



Those who follow the one true God aren't immune from tough times. Sometimes it's not our fault and other times it is. Either way, God is still NEAR and God is still GOOD, even when life gets MESSY. And it's during those times that God gets our attention.

☀️ *"God whispers to us in our pleasure and shouts to us in our pain. Pain is just a megaphone to wake us from our slumber."*

If you read all of Genesis you will see some stories that get MESSY.

- Cain kills his brother Abel - the 1st murder.
- Abraham says his wife isn't his wife.
- Jacob cheats his brother Esau out of his birthright, and lies to his father to get it.

The Bible is full of MESSY stories by people who do MESSED UP things...because it tells the truth.

God can turn a MESS into a MESSAGE.

Jacob's son, **Joseph**, brags about his status as being his dad's favorite, and tells his older brothers of his dream about *them bowing down to him*. (Gen. 37) The brothers sold him into slavery - lying to their father, Jacob.

But God is good even when life gets messy. Although the Hebrew slaves suffered brutal treatment for 400 years, they also continued to grow in great numbers. When they cried out to God, he provided a deliverer—**Moses**. (You'll see more about this in your readings this week.) Moses led them out of Egypt and through their wilderness wanderings for forty years, despite their many acts of disobedience.

Pre-Promised Land Reminders - WHO God Is & WHAT God Has Done

Deuteronomy 7:7-11 (CSB) ⁷ "The LORD had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. ⁸ But because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your fathers, he brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the place of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know that **the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps his gracious covenant loyalty for a thousand generations** with those who love him and keep his commands. ¹⁰ But he directly pays back and destroys those who hate him. He will not hesitate to pay back directly the one who hates him. ¹¹ So keep the command—the statutes and ordinances—that I am giving you to follow today.

Later, Moses tells them...

Deuteronomy 10:20-22 (CSB) ²⁰ You are to **fear the LORD your God and worship him**. Remain faithful to him and take oaths in his name. ²¹ He is your praise and he is your God, who has done for you these great and awe-inspiring works your eyes have seen. ²² Your fathers went down to Egypt, seventy people in all, and now **the LORD your God has made you numerous**, like the stars of the sky.
* See God's promise to Abraham - Gn 15:5; 22:17; 26:4.

Moses hands the leadership to Joshua and the people make their way into the Promised Land. Yet we see their tendency to drift back to disobedience.

Judges 2:11-13 (CSB) ¹¹ **The Israelites did what was evil in the Lord's sight.** They worshiped the Baals ¹² and **abandoned the LORD**, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. **They followed other gods** from the surrounding peoples and bowed down to them. **They angered the LORD**, ¹³ **for they abandoned him** and worshiped Baal and the Ashtoreths.

* Watch the videos at
RightNowMedia.org

Email
Betty@fellowshipofmadison.com
for login info.

Later, it's put even more succinct.

Judges 3:7 (CSB) ⁷ The Israelites did what was evil in the Lord's sight; **they forgot the LORD their God** and worshiped the Baals and the Asherahs.

The writings of Moses (Genesis-Deuteronomy) are littered with the warning not to follow other gods, but be faithful to follow the God of creation.

We, too, run the same risk of disobedience when we forget God in 3 specific areas.

Don't Forget God's Commands.

God's commands are meant for His glory and our good. Obeying God shows that we TRUST God. Disobeying God shows...that we don't.

Quick Look at Top 10 Commands (Ex. 20:3-17; Deut. 5:7-21)

* all of these are repeated in the New Testament except for #4 - Sabbath day rest

1. No other gods.
2. Don't make/bow to idols.
3. Don't misuse God's Name.
4. Sabbath rest (a principle to follow, not a specific day in New Testament)
5. Honor Dad & Mom (long life)
6. Don't murder.
7. No adultery.
8. Don't steal.
9. Don't lie.
10. Don't covet your neighbor's stuff or spouse.

LOVE GOD

LOVE PEOPLE

How great would life be if EVERYONE obeyed those?

God's commands are meant for His glory and our good!

His commands are not a burden. They give us FREEDOM!!!! Disobeying God takes us back to slavery of sin.

Don't Forget God's Blessings.

Deuteronomy 8:12-14 (CSB) ¹² When you eat and are full, and build beautiful houses to live in, ¹³ and your herds and flocks grow large, and your silver and gold multiply, and everything else you have increases, ¹⁴ **be careful that your heart doesn't become proud and you forget the LORD your God** who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

How easily we forget that all blessings come to us from God! We deceive ourselves when we believe we deserve credit for our own success. When we forget God as the source of all blessings, we become selfish, arrogant, and ungrateful people.

When we experience tough times in the present, it's easy to forget God's faithfulness in the past.

🌟 Is it possible that YOU have forgotten the goodness God has shown to you in the past? How many times has He provided for YOUR needs?

OR maybe you're experiencing some of the best times of your life. Those who lean on wealth, health, beauty, & abilities will have nothing to lean on one day. One day your wealth, health, beauty and ability will be forgotten. But ***will your life be known for HONORING the Lord your God?***

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 (CSB) ¹⁷ You may say to yourself, 'My power and my own ability have gained this wealth for me,' ¹⁸ but **remember that the LORD your God gives you the power to gain wealth,** in order to confirm his covenant he swore to your fathers, as it is today.

👉 **ACTION STEP** WRITE DOWN how God has been GOOD to you.

Don't Forget God's Presence.

God blesses us through our circumstances. At other times, **God blesses us** not by our circumstances, but only **with His Presence**. It's in those times we learnt to worship the Giver, not the gifts, to seek God's Face, and not just His Hand.

An Old Promise to the New Leader

Joshua 1:6-9 (CSB) ⁶ "Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance. ⁷ Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. ⁸ This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. ⁹ Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? **Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.**"

366 times the Scriptures say "Do not fear"!

These same words are promised are later echoed Jesus (God-in-skin). "**Do not be afraid; I am with you.**"

Will you TRUST Him enough to OBEY Him?

Will you - in good times and in bad times - **remember God's commands, remember God's blessings, remember God's Presence?**

2 Leaders - Samson and David

Great warriors, great sinners...with one major difference.

- Samson's life motto was "**How far can I go?**"
- David's life motto was "**How faithful can I be?**"
- WHICH OF THESE WILL YOUR LIFE BE MORE LIKE?