

LIVING WORD

Finding Beauty in the

Collage of Life!

By Maria

ML #3598 3/06

Dear Loves,

1. Everyone experiences situations or circumstances that are less than ideal, or that you have to struggle with or rise above on a daily basis. Maybe you have a long-term affliction which is painful or debilitating. Maybe aspects of your marriage aren't ideal. Making ends meet financially is often a battle you fight repeatedly. Perhaps your Home doesn't have enough people to properly meet all the needs you're faced with, so everyone is stretched thin. Or maybe your housing situation isn't ideal. Maybe you're going through a time of difficult personal tests or a heartbreak. Perhaps you're having difficulties with your children, and are finding it hard to know how to help them through their behavioral problems. It's possible that you're struggling in your work, or that there is someone you work with who you have a hard time getting along with. There are all kinds of tests and trials that come as a part of life.

2. In the Family we have so much counsel on how to fight the various battles we face. We have the spiritual weapons, we have the Word, we have the Lord's comfort and encouragement, and we have our precious brothers and sisters, mates and co-workers who do so much to lighten our load. But still, it's not as if we live idyllic lives or never have to deal with difficulties.

3. This Letter is encouragement from our Husband on that topic, and while it doesn't contain any "magic potion" solutions for how

you can be free from the trials of life forever after, our Husband's words will remind you of how He sees things, and maybe after reading this you'll feel more thankful and praiseful for the things the Lord allows to happen to you—because they make you what you are, they strengthen you, and they can work for your good, if you will let them.

Hardships are a part of life

4. (Jesus:) Life on Earth includes hardship; that's just the way it is. Hardship isn't a sign of a lack of My blessings. It's not a sign that you're doing the wrong thing. Life on Earth is just plain difficult at times, and some of the hardships are lifelong.

5. Look at those who are born handicapped or in destitute circumstances. Life on Earth, whether you're in the Family or not, is a training and testing ground, one which teaches you to make the right decisions despite the hardships. It teaches you to see things positively even when you feel like things are hopeless, to choose to love and share and sacrifice even when you don't have enough, to choose to do the right thing even when everything around you is wrong.

6. You in the Family have so much truth and knowledge, which gives you a head start on being able to make those decisions. You have the spiritual weapons, which not only help you make the right decisions, but actually

change things in the spirit so that the battle becomes easier and you win more than you lose.

7. You also have the promise of Heaven, the knowledge of the rewards that come when you're serving Me and doing the right thing.

You have the gift of prophecy to give you so much insight and real "inside information" as to what's going on behind the scenes, so that you can make the best of every situation and come out ahead. But all those things don't negate the fact that life on Earth is difficult. It's a spiritual warfare, yes, and it's also a test for you and training for you. Just because you're My children, it doesn't mean you can escape the difficulties.

8. Whether you're in the Family or not, whether you're a secretary or a leader, a teacher or a witnesser, whether you specialize in one ministry or job or do a little bit of everything, you have a course to run and things to learn on Earth that you won't learn any other way. And a big part of those lessons and growth and experience come through hardships and things that don't turn out the way you'd like—things that go wrong, that you have to then decide what to do about; things that stretch you to the limit to see if you'll still make the right choices.

9. My loves, that's one reason why looking to Heaven and keeping the heavenly vision is so important. Because you can know that one day soon, I'm going to wipe away all tears from your eyes, and there will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, for the former things will be washed away (Revelation 21:4). That's My promise to you and to all My children throughout the ages.

10. So make the most of this time. Know that I understand, and that your queen and king understand. They don't lead problem-free lives either. They too endure disappointments, such as going away for a long-awaited rest and spending the entire time in bed, sick as can be. Or having much-needed housing fall through at the last minute. They struggle with their work, they often lack the help they need, they face loss, sickness, and heartbreak. They too

struggle with trials of life, and so they understand.

11. I walked on Earth as a man and faced many of the trials that you're coping with today. I did that so that I could understand you, deep down, and know how difficult it is, know how much some of these things hurt or discourage you, and know how to comfort you.

