

September Newsletter 2021

Thank you so much for your faithful support this month. We truly appreciate you and the Lord will use your giving for the kingdom as we place it in His hands with faith. Here's where we are in...

In Circumstances:

This month has been a month where God has really put a desire in our hearts to press forward. We realized that many things just sometimes don't come that easy, that most good things require effort, striving, and perseverance. Especially in the area of parenting, teaching our kids how to speak and potty training, for example, doesn't just come- we have to work at it. As we were searching for a second used vehicle these past three months, there were many hot days in the sun and parking lots with two kids after coming home from work and even some disappointments, but we didn't let that stop us. So those examples would be pressing forward as a father or as a mother. I believe God truly wants us to press forward in all areas of our lives through his Spirit. Philippians 3:12-14 says, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, **but I press on** to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and **straining forward toward what is ahead, I press on** toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

A good question to ask ourselves is, Lord, in what area of my life do you want me to press forward? And I pray that You produce in me the want and the will in order to fulfill your purpose. Another way my prayers have revolved around is pressing on as a teacher and trying to reach a fuller potential with more boldness and not becoming complacent because of fear of failure. That may or may not be why we fear to press forward, because the responsibilities become greater, but if the Lord is with us, the Bible in Joshua says, don't be afraid or faint but be courageous!

Thinking about this matter even a bit further, if we look at Exodus 17:8-15, we see two men helping Moses hold up a staff, and when he would let it down, the armies on the ground lead by Joshua would start to lose. This passage leads me to think, that yes, we pray and trust and worship (which is the more important part), but God also calls us to conquer the land, to go and fight the battle, but that because of His mighty power and presence He has already given us the victory/the land. There are two fronts: the spiritual battle and the "taking ahold of" the promises God has given us through faith by our actions in life. ,

In Jeremiah 29:11-13, when it says to search God, and you will find him when you search Him with all your heart, I think that has a lot to do with perseverance. One reason why God doesn't seem to give us things easy is he wants us to search for Him in the areas we need Him most with everything we got to be able to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ to mold us as a potter does the clay or sharpen as iron. We are genuinely reminded of Rom. 5:3-5, "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

In Fundraising:

A verse that I felt God truly told me, and I truly felt it in my heart, is 2 Chronicles 16:9, "The eyes of the Lord move to and from throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." As I hear this in my heart, it says strongly support, not lightly, and the other part is those whose heart is completely (not partially) his. So again, there is God's work and our part of surrendering to Him. (I read this, but love this quote, "When God calls you to surrender something, it is because he wants and has something much better for you."

Likewise, in our times of need this month, God reminded us of the first verse of Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not lack anything!" Oh, that we trust Him to not only take care of us but direct us down the best path for His name's sake.

Another devotional from “Jesus, Our Perfect Hope” by Charles Stanley that greatly encouraged me spoke of the size of our problems. He says that if we continue and continue to focus just on the issue, it becomes bigger and bigger (like looking through a magnifying glass); however, if we replace our focus on God, the problem becomes much smaller and takes on its miniature size in comparison with God’s greatness. To illustrate this, Stanley says to consider God’s names and character- Yahweh- the existing One and the Great I am. Elohim- the One who is infinite in power and absolutely faithful to keep his promises to you. El Shaddai- the Almighty God, the Most High over all, who is always victorious. Yahweh Yireh-your perfect Provider, who perceives your needs and faithfully supplies what will fulfill them. And Yahweh Rapha- the One who heals you both inside and out.” Is there anything you need that He can’t handle? Certainly not!” Our gigantic troubles will shrink in comparison to our great and mighty God! This size change is just what I pray happens with fundraising! That this challenge would shrink in comparison with God’s power and what I also pray for any challenges, obstacles, goals, or setbacks you might be facing.

This month, praise the Lord, one new supporter from Stonebridge church was added. As a prayer request, pray the Spirit quickens church applications for missionary fundraising, as we have been applying for some. By God’s grace and goodness, as of August, we have \$50,560.00 in pledges and one-time gifts. In the Partners account is \$21,053.65 (part of the \$50,560.00). Thanks to the Lord that puts us at 50% of the launching goal.

Spiritually:

Something that has encouraged me is to confess to God my relationship with Him seemed somewhat more mechanical than spiritual. I am getting through a month of trying to find out how to serve and use what God has given me to help others again. I always like to be serving God and his people in some shape or form. But what I mean by mechanical is I caught myself doing Scripture reading like a checklist, and when I was reading Scripture like this, the Lord gently whispered to me, “What are you looking for?” And it was a day after, I read in a Tozer book that so many Christians read the Bible and don’t go beyond the reading to experience God’s presence. It was at that moment that God’s question to me was answered. Oh Lord, I am looking and searching desperately after your presence. To be in your presence and know you are with me. May we long for God’s presence and his dwelling in us more and more as we empty ourselves of us! As I felt somewhat dead in my routines lots of times, another thing that clicked more than before for some reason was reading Song of Solomon. We have to come to appreciate the admiration, desire, and heart-searching and missing for one another in this couple. But one of the common things I notice repeated in this book are words like “awake, arise.”

I guess if you can imagine Jesus as the groom and we as the bride more or less for a second - how our hearts search for Jesus as the women search for the man in this story! And how are we also search as grooms towards the bride, “show me your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”

Song of Sol. 2:10, “My beloved spoke and said to me, “Arise my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of the doves is heard in our land....Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me.”

For example, Song Sol. 4:16: The lady says, “Awake, north wind, and come south wind! Blow on my garden, that its fragrance may spread everywhere. Let my beloved come into his garden and taste its choice fruits.” (Again think of Jesus as the groom)

The blazing fire of love that waters can’t quench is a love that will truly awaken a sleeping or even dead soul or heat a cold heart in flames till it melts. The implication would be to delight in the Lord because, in his presence, there are pleasures forevermore! And don’t let religion cause you to forget your First Love.

