
God Will Not Walk Out On You

By David Wilkerson

October 9, 1995 A young pastor called me some time ago, ready to quit the ministry. The Lord had been using this young man in a wonderful way. But now he was discouraged - feeling worthless, useless, no good to God at all.

You see, he and his wife had been having a lot of marital troubles. They'd had terrible arguments, and it kept getting worse. He said he had prayed for months that God would heal their relationship, but it had only gotten worse. He told me he'd spent more time praying about that than anything else in his life and ministry.

Then late one evening, after a devastating argument with his wife, he walked out. Immediately, he let out his anger at God. "Why won't You help us, Lord?" he cried.

In his anger and despair, he went back to an old habit from which he had been delivered - alcohol. He said, "I just lost it completely. I went out and started to drink." He came home in the wee hours of the morning, nearly drunk. His wife panicked at seeing him that way; suddenly it looked as if it had developed into a hopeless nightmare.

Instead of repenting after his drinking episode, the young man did what Adam did in the Garden: He hid himself from God! He told his wife, "It's no use. I might as well quit the ministry and get a job pumping gas. I can't face you or anybody else over this."

When he called me, he was devastated. He said, "Brother Dave, I feel like quitting. I just can't face this. I drank, but I hated every minute of it. I said to myself, 'Why am I doing this?' I knew it was because I was angry at God. Why hadn't He heard my prayers?"

He sounded so broken, so beaten down. I felt no judgment toward this man. On the contrary - I felt only God's love and compassion for him.

Now, what he'd done was utterly terrible. When a preacher has an argument with his wife, he doesn't just go out and drink. No - he runs to God, to his secret closet. Indeed, all of us are to trust the Lord in such a time. We're to cry out to Him, "Father, take this burden from me!"

I didn't lecture the young pastor or rebuke him. Instead, I began to pray silently: "Dear Lord, what can I say to this man that will heal his troubled soul? What do You have for him - what comfort from Your Spirit, Your Word?"

Suddenly, the Lord impressed upon me, "Send him to Psalm 107!" So I told the pastor, "The secret to your problem is in Psalm 107. Go now, look it up, and ask the Lord to minister to you through His Word." That young man took this word - and he is now experiencing God's healing, delivering love.

I later discovered that this Psalm has been called "the Old Testament love feast." It is one of the most encouraging passages in all of God's Word - and it is meant especially for those needing forgiveness, deliverance, restoration. The final verse promises the reader an understanding of who God truly is:

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord" (Psalm 107:43).

God is saying, "Observe, read, study this psalm - and you will be given a comprehensive understanding of My long-suffering and loving-kindness!" I believe if you study this Psalm, you'll get a revelation of God's great loving-kindness, even toward the rebellious and disobedient. You see, it's a promise - proof that God will never walk out on any of His children, no matter how low they might have sunk!

I remember the night the Holy Spirit spoke to me personally about the Lord's loving-kindness. I was under a burden at the time, pacing back and forth in my living room, crying, "Oh God, I need to know more about Your loving heart!"

The Spirit said to me that night, "David, do not ever accuse your heavenly Father of being less kind and merciful than you are as an earthly father. Think for a moment - there is no sin, no circumstance, no act of rebellion on the part of your children that would cause you to walk out on them. Even if they cried to you from prison, you know you'd be there, with love and compassion. So, don't even think your heavenly Father would ever be less considerate and caring toward you."

That shook me up. Then the Lord showed me a vivid picture of myself. In this vision, I'm standing on a corner near 42nd Street, about to hold a street meeting. Then I see a child of my own who has sinned against me terribly. This child has rejected all my counsel, disregarded all my warnings, and ended up in deep trouble.

Now he is overwhelmed with despair. And he comes up to me, repentant and in tears, begging for my help and love. Yet I turn away from him, saying, "Sorry - I've called out to you many times before, but you've never listened. You have refused my warnings once too often. Now you're simply paying for your sin. There's nothing else I can do for you. You're on your own!"

My child stays there on the corner, and the street meeting begins. Soon I begin preaching into a microphone, crying, "All you murderers, rapists, robbers, sons of the devil - come to God, and find mercy and healing for your soul!" All the vile sinners begin to gather around me. But then my child steps forward - the one whom I've turned away. He says, "Dad, what about me?"