12. There is comfort, My loves. There is the promise of victory. And above all people on the face of the Earth, you are blessed to be able to look up to Me and catch a glimpse of the purpose behind it all, even if everything isn't crystal clear. Some people go through their lives without even a glimmer of hope and understanding. So you really are blessed.

13. I can't take you completely out of these tests and trials of life, because they're a big part of why you're here. But I have given you answers, solutions, insight, understanding, and spiritual weapons that give you an advantage in the battle, if you choose to use them.

14. And one day soon I will gather you and all My faithful children home, and then you'll be so glad. Your battle wounds really will glow. The trials and difficulties you endured will have grown your faith, and the more faith you have, the richer you are in the spiritual realm. So use those trials you face to work for you! Don't let them get you down. Know that great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. *(End of message.)*

The making of fine gold

15. (Jesus:) The difficulties that you face in life are what shape character. These are the tools that I use to make you into the men and women that I need you to be. I know you think that you'd be better off without a lot of them, and that all they do is stand in the way of you performing My will, but this is another of those many times you'll just have to trust that I know best.

16. I don't always put My highest will in front of you like a bowl of cookies and say, "There it is, go for it." It's called My highest

will because it's often high and hard to reach, and the struggles and the climb you go through to get there are what I use to make you what I want you to be.

17. I make this point because I know a lot of the things you're going through, these difficulties, these "trials of life," are things that come up in the process of you trying to do what I've asked of you. Things like having a strong marriage, bringing up children, building a winning team, having a strong spiritual life, and being an example and witness to the world, are all things that I've asked you to do for Me, and often it's in performing these things that you fall short and have troubles and difficulties and feel condemned.

18. You feel like you'd love to do all that I'm asking of you, but life gets in the way and makes everything so difficult. My loves, that isn't just "life," that's Me. I want you to understand this so you won't feel so condemned and worried. I am the One Who says, "Go attain to this height," and I am also the One Who sends the rain and the snow and the obstacles that get in your way, or at least allows the ones that the Enemy brings.

19. I want you to fight to reach for My highest will, but I also allow many difficulties and problems along the way, and those difficulties and problems are My tools in your life. What else could I use? What else keeps you humble and broken and dependent on Me? What else teaches you the lessons that you need to learn? I know you sometimes wish that when I bring obstacles or challenges into your life, they could be a more useful variety, something more understandable, more logical, and easier to combat, rather than these things that seem to be at odds with what I'm asking you to do.

20. It's similar to how most everyone would prefer straight-up persecution by the Antichrist forces for preaching and teaching about Me rather than the subtler, yet much more discouraging attacks from former brethren and loved ones who are not serv-

ing Me. It's much easier to deal with straightforward issues like your belief in Me and My salvation, than it is to handle the more personal attacks about issues or events that are more complex and less black and white.

21. I know how you wish that any wounds or losses would come only from the front lines of the mission field and the front lines of your active service for Me, not inside attacks from your personal situations, your own mistakes, your own marriages, your own children, your own Homes, your own doubts, weaknesses, and besetting sins. But, My loves, if something comes into your life, then you must know that I have a reason for allowing it, and it's not exempt from My promise that all things will someday work together for good, even these things that seem so negative and so unhelpful.

22. I know how you battle against these tedious problems and difficulties and wish they were gone so that you could focus on bigger things, better things, seemingly more noble things, but this has not been My plan. My plan is for you to fight to overcome the obstacles you are facing today, whatever they may be and from whatever direction they might come, and not get weary in well-doing, nor get condemned about the source from which they come or the reasons for which they come.

23. My will is out in front of you, and My everlasting arms are behind you and under you, and all around you. All that remains is for you to move forward regardless of what shape your adversaries take, or from which direction the obstacles come. I know you are sometimes frustrated and think, "No, not this battle again, not this fight! Please take this one from me and give me another." But, My loves, if I were to let this cup pass from you, this cup of all the little trials of life, all the little battles you're embarrassed to fight, then you would never grow in ways that you must, and you would never be the comforters and counselors and leaders of the End that I have ordained you to be.

24. Victory is there in each of these things you face, but you must remember that long-

term battles often have long-term victories.

