

Higher Living January 2011

Happy New Year!

The beginning of a year is mainly filled with optimism. Plans are meticulously made, charting how to use the next 12 months to maximum effect. For most of us this exercise is usually completed the year before, to ensure we hit the ground running in the New Year.

For Christians, it is normally customary to have spent time at church with fellow believers at the watch night service - the day before the 1st of January. The significance of this is the fact that we will be spending the crossover from one year to another in the company of the saints and before our Heavenly Father.

This is not to say that you have committed the unpardonable sin if you did not attend a Watch Night service. As a matter of fact, I did not attend one last year, but had a great time of fellowship in prayer with very close friends.

Watch Night services are usually attended with great expectation to receive a word from the Lord. Many have been bruised and battered by the previous year and earnestly crave for a different experience. They don't want to go through another monotonous year. They don't want to have their dreams unfulfilled any longer. They want results!

Now, I don't have a spectacular word to give you. The Lord hasn't told me to tell you that it is going to be a year of breakthrough! Overflow! Divine appointment! Increase! Advancement! Uncommon growth! Or uncommon favour! One thing I know for certain is this. God is faithful ([1 Corinthians 1:9](#))! He has a plan for your life ([Jeremiah 29:11](#))! He will not abandon you ([Hebrews 13:5-6](#))!

I will like to draw encouragement from one of my favourite characters in the Old Testament. His name is Joseph. A young man who went through severe emotional trauma, but eventually got his life turned around in spectacular fashion. He was compensated in a way that only God could do.

For those of you, who feel that God has moved without leaving a forwarding address, don't give up! He is closer to you than you think.

God was present when the injustice took place: God was present when Joseph was handled shoddily by his brothers. He saw the distress and pain. He was there when Potiphar's desperate house wife accused him of a rape he did not commit. The bible does not promise us a life of ease. But one thing He has promised is to be with us in trouble ([Psalm 91:14-16](#)).

He was with Joseph ([Genesis 39:2](#)). He is and will be with you in your moment of trial. So don't collapse no matter the circumstances you find yourself in. Just hang in there and trust Him ([Psalm 46:1](#)).



In your pain don't abandon the faith: Our relationship with the Father is not one of convenience. It is usually when we are having a hard time that our faith is challenged ([Matthew 13:20-21](#)). His brothers' betrayal was enough for him to commit suicide. Being sold as a slave is no easy thing. He had no more rights. His betrayers wanted to put an end to any possibility of his dreams coming to fruition ([Genesis 37:20-21](#)).

Condemned to a life of servitude, Joseph still had his relationship with God intact. Even when the wife of his boss offered herself to him, the Father was the first person he was concerned about sinning against ([Genesis 39:6-9](#)). Don't discard your faith in God in your hour of trial. Remain faithful.

Keep moving and continue to trust: Joseph worked hard as a slave and God was with him. He prospered as a slave ([Genesis 39:1-6](#)). Most people would have been too depressed to excel. But this young man's relationship with El Shaddai was solid. His environment did not control his emotional and mental state. Even when he was banged up on a false rape charge, he kept on moving and trusting God. He remained faithful to his God and the tasks given to him by his master.

There will be times when we will not understand what we are going through, when we can't even see a way out. This is the time we ought to remain faithful, keep trusting God and keep moving. It is not the time to indulge in self pity.

There is always a big picture: The Father always has a plan. He has a plan for your life. Little did Joseph realise that God was using his brothers' envy to put him directly where He wanted him to be. It was only when his brothers were at his mercy that it became apparent that his family would not have survived had he not been sold as a slave ([Genesis 50:14-21](#)).

Sometimes it is only when the familiar is ripped away from you and you go into the unfamiliar that you find your niche. Not all negative circumstances are of the devil. We never know who will benefit from our godly attitude to life when things are stacked against us.

God vindicated Joseph: In the end, he was vindicated. It all made sense in the end. The dream came to pass. His purpose was realised. The scripture makes it clear that those who put their trust in God will not be ashamed ([Romans 10:11](#)).

In closing, take time to read through Joseph's story ([Genesis 37; 39-50](#)). You will see that our Heavenly Father is a master at orchestrating events in our favour, even through our pain and disappointments.

Politicians have geared us up for a turbulent year in 2011. VAT has already gone up by 2.5%. The price of goods and services seem to be going in only one direction, while salaries have been pegged back. Let's not start talking about job cuts and redundancies, the list is endless.

How we choose to respond to these challenges will determine the end result. Our responsibility as Christians is to trust our Heavenly Father with all our hearts ([Proverbs 3:5](#)) and let His word mean more to us than all the news we are constantly being barraged with.

Lean on him! Don't give up! Have the right attitude! Learn from Joseph! He will see you through the year with flying colours!

Catch you later! Remain strong in His grace.

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