

What We Depend On

By Randy Reynolds

Everything is fragile and subject to breaking which is hard because it affects us, or as we so often have heard it said, "Life is hard." Our government on the upside works hard to create stability, but because of size, selfishness and ignorance also contributes to our hardship. Maybe the government has replaced God in our society for what we believe is dependable? The population that I have seen that is most affected by the Coronavirus and the down turn economically are the very poor. They did not have money in the first place and were vulnerable and now they are even more in need. The government is giving money away to bring some stability, but for the poor they cannot find this money. The stimulus checks are to go to everyone, but if you don't have a connection to the government, they do not send you one. There is a page on the IRS's website to get the stimulus check, so we have had the privilege of helping those in need connect with the government so they can receive this check. Those who are hurting often struggle to bond when there is ambiguity, good and bad in a relationship. They often focus on the bad and avoid making a connection for fear of more hurt or disappointment in their lives.

Resources in difficult times are what give people a sense of hope and stability and a lack of resources brings depression. To contrast those who are doing well in this difficult time, with those who are not doing as well: those who have good support systems do much better than those who lack them. So how do we find and create healthy support systems? It takes faith and hope which moves people to persevere. In working with the homeless most of them lack family as a resource. Often whatever family they have had was not an asset and often has created trauma, which makes it hard to believe that people can be a resource. Trauma increases our fears and decreases our courage. So, what do we depend on? Relational capital is important just like financial capital is important as a resource. To build any capital it takes faith and patience. We need to believe that there is something good coming our way, especially if we are investing and taking risks.

What we expect we often get in life! There are many uncontrollable trials but hope is essential for us to get through them.

"Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive...if life is to be sustained, hope must remain even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired." (Albert Schweitzer, Civilization and Ethics)

Often in very difficult times hope is lost because we cannot see any way our hopes and dreams will come true. However, the story for many is that their dreams died before they were resurrected and came true. Hope like anything needs to be nurtured, watered and supported or the difficulties of life will choke it out. As I said earlier many who are traumatized or lack resources give into fear and lose hope. When that happens, commitment is lost and with it the possibility of provision. Here is a quote out of my book "Common Grace for Relationships," by Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe:

“Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issue from the decision, raising in one’s favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings, and material assistance which no man (or woman) could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now.”¹

As you can see it takes faith to make commitments, with the hope that those commitments will pay off, the unseen. In a time of loss usually people have 3 stages: An ending, a transition, and a new beginning. Commitment is a new beginning, which after the grief will be a call to many people in the world. So where do people find the courage to start again? Where do they find the hope and faith to reinvest and commit? Where are you in this time and process?

Many people do not get their personal hope and faith from God. However, if they are doing well, they get it from somewhere, family, friends, groups or work. Hope and faith that applies to the future are very important for our well-being. For most of the people I work with they do not go to church, I would say because of the ambiguity issues. They see short-comings and hypocrisy, and they do not bond even though a church can be a second family and supply many resources when we are in trouble, including hope and faith. When society becomes too individualistic and people become too isolated they will lack resources. Plus, when our main reference points become ourselves and our emotions it is difficult to have hope and faith and that is when God calls us back to Himself and to community. On the upside I hear from many of the poor that they do have a faith that God loves them and that they can trust in Him.

Where we get our hope from also relates to what we put our hope in. This is one of the main themes in this article. What do we depend on and is it reliable? Hope in a good meal renders us some nourishment and pleasure, but we would not want to invest or put all our hope in good meals. So, a big question is what should we put our hope in? What is the most valuable, stable, and rewarding? I hope I can shed a light on this subject ☺

Read Psalm 112

1. In verse 6 it says, “Such people will not be overcome by evil circumstances.” Who are these people and why are they not overcome by evil circumstances?
2. Verse 7 may supply the answer to this question along with vs 1. Why do you think they do not fear bad news? What does it mean to fear God and do His commands?

¹ Reynolds, Randy. *Common Grace for Relationships*. Tucson: Reynolds Publishing, 2001.

3. Read Psalm 127:1 How does God build a house? How does God protect a city? What is the main point of the passage? How does this relate to the virus and economic downturn?
4. Read Psalm 128:1&2 What are the promises of God and how do they relate to faith? Is there ambiguity in God? How does obeying Him demonstrate that we trust Him? How does obeying Him create a stable support system?