The battle may not stop from one day to the next, but it can lessen as you grow in your understanding and knowledge of how to fight it. Just as some weaknesses and besetting sins grow slowly, little by little, till they are completely upon you, so some victories are gained gradually, as you gain ground inch by inch, till at last you realize that you're standing alone on the field with all enemies routed and defeated.

25. But that kind of victory is so much less glamorous than those with quick resolutions and quick, happy endings. Your flesh tires of these long, painful struggles, these protracted battles against unglamorous foes. You want to fight something that seems worthy, something that you can feel proud of, something that would almost seem worth your while to fight, but it is not going to be that way, My loves.

26. Without the tests, there would be no testimony. Without these nagging weaknesses, these annoyances, these besetting sins, these embarrassing problems, your faith would not be as tested. You are all strong and you can all easily fight and overcome the bigger battles, the simple battles, the obvious ones, and often they are not as much of a test for you. It's glamorous to fight a giant, but it takes humility, patience, and persistence to fight weeds.

27. You feel like such a warrior when you go head to head with giants of sin and evil and defeat them, but you feel like a failure when you have to plug along, dirty and sweaty, in the garden, rooting out and replanting again and again. Few have written songs or poems about the struggles of the gardener, yet it is a struggle just the same, and in some ways a nobler one than the glorious but quick victories of legend.

28. I call you to both kinds of battles in My service, and you cannot praise Me for one but begrudge the other. You have to understand that both come from Me, and both are your lot to fight with your whole might and soul. I give you the big, showy battles to test your faith and courage, and I also give you the

long, tedious, embarrassing battles to test your strength and resolve and teach you humility. All the while in My wisdom I am molding you into the perfect warrior, the perfect fighter, ready to battle big or small, showy or not, and win in any circumstances.

29. I am the author and the finisher of your faith, and if I am blessing you with the trials of life, then I have seen that your faith needs a little more "finishing" and strengthening in a certain aspect, and thus I haven't seen fit to deliver you from these trials and afflictions as quickly as you would like. But trust Me, and look to Me, and know that I'm not going to let you suffer these things any longer than you have to, and certainly not past the point of usefulness. If you do your part, then your faith will be strengthened, you will be matured and strengthened, and when I see fit to deliver you, you will have come through as gold. If I'm letting a battle persist in your life, then you can know that it's still working My good pleasure for you, just as a fever cleanses the body of that which is not good.

30. I'm sorry that you have to fight so hard and so continually against these "trials of life" that you wish could just be over. I'm not unsympathetic, because I know that these things are difficult and that they're not joyous for the present. But I'm hoping that as you come to understand My reasons for allowing these things, you'll be able to praise Me even for them, and become able to let My joy live in you despite these problems and difficulties.

31. These things don't touch My love for you; they don't change the fact that you are special to Me. They make Me love you and admire you more as I see you fight through them and hang on to Me and stand on your faith and use your weapons. And even in the times that you're failing and not making it and I have to correct you, I'm proud of you for being willing to go through so much for Me and for the Family.

32. In a way you're choosing to go through all of these battles because you want

the high prize of serving Me in this capacity. You could make some percentage of the battles stop and go away by forsaking My calling for you, leaving My highest will for you, and settling for something less. By sticking it out in My highest will for you, you're as good as telling Me you're willing to be made willing, and to be tested and tried in whatever ways I see fit to turn your life into what I want it to be. You're also telling Me that you want the biggest rewards and dividends for your investment. You're going all the way for Me, and you can expect Me to go all out in My blessings and rewards and miracles for you.

33. I admire you for, in essence, choosing these battles and struggles, as tough and as arduous as they can sometimes be. I know you probably don't look at it much like that, because if it were up to you, you'd much rather be without them. But if you look at it from My perspective, I see you as brave and willing and sacrificial and worthy of great reward.

34. Praise through every difficult experience, and count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience (James 1:2-3). It doesn't just say to count it all joy when you fall into a battle for righteousness' sake, but even when you fall into diverse temptations, which could mean your own besetting sins, or mistakes, or all the little nagging annoyances of life.

