

October 18 Overcome by Learning from Difficulties

"This hard place in which you perhaps find yourself is the very place in which God is giving you opportunity to look only to Him, to spend time in prayer, and to learn long-suffering, gentleness, meekness - in short, to learn the depths of the love that Christ Himself has poured out on all of us." - Elisabeth Elliot, Christian writer, speaker, and missionary to the Auca of eastern Ecuador

"It does not matter how great the pressure is. What really matters is where the pressure lies — whether it comes between you and God, or whether it presses you nearer His heart." — J. Hudson Taylor, missionary to China

"Trials should not surprise us, or cause us to doubt God's faithfulness. Rather, we should actually be glad for them. God sends trials to strengthen our trust in him so that our faith will not fail. Our trials keep us trusting; they burn away our self-confidence and drive us to our Savior." - Edmund Clowney

"I am not a theologian or a scholar, but I am very aware of the fact that pain is necessary to all of us. In my own life, I think I can honestly say that out of the deepest pain has come the strongest conviction of the presence of God and the love of God." - Elisabeth Elliot, Christian writer, speaker, and missionary to the Auca of eastern Ecuador

"All our difficulties are only platforms for the manifestations of His grace, power and love." - J. Hudson Taylor, missionary to China

James 1:2-4 - Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Matthew 11:28-30 - Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

2 Corinthians 4:16 - So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Lord, please teach me in the middle of my trials. Help me learn to look only to You. Help me learn to spend time in prayer. Press me nearer to Your heart. Burn away my self-confidence and drive me to You. Let me become convinced of Your presence and Your love. Manifest Your grace, power, and love to me as I encounter difficulties. Perfect me, complete me, mature me. Let me discover Your gentleness, meekness, rest, and comfort. Then help me to share all of these precious treasures with the people around me.

October 19 Overcome by Prayer

"When we pray for the Spirit's help ... we will simply fall down at the Lord's feet in our weakness. There we will find the victory and power that comes from His love." - Andrew Murray, South African writer, teacher, and Christian pastor

"Negligence in prayer withers the inner man. Nothing can be a substitute for it, not even Christian work. Many are so preoccupied with work that they allow little time for prayer." - Watchman Nee, Chinese church leader imprisoned in a labor camp in 1956 until his death in 1972

"I am firmly convinced that all victories, and being an overcomer, begin with confession, repentance, and prayer." - Samuel Harris

"Remember us in your prayers that we grow not weary in well doing. It is hard to work for years with pure motives, and all the time be looked upon by most of those to whom our lives are devoted as having some sinister object in view. Disinterested labor — benevolence — is so out of their line of thought, that many look upon us as having some ulterior object in view; but He who died for us, and Whom we ought to copy, did more for us than we can do for anyone else. He endured the contradiction of sinners. We should have grace to follow in His steps." - David Livingstone, missionary to Africa

"My dear children, love your Heavenly Father. Tell Him in faith and prayer all your needs, and He will surely supply them, so far as it shall be for your good and His glory." - John Paton, missionary to New Hebrides in the South Pacific

"My life is one long daily, hourly record of answered prayer. For physical health, for mental overstrain, for guidance given marvelously, for errors and dangers averted, for enmity to the Gospel subdued, for food provided at the exact hour needed, for everything that goes to make up life and my poor service. I can testify, with a full and often wonder-stricken awe, that I believe God answers prayer." - Mary Slessor, missionary to Nigeria

"If you are sick, fast and pray; if the language is hard to learn, fast and pray; if the people will not hear you, fast and pray, if you have nothing to eat, fast and pray." - Frederick Franson, founder of The Evangelical Alliance Mission

"Against the persecution of a tyrant the godly have no remedy but prayer."
- John Calvin

"Pray. That saint who advances on his knees never retreats." - Jim Elliot

Romans 12:12 - *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

Psalms 145:18 - *The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

Hebrews 4:16 - *Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

1 Peter 4:7 - *The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.*

Matthew 5:44 - *But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*

Luke 18:1 - *And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.*

Colossians 4:2 - *Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.*

James 5:13-18 - *Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.*

Psalms 55:22 - *Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.*

Prayer from Psalm 61:1-4 -

Hear my cry, O God; give heed to my prayer. From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For You have been a refuge for me, a tower of strength against the enemy. Let me dwell in Your tent forever; let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings.

October 20 Overcome by Focusing on the Future

"If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire; the great men who built up the Middle Ages; the English evangelicals who abolished the slave trade, all left their mark on earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this." - C. S. Lewis

"We have only to keep the end in view, and have our hearts thoroughly engaged in the pursuit of it, and means will not be very difficult." - William Carey, missionary to India

"For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice."

— David Livingstone, missionary to Africa:

"Bid faith look through the key-hole of the promise, and tell thee what it sees there laid up for him that overcomes; bid it listen and tell thee whether it cannot hear the shout of those crowned saints, as of those that are dividing the spoil, and receiving the reward of all their services and sufferings here on earth." - William Gurnall

Romans 8:18 - *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

2 Corinthians 4:17 - *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,*

Colossians 3:1-3 - *Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

James 1:12 - *Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.*

Lord, when I feel overwhelmed, please help me to overcome by thinking about the glorious and unimaginable future in store for those who love you.

October 21 Overcome by Resisting Temptation

"The reason why many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason why others succeed is because they have gained their victory on their knees long before the battle came. Anticipate your battles; fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have victory." - R.A. Torrey

"If we do not abide in prayer, we will abide in temptation. Let this be one aspect of our daily intercession: "God, preserve my soul, and keep my heart and all its ways so that I will not be entangled." When this is true in our lives, a passing temptation will not overcome us. We will remain free while others lie in bondage." - John Owen

"Sin gets its power by persuading me to believe that I will be happier if I follow it. The power of all temptation is the prospect that it will make me happier." - John Piper

"The temptation once yielded to gains power. The crack in the embankment which lets a drop or two ooze through is soon a hole which lets out a flood." - Alexander MacLaren

"When Christians find themselves exposed to temptation they should pray to God to uphold them, and when they are tempted they should not be discouraged. It is not a sin to be tempted; the sin is to fall into temptation." - Dwight L. Moody

"All the great temptations appear first in the region of the mind and can be fought and conquered there. We have been given the power to close the door of the mind. We can lose this power through disuse or increase it by use, by the daily discipline of the inner man in things which seem small and by reliance upon the word of the Spirit of truth." - Amy Carmichael, missionary to India

1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

James 4:7 - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Galatians 5:16 - But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Luke 22:40 - And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Psalms 119:11 - I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Romans 13:14 - But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Lord, keep me from temptation. Help me to walk by the Spirit, leaving no provision for the flesh. When I am tempted, please remind me to pray more and to resist the temptation. Uphold me, Lord, Grant me power to close the door of my mind to temptation.