.

Too many believers have become saved and never moved on into the blessing of living in the saved state because they never dealt with cleaning their heart and life of the patterned behaviors that sin had produced in us. They are like Israel wandering in the desert for 40 years when all the time they were within a week’s journey of reaching the promised, but they just didn’t

believe it was for them.

Some have asked if I am talking about a second work of grace when I talk about being delivered from the patterns of behavior that the scripture talk about

Too many believers have become saved and never moved into the blessing of the saved state because they never dealt with changing patterned behaviors of the past

as being the way of the flesh (see Galatians 5:19-21). My answer is that I am actually talking about a continuing work of grace. That's why the Apostle Paul admonished the Philippians to, "continue to work out your salvation."

That's why we talked about a lifetime process. We have learned that we are reconciled to God at salvation and that we have been renewed in our spirit by the Holy Ghost, but the process of restoration is ongoing and lasts a lifetime.

When we began New Hope Community in the motel we initiated intake interviews to determine if a family was ready for what we were offering. If we were going to be able to lead these people into the lifetime process of reconciliation, renewal and restoration we had to first determine if they were ready for that kind of commitment. That was the purpose of the intake interview.

These folks were not novices at getting attention and asking for help. Many of them had been system dependent for generations. They had been through many social services programs, drug rehabilitation programs, job training program, welfare to work programs, and more. Yet, they were homeless, still drug addicted and system dependent. They needed to change but a very small percentage of them had realized just how desperate was there need.

When a family came to us their first task was to convince us that they had given up any hope of solving their problems alone. Their second task was to convince us they ready to commit to whatever it would take to change their lives. If they were successful in convincing us of those two things we would give them a chance. We then asked them to commit to the lifetime process of restoration and reconciliation.

These families had not been exposed to the same disciplines of life that influences many of us during our developmental years. Most of us were taught a certain amount of cleanliness and orderliness. The families we worked with needed training in all of these areas.

Because of the behaviors of the past most of the people we were to work with had lost contact with family. Many of them had lost their children to protective services, and nearly all of the people they currently knew were drug users. They needed to be restored and reconciled to their families, their children, society and to relationship with God.

Jane and I became committed to the dream of seeing people restored to hope, healed of their hurts, their dreams fulfilled, and reconciled to God. To that dream we committed our lives. And, this dream has nearly cost us just that, our lives.

Whether we are preaching in a local church, working with drug addicts or just doing outreach our message is the same; In order for a person to become restored to the abundant life that God has intended for them they must become committed to the lifetime process of reconciliation, renewal and restoration.

Chapter 5

Dream Busters

Hezekiah had a dream, but the Assyrian armies were trying hard to bust his dream. There were 200,000 sword waving soldiers surrounding Jerusalem as Rabshekah yelled, “Jehovah has sent me to destroy you.”

There will always be dream busters so we had just as well get used to it. There is an abundance of people who are ready to tell you it can't be done. Every advisor I contacted about our project said, “you can't do it.” Our attorney said, “I wouldn't touch this deal with a ten foot pole.” Our first partners left within 30 days and told us we had less than a 10% chance of making it.

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There was not enough money, we didn't know how to run a motel and we had never run a program like New Hope Community. If there was ever a prescription for failure, we were it. By every account of man we should not have survived the first 30 days.

We took over the Dodge City Inn on Friday, January 26. There were 200 motel rooms with 28 occupied and 135 that were not able to be occupied. There were four of us and in less than thirty days there were two of us; the two smart ones left!

On the first Monday morning we were at the inn we contacted all the utilities that serviced the complex to check the status of our accounts. It was a good thing we did. The gas company and the electric

company had dispatched employees to disconnect us. The phone company was cutting off service as of 5 O'clock, and the water was on a 48 hour notice. All of these utility bills amounted to over \$25,000 and we didn't have even a thousand dollars.

We had only been there three days and I could already see Rabshakeh at the gate trying to negotiate our surrender.

Dream busters – there will never be a shortage of them. From people to circumstances, if you are looking for an opportunity to fold up and go home, there will always be ample opportunity to give up.