35. You can be happy for all of those because they're building in you the very things that I'm after. I'm using the full range of My tools in your life to shape you into what I want you to be. The process might sometimes be painful, but the end result is so beautiful. Stay still and happy, My faithful ones, and I know you'll be pleased in the end with what I have wrought in your lives. Don't get impatient or frustrated, but recognize that this is the life of My chosen vessels, and this is what you're going to go through to reach that high crown.

36. Learn to be happy anyhow, because these battles aren't all going to go away.

You're going to be fighting these and many others for some time to come, and although you will gain victories, you'll continue to have new battles, or have to keep an attitude of victory in some even though the circumstances don't change. But I am greater than these battles, and if you have your heart and eyes set on Me, then you too can live above them, and not let them touch your heart and rob you of your happiness.

37. And when you feel weary, come to Me and I will give you rest from your labors and comfort for your trials. Whether you feel it's a worthy battle or an unworthy one, My love for you will be the same, and My counsel will be the same—to pick up your weapons and keep fighting in My name and with My strength, knowing that victory will come in the end because I have promised it. It's your destiny to succeed, and I will never break My Word. (*End of message.*)

A bar of steel worth five dollars, when wrought into horseshoes, is worth ten dollars. If made into needles, it is worth three hundred and fifty dollars; if into penknife blades, it is worth thirty-two thousand dollars; if into springs for watches, it is worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. What a drilling the poor bar must undergo to be worth this! But the more it is manipulated, the more it is hammered, and passed through the fire, and beaten and pounded and polished, the greater the value.—Sir Henry Bessemer (1813-1898), British inventor and engineer

Praise defeats weariness

38. (Jesus:) There are as many reasons as there are people and circumstances for why I allow you to be so sorely tested. But though the reasons vary greatly, one thing you can all have in common is your attitude toward those battles and difficulties you face, the perspective you choose to keep toward them.

39. I think by now you have come to understand that battles are par for the course of life, but I want to talk about how to accept that understanding graciously, nobly, and with a spirit of faith and belief in My many promises to you—that I do not give you more than you are able to bear, and that whatever you forsake here will be returned to you a hundredfold.

40. **What often keeps you from having My perspective on your battles is this weariness you feel when faced with them.** It's weariness that makes you a reluctant fighter and causes you to lose hope and faith before you even set out to fight. It kills your spirit before it has even been given the opportunity to prove itself.

41. **Weariness is no less than a burden, a heavy smothering weight that the Enemy seeks to place on you each time you sense another battle coming, especially the long-term ones.** It gives you a feeling of resignation, that it's just another day, another battle, and that the sadness or reluctance you feel is natural and understandable, because, "Here I am again, back in the fray, and who enjoys that?" You can tend to feel that it's just you, that you're tired, overwhelmed and overburdened, and you can't keep up, that it's all just too much, and that your reluctance to pick up your sword is excusable.

42. **But the truth is that the battle and the weariness are not synonymous.** They are not one and the same, and it is not necessary to battle weariness on top of everything else when you're in the midst of a long-term struggle—or any struggle, for that matter. Battles might be par for the course of life, but weariness isn't.

43. **Weariness is a wet blanket over your soul, smothering the flames that would otherwise burn bright and ardent,** that would lift your spirit in battle right when you need it the most. Weariness is a pollutant in the air around you, restricting your breathing and clouding your vision. Weariness is like a spiritual arthritis that seeps into your joints, causing discomfort, an achiness and a feeling of being washed up, old, and unable to bend and keep up with the new moves of My Spirit.

44. **Weariness is a subtle weapon the Enemy would like to use to hold you back from rushing into the fray with as much might, valor, and determination as you otherwise would.** Weariness is not of Me, but is an oppression that I wish to deliver you from. It is not a burden you have to bear any longer.

45. **You can fight it and have victory.** The perfect weapon and antidote for weariness is one that I have already placed in your hands—praise. If you want to know how to glory in your battles, whether long- or short-term, if you want to know how you can rush into the fray unhindered by this burden of weariness, if you want to have a more heavenly perspective on your battles and not only endure them but enjoy them, then choose the weapon of praise as the initial burden-blaster, and let it free your heart, mind, and spirit, and give you My perspective and focus for the battle.