I ask you: What kind of father would I be to leave that desperate, hurting child standing there, crying out, "Dad, I'm sorry - this thing is beyond me. Will you please do what you can to help me? You have the power and the authority. Please, Dad - do something about it!" Would I dare say, "I'm sorry - I've got another street meeting to go to"? No - never!

Yet, how much more loving-kindness and compassion does our heavenly Father have for us? He won't ignore our cries if He also extends His love and forgiveness to every passing, mocking sinner.

That is the wonderful message of Psalm 107! We discover in this Psalm that there are four classifications of God's people who end up in trouble and affliction because of their own doings. But the Lord does not walk out on any of them - not one. Even fools, who heap trouble on themselves by their own stupidity, are shown mercy and delivered when they cry out to God for help.

Let's look at these four categories of believers in trouble. See if you find yourself in any of them:

1. The First Kind of Believer in Trouble Is the Starving Christian."O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west,

from the north, and from the south. "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them" (Psalm 107:1-5).

Here is a classification of people who once knew the fullness of the Lord and who at some time in their life discovered glorious deliverance. But now they are in a solitary wilderness, wandering alone, and they can't find the city.

"The city" in the Old Testament is always Zion, which represents God's true church. Today, of course, that city is the true body of Christ, who worship in spirit and in truth. And this first class of believers are those who cannot seem to find the city. They no longer attend church, refusing to worship with any body of believers - because there is little or no spiritual reality to be found.

Indeed, there are multitudes of starving Christians who go from church to church today trying to find their place. In the end, they give up even seeking a good church - because they are determined there are none.

Yet Scripture tells us this can develop into a dangerous condition. These Christians know what the Lord has commanded:

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

It's true that nowadays it is hard to find churches worth attending. In fact, this is the number-one complaint among the readers on our mailing list across the United States and Canada. So many letters say, "I can't find a church that provokes me to righteousness. I hate getting up on Sunday morning, because the church I go to is boring, dead. My children are backsliding."

One woman in southern California went to about twenty-five churches in her area, looking for a godly place to worship. She ended up sending me those churches' bulletins and flyers, with a note that said, "Please, Brother David - read these and tell me which one I should choose."

Here is a sample from one bulletin. The schedule of church events in August was as follows:

- Friday night, 7 to 10 - father-daughter dance.
- Following Friday - family night at the stadium, Padres vs. Giants.
- Following Friday - country-western line dancing.
- Saturday - tennis tournament.
- Monday - school of basketball.
- Tuesday - junior-high Bible study at the beach; high-school Bible study at the bay.

Do you think this kind of activity has every devil in hell trembling? No! Many churches today are an absolute mockery of God. The preachers are backslidden - and the congregation cares only about having their "needs met."

On the other hand, something very dangerous of another nature is happening in churches today. Some Christians have become so critical - so hard to please - that no church could ever meet their standard. The least imperfection drives them away.

Indeed, it has become vogue among believers simply to abandon their church if they see even the slightest thing they don't like. One pastor told me, "I don't know what to do. New people are coming in, requesting an interview with me about the church. They ask me a hundred questions about what I believe and what the church is all about. But the first time they disagree with an answer, they get up and walk out of my office."

A pastor told me a couple had come to him and said, "We've been to every church within miles, and not one is worth the time. They're all in compromise, messed up. We walked out of the last church we visited, because we saw an announcement in the bulletin that said, 'Singles Night.' What right does that church have to find lovers for one another?"

The pastor tried to explain to them that that wasn't what the bulletin meant. It was simply an announcement about a night of ministry to single people, who could come and praise the Lord together. But this couple was so critical in their spirits, they were convinced the church was matching up singles.

We also received a letter from a woman who has written a book on music. She wrote, "I'm sorry, but I couldn't listen to the Times Square Church choir tape. It's all rock-n-roll." Yet 40,000 others tell us they worship with it daily and are blessed!

Without fellowship with a true body of believers, such Christians can end up cold - leaving their first love and wandering about, lonely, hungry, thirsty, feeding on what I call "Christian TV dinners" - televised worship services and radio sermonettes. Or they become tapeworms, thinking sermon tapes will satisfy their hunger.

No - that isn't what church is all about! It's about the fellowship of the saints, the bond we have in the Spirit. It's about praying corporately and seeking God's face. We would all starve without it!