Our first dream buster was sad state of financial affairs. The second dream buster was the physical condition of the rental rooms. The third dream buster was the condition of infrastructure; the boiler room, plumbing, and electrical. The fourth dream buster was when our partners left us. And finally, on top of everything else we found out that we had made a bad deal on the property.

In less than a month after we took over the bank that held the first mortgage sent a letter of foreclosure. It seems that the owner had not made a payment in over a year and it would take \$350,000 to cure the default. Dream busters.

When Hezekiah faced his dream busters (200,000 of them just outside the gate), he went to the temple. Dreams are made at the temple. Dreams are maintained at the temple. Dreams are restored at the temple.

There were many kings of Jerusalem that had not served the Lord faithfully. They had built groves of idols to the popular gods of the region. They abused the people taxing them for their own luxuries. The people had been led into immorality and spiritual defeat. All of this disobedience to God had brought them into a series of times of serving foreign powers. Hezekiah brought Israel into an era of change.

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When Hezekiah became king, “He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Just as his father David had done. He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)” (2 Kings 18:3-4).

Hezekiah was a man of integrity who followed the Lord completely (vs 5-9). He became an example to the people of what God wanted their leaders to be. His dream was to restore Jerusalem to the glory she had once known. He knew that could only happen by the grace and power of Almighty God. So he turned completely to God.

Now here he is, the commander of the Assyrian armies is at the gate threatening him. What should he do? Call a council of the elders to determine the terms of surrender? Call together his generals to plan their defense? What would this man of character do? He went to the temple and called for the prophet of God.

The prophet Isaiah sends Hezekiah this message, “This is what the Lord says: ‘Do not be afraid of what you have heard.’” When in the hour of his greatest trial God himself speaks and says, “Do not be afraid!” What hope! What a dream!

***This ministry
that we
thought was a
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judgment***

We had only been at the inn a few months when early one morning, facing what seemed to be insurmountable obstacle of more than \$50,000 behind in our obligations and seeing no way of paying them I went to the temple.

It had become my practice to spend my early mornings in prayer and this particular morning I was carrying a heavy burden. I had begun trying to think of some way to get out of my contract at the inn. I was beginning to wonder if my dream had become a nightmare. At first I thought this dream was a wonderful blessing in ministry, now I began to ask if it was instead a judgment from God.

Confused, discouraged, looking for answers, I went to the temple. That morning the only answer I got was, “Stay with the deal.” Every time I brought it to the Lord my spirit seem to shout back at me, “Stay with the deal.”

You might ask, “How can staying with a bad deal be good?” The same way that hearing God say, “Do not be afraid” affected Hezekiah. When God Himself says “Do not be afraid” it is only because he knows something we don’t. When the Almighty, who alone spoke the worlds into existence and hung the stars on nothing but space, says, “Do not be afraid” you can rest assured that we have nothing to fear.

When God says, “Stay with the deal” you can rest assured that he has a plan that is being put into action.

The Assyrians came against Jerusalem and King Hezekiah as dream busters. Look at how they sought to discourage the Jews:

- They ridiculed Hezekiah’s alliance with Egypt
- They ridiculed Hezekiah’s God
- They ridiculed the size of the Jerusalem army
- Then they said, “The Lord himself told me to march against this country and destroy it.”
- They boasted of their victories over the gods of other lands

***I went to
the temple
and God
said: Stay
With The
Deal***

If Hezekiah had listened to the dream busters he would have been defeated before he ever started the battle. He chose rather to go to the temple and hear what God had to say. The great significance of listening to God’s opinion on the subject is that he knows the end from the beginning.

God knew that this Assyrian commander was going to hear the news that the Assyrian army was being attacked in another battle front. God also knew how he would respond to the news. God knew that if Hezekiah and this army were in armed conflict that the commander would not leave his own battle to go to another. God was saying, “Let it be. Don’t be afraid, don’t fight, just wait; I will send you a victory.”

Because Hezekiah was willing to seek God for an answer and wait for God to bring the answer to pass, he did not have to enter battle. Not one soldier was lost. A great victory was won without lifting a sword.