46. **My loves, praise is your weapon of choice in any battle, but especially if you want to counter weariness** and want to be freed from its grip long enough to see through My eyes, long enough to breathe in My clear heavenly air that will clear out your lungs, get your blood pumping, and inspire you for the battle. *(End of message.)*

You're worth it to Me

47. *(Jesus:)* **My loves, I want to talk about your hearts.** The volumes of love, the chapters of prayers, the scrolls and scrolls of pleas and praises are all recorded within your heart of hearts. I want to open that book right now, the book that speaks the words of your hearts, the book that has recorded every secret prayer, every hidden tear, every silent sorrow.

48. **Every time I open this book, I weep, for I read words that you haven't even whispered aloud, but have only conveyed to Me wordlessly in prayer.** I see tears that you haven't shed in the flesh, but have shed in your heart and in your spirit. I see pain and I see suffering. But I also see bold markings of faith, bright highlights of ardent love and praise, pre-

cious reference points of dedication, trust, and endurance. I weep to read the words on the scrolls of your hearts, for they are both beautiful and deeply moving.

49. As I read these words to you and as I speak to you now, don't mind My tears. Each tear is a token of love and of deep admiration for you, My dearest ones. Let My tears soften your hearts and wash away the great pains of the suffering and trials that you have been and still are experiencing for Me.

50. I know your troubles. And I'm speaking to you—yes, you personally—each one of you. Each of your troubles are different. Although some might seem similar, or identical, I say they are different because they touch your life differently, you react to them differently, and therefore they affect you differently.

51. I want you to close your eyes now, My loves, and take a moment to be silent with Me. I'm going to whisper to your heart from the pages of your book of the specific trouble that I am referring to right now. You know what it is—that great burden that has weighed on your heart for some time, that problem that just doesn't seem to go away, that doesn't seem to ever find a complete and lasting solution; that heavy burden that seems to only grow heavier and less bearable with each day; that prayer that seems to never be answered—or never answered as completely as you feel you need it to be answered.

52. Your burden weighs so heavily on you that sometimes you just feel like crying. You carry so many burdens already—the burdens of your Home, the burdens of your family, the burdens of your mate and loved ones, the burdens of the work and the sheep, the burdens of My Kingdom, and your personal burdens as well.

53. (Channel:) Jesus is crying. He seems deeply, deeply moved. He's reaching out to hug the one on His lap, but with such desperation and feeling, almost as if He's frustrated

that He can't touch them physically or let them feel Him in the flesh.

54. (Jesus continues:) How My heart wishes to touch you. My arms ache to hold you. I want to be the physical embodiment of comfort and love that you feel you need. I want to hug you and hold you so close to My heart. I want you to hear Me say those words that you long to hear, "You are doing so well, sweetheart. Everything is going to be okay. I will make everything okay. Don't worry, it will be all right. I will sort out this problem. I will bring a solution. It's going to turn out beautifully in the end." I wish you could hear Me audibly. I wish I could be there with you in person to shoulder this load with you. I see your tears and I want to be the one to wipe them away.

55. But, My darlings, even though My heart aches to deliver you and to make all things right and bring perfection and peace and calm to your lives, I cannot. My Father could not deliver Me from the cross, even though His entire being ached to release Me. The pain I felt, the suffering I endured, tore at His heart, He couldn't watch Me die on the cross. His love for Me was so great that He couldn't deliver Me or take Me away from the suffering, no matter how great, because He knew that My reward, My glory, would be worth that moment of torture and beyond. You are worth that suffering to Me.

56. One day, My loves, you will say the very same to Me: "You are worth that suffering to me." That is the day when you will receive your reward in full, and it will astound you. But for today, when the full glory is not yet revealed, you must believe Me when I say that these battles and long-term difficulties and seemingly unending problems will be worth it in the end.

57. These deep difficulties and struggles of daily life are breaking you. But the more pieces I have to work with, the more I can do with you. The more you are broken in My hands, the more useful you become to Me.

And so continues the process of breakings and strengthening and greater usefulness. I am breaking you so that I might use you much, much more.