Yet, perhaps you can honestly say, "Brother Dave, I can't find a Christ-centered, holiness-seeking church in my area. I can't find the city."

Dear saint, God has provided a solution!

"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation" (Psalm 107:6-7).

God says, "I'll show you the body. I'll lead you right to them!"

Rest assured, Jesus has His body of believers all over the world. And if you will cry out to Him, He will miraculously bring like-minded Christians to you.

Meanwhile, until you find His true body in your area, the Lord will not walk out on you. He promises to manifest Himself even where two or three are gathered in His name.

2. The Second Kind of Believer in Trouble Is the One Who Has Fallen Into Sin Because of Disobedience To God's Word."Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High; therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help" (Psalm 107:10-12).

Why were they bound in affliction?

"...they rebelled against the words of God... and contemned [rejected His] counsel..." (verse 11).

Beloved, could this be you? You've sat under godly, convicting preaching. The Spirit has striven with you. You've known better. But still you went out and sinned willfully! Now you are back in the clutches of an old habit. The yoke is on your neck once more.

You are miserable, bound in the irons of affliction. Your heart is "...brought down...with labor" (verse 12). In Hebrew, the word labor means "misery." In other words: "He brought their heart down into misery."

When a person sins willfully, disobeying the Word of God, his tendency is to hide, cower in fear, wallow in misery - to feel it's all over, thinking, "God can't use me." When you're in that kind of condition, the devil will whisper to you, "You're hooked forever! There is no deliverance for you. You're one of those lust-obsessed people who never change. God has had it with you. Your sin has caused Him to hide His face from you!"

Satan will pound you with the Scriptures, misquoting them all. And he'll try to deafen you from the mercy of God. When you sit in church, you'll hear only judgment from the pulpit. You won't hear about God's mercy - because you're under such guilt, condemnation and fear!

I'm not talking about people who hide from God because they covet and love their sin. Rather, I'm talking about Christians who have taken a fall - yet who in their misery have a sorrow and a hatred for their sin. Something inside them cries, "I have hurt God!"

To this Christian, God's Word promises:

"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder" (Psalm 107:13-16).

Hear this well: God never has - and never will - hide His face from a crying child of His! It doesn't matter how far you've fallen, how many promises to God you've made and broken. Your sins, though scarlet red, will be white as snow - if you will only cry out to Him for help!

You may think you can whip your habit. You may stay up all night, trying to figure out every angle - but you'll only wake up tired and miserable, without sleep - and just as bound as you were when you went to bed! Only God can cut the bars in sunder. Only He can deliver you from your darkness. That is our strength and our hope!

Many Christians have come up to me on the street and literally fallen into my arms, crying, "Brother Dave, I don't know how God can ever forgive me!"

I answer, "Yes, He can."

"But you don't know what I did!" they say.

"I don't have to know what you did," I respond, "because I know my Father."

"Well - what do I do?" they ask.

I answer, "You cry out for mercy."

"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and *he saved them...*" (verse 13, emphasis mine).

The sufferers in this Psalm didn't cry out to God after they were out of their mess - but while they were still in it. And the Word says He saved them!

3. The Third Kind of Believer in Trouble Is the Fool Who Has Brought Down Trouble Upon Himself.

"Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death" (Psalm 107:17-18).

According to the dictionary, a fool is someone who lacks judgment or good sense - one who makes silly, stupid mistakes. He does his own thing without thinking of the consequences.

What could be more foolish and unthinkable than indulging in sexual activity with some unknown person? The whole world knows that AIDS is an international problem. And yet people all over the world are still contracting it.

People simply refuse to be alarmed. Women risk their lives for one night of passion. Men trade their future for an hour of carnal pleasure. And now many are suffering the consequences for their absolutely stupid acts. They have become fools!

A growing number of Christians now are HIV-positive or have full-blown AIDS. Many of these are wonderful believers who acted foolishly before they knew Jesus - and now they are being given the death sentence: "Sorry - you've got the virus."

They talk about the terror they felt when they first sensed something strange in their body. They knew something wasn't right - and suddenly a haunting memory came back to them of a foolish act in their past, either sexual or drug-related. It happened when they were living in sin, playing the fool:

"...because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, [they] are afflicted" (verse 17).

