

The Encouragement Newsletter

Fourth Quarter 2009

The Ds of LIFE

In a natural journey to our destination we may encounter many things like rain, snow, sleet, wind and heat. We may experience turbulence, sunshine and a pot hole or two. Encountering these things have the potential of delaying the trip slightly or for days. Whenever I am scheduled to travel by plane, I always check the weather forecast for my destination. If traveling by car, I typically sleep and Fred, my dear husband, will check the forecast and drive through whatever weather conditions we encounter and get us to our destination safely.

Life is a journey full of so many expected and unexpected things. We do not know what type of conditions we may encounter on this journey. It will not be filled with days of sunshine only. You better believe it, there is some rain, wind and turbulence around the corner. Oh, how I wish I did not have to experience the wind or storm. I wish I could turn on the television, radio or search an internet site that would give me the forecast with the time and the day I can expect the storm, wind or rain, but it does not happen this way. When things are uncertain, I learned to hold on to the One Who is certain in all seasons and weather conditions because He said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5) and trust Me to get you to your destination in one piece.

Again, life is full of exciting and not-so-exciting moments. It all comes to make us strong and discover who we really are. In the exciting and not-so-exciting moments in life, there are some things that are cyclical. I call these things "The Ds of LIFE".

Distractions—

The purpose of a distraction is to shift our focus from the direction we are headed. It is similar to a detour. Except, you may not end up at your destination. Can God use a distraction... Yes! God can use anything in our life to bring us to Him, set us on course, etc., but we are living in a day where we have to watch out for the distractions. In this day, we have a mandate to stay on course and avoid the distractions that will take us on another path. We must make a choice and pray that we will not be distracted. Distractions can move us from people we are assigned to be with. I have written a lot about being careful of our connections, but I want to express to you that there are some connections that the enemy will do all he can to distract you from. The connections could be our marriages, friendships, our natural family and/or the saints of God. How many times have we been distracted by disagreements and offenses to the point of breaking the ties that have been bound for the purposes of God? No man is an island. We need others to fulfill our purpose, but distractions can remove us from those godly connections that are ordained of God. Distractions come to refocus our energy from God's purpose. Some distractions cannot be avoided. However, there are many that can be avoided and we have to fight them off in order to stay focused. Distractions like, fear, anxiety, old friends, new friends, intimidation, insecurities, doubts, the opinions of others, you name it. In many instances, we have a choice to be distracted, stop and lose ground that we may not regain. Or, overcome, push past the distractions, keep focused and keep moving.

There is, however, a distraction, I believe, we need to always welcome. I call it a "Divine Distraction". This is what Paul experienced. Paul was on his way to kill the believers (Acts 9:1-18) and he had an encounter with

God that changed his mind, will and destiny. Another “Divine Distraction” was experienced by Gideon (Judges 6:11-27) Gideon was in a low place because of what was going on with his nation or his people. They were a disadvantaged people and he was simply trying to survive. He had a God encounter that took him from a small room of trying to survive to a place of prominence where he was destined to affect a nation. The Lord is calling many from low places of spirit and just surviving to prominence. We will hear of many experiencing a Divine Distraction that will set them on course to fulfilling the destiny God planned before they were born. This could be you...

Welcome the Divine Distraction that will set you on course and reject the distractions (both internal and external) that will keep you from pursuing the purpose of God. Think about where you are today. Have you been distracted? If you are off track, get back on course. Remember to consistently pray for the grace to pursue destiny without becoming distracted.

Distraction

The state of being distracted; that which distracts, divides the attention, or prevents concentration; Distract-To disturb or trouble greatly

In certain areas of life it can seem like we spend a lot of time on a street called “Disappointments”. They may come one right after the other. Once I think I am over one disappointment, here comes another. What’s going on?...A tag team or something? Disappointments come when expectations, spoken, understood and/or assumed, are not met. People can commit and then undue the commitment seemingly within seconds. Circumstances in life begin favorably and then turn unfavorable. The best thing I can do to ease the affects of disappointments is adjust my expectations as much as possible. If there is a thorough understanding of who will do what, when, where, how and the limitations, this will curve the emotional rollercoaster when disappointments occur. Accepting things as they are is another way to deal with disappointments. Some things and some people are not going to change; and if they do, it probably won’t be when you or I want it to. I found that when I embraced the words of the Serenity Prayer, disappointments were not as devastating. There are times when a disappointment will come out of no where. There were no signs or warnings. I may have done what I could to adjust my expectations, but the unexpected happens. I just simply cast the disappointment on the Lord because in 1 Peter 5:7, I am assured that He cares about any and everything I care about. In addition to casting that care on Him, I must forgive the one who has caused the disappointment.

