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By Jim Langley

Confronting The Storms Of Life

Storms we experience in our personal and business life may seem inconsequential, especially if compared to hurricanes, tornadoes and tsunamis. However, like storms of nature, they can also cause irreparable damage in our lives. We can rebuild or relocate from natural disasters; internal storms we face may prove to be much more difficult to repair.

When I returned from Vietnam, after serving 18 months in that infamous conflict, no one had any real idea of the effect the war had taken on those who patriotically served. Over the years, I have gained a better understanding of the impact that period had on me personally. After two failed marriages and other struggles, I began to realize something was causing such inner instability. But let's look at the storms of life in a broader sense.

We encounter many types of storms during various stages of our lives. There will be financial storms, such as losing a job, the loss of a business, out-of-control debt, bad investments, and possibly bankruptcy. There will be relational storms, such as unfounded rumors and outright lies spread maliciously, loss of friendships, accusations, infidelity, and perhaps divorce. We also will face health storms too numerous to mention, and eventually we will all have to face death.

The apostle Paul understood the storms of life; he had experienced many of them. In *2 Timothy 3:10-11*, he tells his protégé, Timothy, *"You, however, know about all my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings - what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all*

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of them." The writer of Hebrews instructs, *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).*

We cannot depend on a personal strategist to forewarn us of all the dangers that may lie ahead. Only our Heavenly Father knows our future storms, and we cannot know when or how these storms will come. The good news is we need not go through the storms alone. In *Hebrews 10:25* we are reminded *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* Living in tenuous times, we would be wise not to try going it on our own.

Where else can we turn during stormy times, when everything around us turns into uncontrolled chaos? For me, my attention turns to my Comforter, the Holy Spirit of God, the One I truly want to lead me through the valley experiences I will face. We have God's promise, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).*

In *Psalms 23:4* King David proclaims, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."* I find those words consoling as I anticipate the future storms that I know will come. This comfort and assurance I find is not based on wishful thinking, but on God's faithfulness and reliability.

Jesus prophesied in *John 16:32-33*, *"But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things so you might have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

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Those of us who know Jesus Christ personally have unwavering assurance that we are not alone, since God's Spirit dwells in us and provides the peace that transcends all understanding, whether we're at work, in our homes, or even as we travel. It is never too late to turn to Jesus. If you do not know Him, He awaits your plea for help.

Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as an insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his personal relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Question

1. Someone has said, "You are either in a storm of life now, have just come out of one, or are getting ready to go through one." Which describes your life right now?
2. How do you typically respond when confronted with adversity in life?
3. What benefit, if any, can we derive from going through struggles and "storms" in our lives?
4. Who can you turn to when your life's storms seem overwhelming, maybe even more than you can bear? What have you learned about relying on the support of others at such times, whether it's God or other people?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Job 38:1-7; Psalm 22:25-28; Luke 8:22-25; Philippians 4:6-7; James 4:7-10; 1 Peter 3:13-17

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