The despair of many such Christians is unspeakable. They feel helpless, on the verge of giving up. One man said, "I feel like my life is over. There's nothing I can do. I just look forward to death."

"...they draw near unto the gates of death" (verse 18).

Other Christians are paying a high price for their past acts of foolishness. Some are sinking into a financial hole because of foolish spending. Others are locked in a terrible marriage because they rushed into it foolishly. Some women come to our church black and blue from their husbands' abuses.

I wonder how many who are reading this message right now lie down at night and cry, "Oh God, I've been a fool. I've made a terrible mistake. I'm paying for my own foolishness!" They can't eat or sleep.

"Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat..." (verse 18).

Yet, beloved, you don't have to live without hope. You don't have to give up. God has given you His Word that He does not walk out on fools!

"Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (Psalm 107:19-20).

I get so happy when I read these verses - because I know all the dumb mistakes I've made in my own life. I'm embarrassed at the stupid, silly things I've done.

The Lord knows there are things we can't change, words we've spoken that we can't bring back. Yet He is not asking us to do any penance or make any promises. All He asks is that we cry out to Him in our desperation. He can heal, prolong life and provide supernatural grace:

"He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (verse 20).

God will send someone to you with His Word! Perhaps the pastor will preach a message just for you. Or perhaps the Holy Spirit will direct you to a certain passage. It will be your healing Word. All you have to do is cry out to Him!

4. The Fourth Kind of Believer in Trouble Is the One Who Is Swamped by a Storm in Business or Career. The following verses are for those who are facing trouble in their business or career:

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end" (Psalm 107:23-27).

Career people and businessmen here are likened to seamen in ships. And the great waters signify the big world of competition, an ocean of activity.

Now, these people are God's beloved saints. They're in awe of His greatness and power. But a storm breaks out that is beyond their control. It is not judgment and retribution for sin. Yet, suddenly waves are swamping them, swallowing up their boat. They are staggered by problems on all sides, and it looks like their ship is going down. Suddenly they are confused and perplexed:

"...their soul is melted because of trouble" (verse 26).

Many career people have told me at various times, "It looks bad. I don't know what happened, but suddenly I'm in a mess." They were able to solve their own problems in the past, and to escape one crisis after another. But with this trial, there seems to be no way of escape. They are mentally and physically exhausted.

"They...are at their wit's end" (verse 27).

How easily we forget that our loving heavenly Father is our partner in our work, no matter what our career or calling. Indeed, nothing happens to us on our job without His involvement. He has power over all people and all our difficulties - and He has a reason and purpose behind them all.

So - what can you do when your business partner can't give you any advice - when consultants can't help you? Where do you turn when your spouse, your pastor, your best friend has nothing to say to you?

I am no businessman. But I can point you to the seamen in Psalm 107:

"Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Psalm 107:28-30).

I talked some time ago to the godly young pastor of a church who was at his wit's end. It seems the elder who had served as church treasurer for twenty years was trying to run things. He had been stealing money for years, and he had succeeded in running off a host of other pastors. Now he stood against this young pastor at every turn, poisoning the elders against him. The pastor's wife had developed stomach problems from all the stress.

When I talked to this pastor, he was busy preparing a sermon to preach to his hostile congregation. The message was all about turning them over to the devil for the destruction of the flesh, that their souls might be saved. He explained, "Brother Dave, I've got to preach this before it kills me. I've got to hand them over to Satan!"

I told him, "No! Don't fight them. Don't let all this get into your spirit. Don't think about taking revenge. Instead, show them the light of God's Word. Preach Jesus to them.

"What you need to do is to lay hold of God. Cry out to Him. He'll take care of your congregation. He can do what you'll never be able to do. He can either remove them or save them!"

I have a prophetic word for some readers right now: Don't let your situation get into your spirit! Bring it all out before God. Go into your secret closet and cry out everything to Him. He will deliver you - out of all your misery and all your messes!

How long will you stay up at night worrying? How long will you stagger around in fear, trying to reason your way out of it? God alone can calm your storm. He alone can still those threatening waves. He alone can bring gladness and peace - and lead you into your desired haven.

"Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry" (Psalm 106:43-44).

God is not about to walk out on you. He is in this battle to the end. He is in you, with you - no matter what.

Hallelujah!

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