Chapter 6

Dream Builders

Just a couple of months after hearing God say, “stay with the deal” I was having a lot of pain in my chest and I was out of breath most of the time. I would often find myself walking to where I was going then finding a place to sit down for a few minutes. Working too much, resting too little and absolutely no time off was taking it’s toll.

Finally one Saturday morning I sat in my office exhausted and sick. I felt like I was up against a wall. I knew I couldn’t put in another 18 hour day. There was no place to go but to the temple. Sitting at my desk I prayed, “Lord, you said to keep the deal. I have, but I can’t go any further. You have got to come through. If you don’t send someone to work with Jane and I we will not be able to continue. We must have help.”

When I finished praying I opened my address book and beginning with the A’s I called the number of every minister I knew. I finally got to the S’s and called a person I had not seen or spoken to in 18 years; Craig Smith.

About a year and a half earlier I was visiting with Larry and Rachel Payne and Larry told me that Craig was pastoring in Pomona. I wrote down his number thinking that I might call him sometime.

When I got him on the phone there was a few minutes of becoming reacquainted then I asked if he

knew of anyone who would be interested in working with a new church that ministered primarily with drug addicted homeless families. I told him that there was not much pay but there was a lot of work. I could promise long hours, six to seven days a week, a place to live and enough money to live on if you didn't have a car payment and didn't eat too much.

I really never expected that he and Vickie would have any interest. I was only asking for a referral. While we were talking Craig began to ask some in-depth questions and said he would like to come and visit the work. We ended the conversation with pleasantries and I thought, "Well Lord, I don't know what you have in mind but I'll keep giving it all I've got until something breaks."

That same afternoon Craig called back and said he would be up the next week. When he arrived I was just going into a discipline committee meeting.

A discipline committee meeting was called whenever a community member had violated the rules, usually by using drugs. It was a process of offenders having to face their peers and receive discipline by them. The discipline could range from a stern rebuke to being put out of the project.

This particular committee meeting lasted for some time. Craig just sat and listened. We went from that meeting to another crises and another until finally it was about 10PM. That closed out the first day he was with us.

The next couple of days I hardly saw Craig and on Friday wondered what had happened to him. Walking past our community dining room I saw him sitting at a table with a group of men around him. I could tell by

the look on his face that he was already hooked.

Friday evening Vickie arrived. I don't remember seeing her again until Saturday evening when Craig, Vickie, her sister Sandy and Mark, Sandy's husband were preparing music for the Sunday service. Those were busy times.

Monday afternoon Craig and Vickie went back to Pomona. Jane and I went back to the temple. I could see that Craig and Vickie were both moved by the ministry here; but it would take a miracle to get them to come.

The church they pastored was established and most of the people were pretty much patterned into the Christian lifestyle. There was very little work to keeping things going smoothly. Craig had a successful Insurance business as well and Vickie was happy working as a medical assistant. They owned their own home with two cars and a garage.

The Lord has impressed me that you are going move to the other side and begin working with needy people

Even with all that God had done for us in the ministry to this point my faith was weak. These were successful people and I felt that there was no way they would give up all that and move into a motel room to minister to homeless drug addicts. Why would they leave their successful business and ministry for what we had to offer?

Jane and I just went to the temple. When God tells you to stay with the deal he is going to make the deal work. We prayed. We both knew that if help did not come we would not be able to keep up at the pace we were having go.

On Tuesday evening Craig and Vickie attended a special service at a neighboring church. The guest speaker came to Craig after service and told him, "The Lord has impressed me that you are going move to the other side and begin working with needy people." God had answered.

Craig called the next morning and committed to come. For the next six weeks he would fly up to Sacramento for three days then fly back to Pomona. Finally on July 15 Craig and Vickie moved up.

Craig and Vickie left their comfortable church and home. Craig left his business and Vickie left her job to move into a motel and work with people in recovery. Only God could pull that off.