58. I am creating a collage of your lives—a collage from the broken pieces of the difficulties you face, the battles you encounter, even the mistakes you make. The more breakings I allow you to go through, the more material I have to work with in My design for you. This collage is not meant to be a pretty picture for people to look at or a pretty design for people to admire—but it is meant to be held up to the window of My light. My light will shine through the stained glass window of your shattered pieces, revealing beautiful colors, enhancing depth, adding light and beauty to the lives of those who walk in your footsteps.

59. Each trial that besets you is a new color, a new design within the window of your life. Each difficulty is a new shattered piece that I might use for My glory through you. If I were to take away these difficulties, there would be holes and big gaps within My design. These difficulties complete My working within you. You might feel that your lives would be simpler without these struggles, and perhaps you're right. But then you would also miss out on acquiring that beautiful jewel of experience, and others would miss out on the reflection and glow that piece would've brought them.

60. My loves, when others look up and see that you carry the same shattered pieces that they have incurred in their lives, this encourages them and causes them to continue to carry on for Me. When they see that you have battled the same, if not more difficult troubles than they have, their faith is strengthened and renewed. When they see that you are still fighting, they believe that they can too. When they see that you have been touched with the same afflictions and trials and difficult battles as them, they are convicted to give all to Me, yet again, as they see you do.

61. I know that sometimes these reasons seem vague; they don't seem to lighten the trouble you face. I understand. My loves, I too was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. I know what it's like to sorrow and to be deeply grieved and moved to passionate and emotional tears. I suffered in all points, just as you do (Isaiah 53:3–4; Hebrews 4:15). My experiences were different than yours, but if you'll look up at the window of My life on Earth, you'll see that I carry the same shattered pieces as your stained glass window.

62. I too experienced betrayal by loved ones and even family. I too experienced difficulty with living conditions and even with My closest team of friends and co-workers. I too was tempted with the tests and battles and lies of the Enemy. I too faced the challenges of need for supply for Myself and those who followed Me. I encountered the same measure of difficulties and troubles and sufferings that you, My beloved brides, do now. I was broken, just as you are breaking now. There are many shattered pieces of My life—shattered pieces of hard experiences, of difficulties, of trials, of sufferings, of temptations, of sorrow and tears—which My Father transformed within His hands into a marvelous and breathtaking display of hope, courage, faith, and utmost love.

63. Look up, My loves, and view the window that displays the story of My life and experiences on Earth. I promise you that there is not one shattered piece within your window that you will not likewise find within Mine. I experienced everything before you, so that right here today, I could shine My light of hope, courage, joy, faith, peace, renewal, vision, and great, great love upon you.

64. Wasn't My life worth it for you? Wasn't My sacrifice, My pain, My suffering, My difficulty, worth it for you? You wouldn't take any of that difficulty away from Me if it meant that the reward—your salvation and place as My bride—would be lost forever, would you?

65. So neither will I take your sufferings and difficulties away from you, for to lose the reward of them would be a much greater loss. The reward of the trial is so much greater than the cost. As the apostle so aptly wrote, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). They aren’t. The sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory, reward, and great honor that I have for you over here. Your sufferings are but a cup of water when compared to the oceans of reward that I have reserved for you.

66. You need these shattered pieces, My love, for this is what I wish to create your life with; this is the material I need to create My masterpiece. It was the material My Father used in My life and it is the material I will use in yours. I learned obedience through the things I suffered (Hebrews 5:8), and so too will you learn obedience through the things you suffer. I’m only placing you on a path that I have already walked and know well. I have not asked something of you that I did not first ask of Myself. I tested this path first. I experienced this life first, so that now I could be to you everything that I knew you would need.

67. Your lives are beautiful to Me, tough experiences and all. I know that the glass feels sharp to your hands and the shattered pieces tear at your heart, but give them to Me and I will place them in proper perspective for you. I will show you how I look at these broken pieces of your life and your situation. I will frame them within the perfect will for your life, and there, they will no longer hurt you. Once these pieces are in My hands and once you learn to look at them the way I see them, then you can be free from the pain you initially felt as you experience the beautiful wonder that this new colored gem adds to your life and service to Me.

