



The Living God Ministries, Inc.

Montgomery & Spanish Fort, Alabama

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Comfort Those Who Suffer

Warm hellos to you dear brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from our offices here in Spanish Fort, AL.

My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

With the beginning of November, the weather here in the United States is moving from autumn to that word I don't often like to mention - winter! Temperatures dropped down to the low 40's one night last week. I have to admit I do not have the metabolism and toughness I used to have in coping with cold winter conditions. Aging takes a toll eventually on most people. This is part of the reason many choose to live further south as they get older. This is also part of the reason so many choose to observe the Feast of Tabernacles near the Gulf of Mexico each year.

Even King David was affected by the passing years. "*Now King David was old, advanced in years; and they put covers on him, but he could not get warm.*" (1 Kings 1:1). Ecclesiastes 12 colorfully describes the deterioration of seeing, hearing, teeth, and stability-balance. Not everyone declines at the same rate or to the same extent. There are those exceptions such as 80 year olds running a marathon and seniors outdoing other younger people many years their junior. "Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished." (Deuteronomy 34:7) It seems that the Lord perhaps turned his physical body to the "off" mode!

One of the big challenges whether you are old, middle aged, or young is having constant or chronic pain. Due to injuries, and surgery, my lower back, and right knee causes me pain a good part of the time. It has slowed me down somewhat and I don't walk as fast as I used to. I've gained extra weight around my midsection that is very difficult to get rid of. My pain is not as severe as many with significant and persistent pain, but I have a lot more compassion for others with chronic pain. Even when giving messages, if standing, I have to move a lot to avoid stiffening and pain.

Some younger people can be afflicted with painful conditions and may "look healthy on the outside", but are actually suffering from pain from past injurious, fibromyalgia, migraine headaches, Lyme's disease, or various other health conditions. You and I need to show compassion and pray for one another when someone has a health challenge or some other kind

of challenge.

Our "turn" may come up some day and we would probably like others to care about and pray for us. Over the last few years, my wife and I have been busy visiting brethren who have had serious health issues. I also try to call many to let them know they are not forgotten as they struggle. The apostle Paul mentioned with compassion, individuals that had fallen sick such as Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-30) Trophimus (2 Timothy 4:20) and even Timothy (1 Timothy 5:23).

When someone is ill or injured or suffering some affliction, the instruction, after the person goes to God in prayer, is to ask for prayers and healing. "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5:14) It is not my place to demand or put pressure on someone to ask for prayers and anointing, but I am very willing to anoint anyone who seeks to look to God for healing and ask me to anoint them or send an anointed cloth. I consider that a great privilege to know about their afflictions and go to God in prayer on their behalf. Asking others to pray for you is an intrinsic part of our calling.

I know we don't seem to see a lot of dramatic healings in the church but I have seen God's intervention in little ways a number of times. Sometimes there is simply the peace of mind that God gives that helps the person to accept the situation and whatever the outcome is.

Aging does often bring health challenges and afflictions, but that does not mean that God is purposefully causing them and sending them to chastise or correct someone. Even the righteous will have afflictions! "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the LORD delivers him out of them all.*" (Psalm 34:19).

A great servant of the church, the apostle Paul, went through many trials and afflictions. "*But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra-- what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.*" (2 Timothy 3:10-11)

Paul brings out an important benefit from going through our own personal trials. "*...the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

We have an aging church population and spiritually maturing membership. Let us patiently persevere and endure our various trials-challenges and afflictions and also persevere in prayer for and encouraging one another. May God send His special help and encouragement to you all and especially to those of you who are suffering health issues or any other afflictions.

As I like to close with each Friday, arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

-Scott Hoefker

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