Three days after Craig and Vickie moved in I went into the hospital. Jane had called to reschedule an appointment I had missed and was explaining my symptoms to the nurse. The nurse wanted to ask me a few questions. When I answered she told me to come to the emergency room immediately. I told her that I had a dentist appointment and I would come down after I had seen the dentist. To that she responded that she was sending an ambulance and I had better get in it when it arrived. She had me convinced. I said I would be there in 10 minutes.

By the time they got all of the equipment hooked up to me I could tell that I wasn't getting out of there that day. They got my heart stabilized and did some tests including an angiogram. The doctor concluded that I needed to have by-pass surgery.

Just a week after Craig and Vickie moved in I underwent heart by-pass surgery. The doctor did 5 by-passes. Some people are already thinking, "If that is

the way God answers prayer, I'll just handle it myself, thank you!"

Now, years later, we can clearly see the hand of God in the events of that time. If Jane and I had not have gone to our temple of prayer to seek the will of God we would never have survived the attempts Satan has made on our lives and this ministry.

Now, years later, we can clearly see the hand of God in the events of that time

God had planned from the beginning to have Craig and Vickie join us in ministry; we just had to hear what he was saying instead of looking at the circumstances. New Hope Community would not have survived If God had not in his wisdom called a couple who were already comfortably fixed in their pastorate to sacrifice all and come to work among people of need. That's what happens when the people of God will take their dream to the temple.

Tough Times Don't Last But Tough People Do; People With A Dream Are Hard To Beat. Dream builders learn to go to the temple when their dream is threatened.

Hezekiah's response to the first threat: He went to the Temple to pray (Is. 37:1-2) and called for the prophet of God. What happened at the Temple? God spoke, *"Do not be afraid of what you have heard"*

Not long after Sennacherib's chief general heard the news that called him away from Jerusalem another letter arrived. This time Sennacherib was reminding Hezekiah that he had destroyed all of the kings that

trusted in their god to deliver them. The threat was that he was coming to destroy Jerusalem and there was no army that could stop him.

***God Answers:
“Do not be
afraid of what
you have
heard”***

The mistake Sennacherib made was that he challenged the ability of the Lord God himself to deliver the people who had turned to Him for protection. The letter said, “Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, ‘Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria’.” A tactical error.

You can challenge the prophet of God. You can challenge the people of God. But woe to the one who challenges the Lord God himself.

Hezekiah’s response to the second letter: (Is. 37:14-20) *He returned to the temple.* Dream builders consistently go back to the source of their dream. In the temple Hezekiah prayed, “It is true, O Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and these lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by men’s hands. Now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God.”

The greater the pressure the more dream builders depend upon their God. We would never know the God of impossibilities if we never attempted the impossible. We would never know the God of great and miraculous deliverance if we did not humbly go to our temple of prayer and seek him.

Then God spoke. 2 Kings 19:20-31 records the message Isaiah sent to Hezekiah. The main body of the message says, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: *I have heard your prayer* concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria. This is the word that the Lord has spoken against him:...

I know where you stay and when you come and go and how you rage against me..I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth; I will make you return by the way you came.”

***The greater
the pressure
the more
dream
builders
depend upon
their God***

That same night, while the Assyrian soldiers slept, feeling secure in the strength of their numbers, the angel of the Lord went into their camp and destroyed 185,000 men. 2 Kings 19 35-36 simply records, “When the people got up the next morning – there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.”

It does not make a difference how dark it looks, or how foreboding the enemy may appear; God, the supreme dream giver will come through for the dedicated dream builder.

The weeks from July 24th to October 20th were some of the most difficult of my entire life.

While I was in recovery from heart surgery a sheriff's deputy came to Jane at the front desk of the motel. He was looking for 3 eleven year old boys who were being accused of molesting a three year old child. He asked her if we knew the three boys. We

did. One of them was our son and the other two were from families in our ministry project.

Jane had recently evicted a prostitute from the motel and she was getting back at us by falsely accusing these boys of molesting her daughter.

We would never know the God of impossibilities if we never attempted the impossible

The sheriff's deputies went to the school where the boys attended, handcuffed them, and booked them on charges of raping and molesting this toddler. You can imagine the humiliation these boys felt.

