

PUTTING FAITH INTO PRACTICE

BY KEITH GREER

During my sojourning here, I have had thrust upon me several difficult situations of the sort that can truly test one's faith. God's children are not exempt from this life's difficulties, but His word prepares us for our struggles by plainly telling us they are coming. Listen closely:

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." {2 Timothy 3:12}

"But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber." {2 Peter 2:1-3}

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." {Ephesians 6:11,12}

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls." {1 Peter 1:5-9}

This is just a small sampling of the many passages that warn and prepare us for the onslaught of problems the devil and this life will bring our way. But before you start thinking that all is doom and gloom, please consider why God revealed these things to us—so that we can prepare to defeat our enemies on all fronts, wherever they attack us. God did not promise that once we say "NO" to the devil, he will go away and leave us

alone. Quite the opposite is true; he sees every discouragement we endure in this life as an open door to take advantage of an already unpleasant situation and again bring us into sin's bondage.

Do you see why faith is so important? It's not something to put on a lapel pin or bumper sticker; it's a force that works in our lives. For this reason, the writer of Hebrews told us that without faith, it is impossible to please God {*Hebrews 11:6*}. Faith is an individual attribute, and each of us has either strong or weak faith.

Obedient faith will help carry God's people through the many trials and valleys in which we must walk as we journey here. Some are more difficult than others, but we can overcome them all by putting our faith to work and trusting God to do His part.

Life can sometimes overwhelm us and bring us to our knees. But in the midst of it all, remember that you are not alone. God promised to be at your side {*Hebrews 13:5,6*}. We shed many tears during our earthly journey. But, we look for a place where God will wipe away the tears from our eyes {*Revelation 21:3,4*}. If we are to achieve that lofty goal, we must put our faith into practice as we struggle along here on earth. Our faith and His grace—a winning combination! ***