68. Look up, My loves! In looking up, you will see things the way I see them. You will see My light shining through your life, trans-

forming any difficulty or ugliness into a vision of beauty and perfection. And let the window of My life be an encouragement to you, too. Let it lift your hearts and bring hope to your spirits to see that I have gone before you and I have filled My life with the very emotions and feelings and difficulties you encounter. If I could make it, My love, so can you. If I could endure, so can you. For I am in you, and though in this world you will have tribulation, be of good cheer—I have overcome the world! (John 16:33). *(End of message.)*

The keys of intercession

69. (Maria:) One of my dear helpers is pregnant, and she’s very thankful to be having another baby. However, her pregnancies are very difficult. She’s so sick in the first four or five months that she basically can hardly get out of bed. It’s a constant fight to keep down any food or water. She’s unable to work, because looking at her computer, even while lying down, makes her even sicker. And although she knows she’s doing something very important in making a baby, the Enemy hits her hard during those early months with feelings of uselessness, like she’s a burden on others and isn’t carrying her share of the load, plus tremendous discouragement about feeling so terribly sick all the time.

70. Thank the Lord, she’s over that hump now and is feeling much better. But when she was so sick and it seemed like it would never end, in one of her quiet times of communing with the Lord she was telling Him she didn’t know if she could make it through another few weeks or months of this, and asking Him to please do a miracle for her, and He spoke to her heart and gave her this key promise: “Call on the keys of intercession, and I will plead with My Father on your behalf, for mercy and relief.”

71. When she was feeling a little better, she asked the Lord more about the keys of intercession, and I believe that you will find this very encouraging, as she did.

72. (Question:) What are the keys of intercession?

73. (Jesus:) The keys of intercession have two main purposes.

74. 1) You can call on the keys of intercession when you're interceding on behalf of someone else. You can call on these keys before united or private times of prayer, and the keys of intercession will help you to be a good prayer warrior, really going to bat for the person or situation you're praying for.

75. 2) You can call on the keys of intercession when you're going through a very difficult time in your life, or when you're facing a big trial, battle, affliction, or obstacle, and I will go to bat for you in the spirit and work to change things. Even if a situation is bearing good fruit in your life, if you are weary of the fight, you can call on the keys of intercession and I will plead with My Father on your behalf to change things.

76. Things will not always change immediately, because sometimes My Father will know that the continuation of the battle is the best course of action. But sometimes things will change, and My interceding can change My Father's mind.

77. So this is a key to call on when you feel like you're at the end of your rope. I and My Father will reevaluate your situation, and in as many cases as possible, we will have mercy and bring the relief you seek. The only times we will not intervene are in situations when we know that you are near the finish line, and we know that your being able to finish the race till the end is more important than immediate relief. But trust that in such cases, our greatest mercy is shown, and greater strength is delivered to you. (End of message.)

The Tumbling Barrel and You

Ever hear of a tumbling barrel? It's an industrial device for smoothing newly made pieces of metal. It is a cask or drum equipped to revolve at a predetermined speed. Into it are put steel castings or manufactured metal pieces. An abrasive such as powdered alumina or carborundum is also put into the barrel, or maybe sand, rubber pellets, or steel balls, depending upon the character and hardness of the metal parts.

The tumbling barrel is then rotated. With each revolution the metal pieces are carried partway up the side of the drum; then they fall free and drop back down. As they tumble and spill against each other and are rubbed by the abrasive, the burrs disappear and the rough edges are smoothed. They are then in shape to function properly.

This ingenious process strongly suggests the way men are tumbled about in life. We come into the world with burrs and edges characteristic of raw newness. But as we go along, we tumble against each other and also rub against hardships and difficulties. This affects us much as the abrasives in tumbling barrels affect new pieces of metal. Such friction and attrition make for a rounding and maturing of personalities.

There are well-meaning people who believe that life is too harsh. They would like to plan and arrange the world so that no one need suffer. But without struggle, how could the end result of personality be developed? How could a person become rounded and mature and strong?

This shaping process makes men. As tough and unpleasant as difficulty may be, it is the source of potential development. Surround every difficulty with prayer, with faith and with straight thinking. Then let enthusiasm build power under it. On this basis, you can handle any situation that can ever develop.—Norman Vincent Peale, *Enthusiasm Makes the Difference*