That day we called the attorney that had served us. Jacques Whitfield, an attorney dedicated to the Lord, came over immediately. Jane and I, with the other two families and Jacques gathered in my office. We were weeping, angry and at a loss as to what we should do. In that room we held hands and went to the temple.

Dream busters. They never stop coming. Sometimes it just seems like the cost of winning the war is so great that there will not be anything to celebrate when the battle is over.

We were weeping, angry and at a loss as to what we should do. In that room we held hands and went to the temple.

A few days later Jane went to the doctor to get a mammogram. In about a week the nurse called and said the doctor wanted another mammogram because the first one was not too clear. They scheduled her for a second mammogram. Those who have gone through that kind of a call know the anxiety that goes with it

The doctors and their staff are always very nice and they assure you that there is nothing to worry about. It was probably something that will be cleared up when they get the results of the second test. But you know. If they didn't think something was wrong they wouldn't be putting you through this.

Now, get the picture that Jane sees. First her husband has five heart bypasses; then her son is falsely accused of raping a toddler; and now she faces the possibility of breast cancer. We could almost hear Sennacherib at the door with 200,000 soldiers just waiting for the morning to strike.

Just five weeks after my surgery, before the results of Jane's second mammogram had been given us, I had a heart attack. I'll never forget lying on my back being put into the ambulance and looking up to the second and third floor of the motel. The walkways were lined with people crying saying, "Don't worry Pastor Paul we're praying for you."

At the hospital they hooked me up to many IV tubes. They were dripping morphine and nitro into my system through IV's trying to stabilize my heart. Every few minutes they asked about my pain, checked my heart rate, and then increased the medication. They finally got my heart stabilized.

The next morning the doctor comes by and says, "The ekg indicated you were having a heart attack. Every indication was that you were having a heart attack, but the blood tests don't show any indication of heart attack. I don't understand what happened."

I told Dr. Barbour, my cardiologist, that the 100 people that were praying for me from the time the ambulance took me off could have had something to

do with it. After that the doctor referred to my “cardiac event” as an aborted heart attack.

While I was in recovery from that heart attack Jane got the word from her doctor that she was going to have to have surgery to remove a lump from her breast. The night was getting darker and the enemy seemed to be gaining strength.

After that the doctor referred to my “cardiac event” as an aborted heart attack

During that time there were nights of just holding each other and crying. Sometimes I was tempted to echo the words of Israel so long ago, “God, did you bring us out to this desert to die?”

Through all of this there seemed to be something coming from down inside of me that said, “Stay with the deal.” Don’t give up. Never give up.

It was not a glorious, victorious time. Our faith was but It was an anchor in the storm We did not laugh easily. We did not do much dancing during that period, but in the midst of the severest trial we had ever faced together there was a solid foundation of faith upon which we stood.

It was God himself that had called. It was a sovereign act of grace that had put us in the motel. It was nothing less than miraculous that this ministry had begun and continued. We knew it was the hand of God. We also knew deep inside of our spirit that regardless of how bad it got or whether we even survived physically, this work is the will of God and he will be victorious.

During that time the dilemma Paul wrote of in Philippians began to make sense to me. He writes, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Sometimes the agony of service causes the glory of eternal ecstasy to appear so alluring that you want to make the transition right now.

Our Faith Was not giddy or light hearted but it was an anchor in the storm

Sometimes the agony of service causes the glory of eternal ecstasy to appear alluring

In the midst of that time we went to the temple very often. There we were constantly reminded that the God who called us and began the work with us would continue the work to completion.

A few days after Jane’s second mammogram the doctor wanted to see her. He told her there was a mass there that he wanted to take a look at and scheduled a biopsy the next day.

After the biopsy he held in his hand the material he had just removed. He said to Jane, this appears to be cancer. He told her he had done this many times in the past and he was sure this was cancer.

The doctor sent the material to the laboratory and prepared Jane for a mastectomy in the following weeks. He wanted to do an immediate mastectomy followed by chemo and radiation. It didn’t look good.