One more tidbit about disappointments. I’ve focused on disappointments with others, but we all know that we can be disappointed with ourselves. We can say and do things that can be disappointing. I can raise both of my hands on this one. I have responded in ways I thought I was “too mature” to respond in. When the truth of my heart was revealed and opened for the Holy Spirit’s scrutiny, I was disappointed that I behaved or responded in a certain way. Could I have done better? Acted more mature? Perhaps, but I did not. We all tend to have a high expectation for ourselves and when we fall short of the self-expectation, we become disappointed. Guess what, we even have to forgive ourselves, learn from life, but keep moving.

Disappoint—To fail to fulfill the expectations or wishes of

Disappointments

The state or feeling of being disappointed



Determination— The act of coming to a decision or of fixing or settling a purpose; a fixed purpose or intention; fixed direction or tendency toward some object or end.

No matter what comes our way we all must have a determination to finish our course. There will always be distractions that are designed to cloud our vision, cause discouragement and disappointments, but a strong sense of determination is the fuel to push through like a bulldozer. What is your vision? How determined are you to see it to the end? What has the Lord placed in your heart to do? Or, what is simply the right thing to do and right way to live? It may not be big in the eyes of others, but in His eyes it is a big—obedience is always big to Him. Remove the obstacles, work through the challenges and pursue. We must always make sure we are determined to fulfill the purpose of God. May it always be our prayer that we stay on God's chosen path and never strive in the flesh to "make it happen". Challenges will always be a part of life and so must determination. Determination is the necessary ingredient to have sure footing. It is the energy to push past the weight and burdens that come with the seasons of life. Determination is a state of being. It is a mind set. Be assured that all things are possible with the Lord; even in dark moments, determine to overcome and keep pushing.

In 2010 and beyond, as God's people, we must realize that there is an enemy determined to see our demise. His intention is to destroy all who exalt the God of all gods—and that mean me and you. He has devised a plan to kill, steal and destroy. (St. John 10:10) We must be just as relentless in our determination to not only start, but FINISH. Finally, in the coming year, have a dedicated determination to be Fixed, Focused and Full of Faith.

As I go through decisions, disappointments, dilemmas, discouragement and doubt, I become more determined in the holy things of God. I feel more of a press to go on. Even when I mess up things, I am still Determined and through it all, I will fulfill God's purpose for my life. There are many things I have before the Lord, but determination keeps me on my feet and focused. Determination causes me to endure when I am faced with all of the other Ds—one by one or all at one time. I press and push toward the high call in Christ Jesus. ~Veronica's Journal Entry July 16, 1998~



NO-FAZ-MR-MD

DELIGHT

A high degree of pleasure or enjoyment; joy; rapture; to give great pleasure satisfaction or enjoyment; to please highly.

In this day of modern technology, massive modes of entertainment, books, DVDs, CDs, Christian and non-Christian television, 10+ movie channels, sports channels with the NFL ticket (need I go on?), we have so many things competing for our attention. So many things pull us to take pleasure in them and this is to the point of leaving our relationship with God behind. This even includes many well meaning things. We can become so entangled with the temporal things that we lose sight of the eternal. We begin to take more pleasure in these things that cannot help us in our time of need and we find ourselves just totally empty within. If we trace our step back, we may be surprised to see that we have left our first Love. We no longer delight in spending quiet time alone in prayer and reading the word of God to be fortified and stable, which will increase our determination, keep us from being distracted and help us get through disappointments. Where is your delight these days? Is it no longer a delight to pray? Is it a bother to read the Word of God? Is it no longer a delight to worship God for Who He is and not for what He can give? Oh, may we just delight to do His will because in His will we have life.

Delight is not just one way. It is both ways. In other words, the Lord delights in us also. Yes, He has great pleasure in His children. Whenever we set our heart to walk upright before, He delights in us. (Proverbs 12:22, 15:8) Doing His will brings Him delight. This does not mean that we do not make any mistakes. It means we have a strong mind and motivation to please Him at all costs. Finally, as we delight in Him, we will receive the desires of our heart according to Psalms 37:4.



*I delight to do Your will, O my God;
Your law is within my heart.
(Psalm 40:8—NAS).*

Take a moment and look back over 2009. Did you experience Distractions? How about the need for Determination? No doubt there were Disappointments. What about the focus of your Delight. What other "Ds of Life" did you encounter? I know you can add to the list and please do. More importantly, set you mind and heart to turn every negative "D" into a positive and increase the positive "Ds". 2010 holds man challenges, but it also hold great victories. Gross darkness may cover the earth, but His light will shine on you. (Isaiah 60:1-3).

**...BUT LET US ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER-AND ALL THE MORE AS YOU SEE
THE DAY APPROACHING - HEBREWS 10:25**

If this newsletter has been an Encouragement to you, please let me know by e-mailing me at hisminstrl@yahoo.com. I would love to hear from you.