We waited for two weeks. First the local lab gave a report that it was a rare form of cancer but they weren't sure what kind so they sent it to a lab that specializes in rare cancers. When the report came back, the doctor was surprised; there was no cancer. Our time in the temple is beginning to pay off.

Just as things were beginning to smooth out a trial began that would supercede the rest. Our grandson was taken from his mother and it looked like we may not get him back. Again, we went to the temple and God intervened.

In just 3 months the enemy attacked us from every direction and each time we went back to the temple in prayer and God Came through.

On October 20th, the first Sunday that I was to return to the pulpit after open heart surgery, Jane and I sat in service with heavy heart because of what our daughter and grand son were going through.

***Be prepared - I
am about to pour
out upon you a
blessing that you
cannot contain***

Shortly before I was to preach I sensed the Lord speak to my spirit. He said, "Be prepared, I am about to pour out upon you a blessing that you cannot contain." I felt it so strongly that I wrote it down and showed it to Jane. Jane had no sooner read the note than Vickie stood up to the microphone to lead in worship and said, "Get ready, God is going to pour out a blessing on you that you cannot contain."

That settled it. We knew God had heard and he had answered. The worst was over and he was going to show himself to be God to all the nay-sayers.

Chapter 7

THINGS DREAM BUILDERS SHOULD KNOW

KNOW WHO YOU ARE – CHOSEN OF GOD

Why would Hezekiah want to hold on? Because the Jews believed that they were a people of God. Hezekiah knew that he was appointed of God to be king of Judah.

If you are going to survive the darkest times you have got to believe you are called and chosen of God. Peter writes, “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).

In 2 Kings 19 We are given God’s response to Sennacherib’s threats. God will respond The same way to those who threaten his chosen ones today.

First he affirms that Israel is his Daughter. He calls Israel, “The Virgin Daughter of Zion” (v21). Then he points out that Sennacherib insulted and blasphemed the Lord God (v22).

God then told Sennacherib, “I know where you stay and when you come and go and how you rage against me. Because you rage against me and your

insolence reached my ears I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth and I will make you return by the way you came” (v27-28).

Never forget that who God calls he protects. When we know who we are we can have the confidence that God will honor his commitment to those he loves and deliverance will come.

KNOW YOUR DESTINY

God had promised the Hebrew people since Abraham eternal possession of the land and prosperity. Their destiny was to inherit the land and do well with it.

Hezekiah could be sure of his standing because he knew what God had ordained for him and his people. When we know the will of God the rest is easy.

The Scripture is full of promises to the faithful. In Jeremiah he says, “I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). God has given a destiny to the people who will follow him.

KNOW THAT YOUR GOD WILL DELIVER

When you are among the chosen of God and he has shown his destiny for you then you must trust him that he will deliver you from every peril. Evil comes against us in it’s own power, we must realize that he who is in us is greater than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

The Psalmist writes “No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose

hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in you” (Psalm 33:16-22).

It is easy for us to look at the enemy around us and begin to question God. Too often thoughts of fear and discouragement creep in and begin to dominate our thinking. But in the midst of every assault we must realize that the Lord is on our side. God will fulfill his destiny for us.

This Assyrian King confused the power of wooden gods with the power of the Almighty God. He was accustomed to going up against nations whose god’s were not true. He could mock their gods and seem to have a greater power when he went against them. Fighting a people whose God is the Lord was different.

When God was ready to act against the king of Assyria he promised, “I know where you stay...” “I will put my hook in your nose” (2 Kings 19:27-28). This was no idle threat for in just a short time the king of Assyria was killed by his own sons (2 Kings 19:36-38)

PEOPLE WITH A DREAM DO NOT GIVE UP

People who’s mind and heart are fixed on a dream are focused – nothing can deter them. During WWII Winston Churchill, the prime minister of England gave a speech that demonstrated his tenacity as a leader. It was simply, “Don’t give up. Never give up. Do not Give up.”

Why do we continue in the face of great obstacles and opposition? Because we are children of destiny and we have a dream from God – He has promised and God cannot lie!

And we know that tough times produce tough people and people with a dream are hard to beat.

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