

Not quitting during the tough times

Ecclesiastes 10:4 (KJS) If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

This scripture has guided me through many a time in my earlier years as a Christian when I wanted to quit, especially when things got tough on me. In my years of ministry I have seen many people quit God's assignments in their life.

I have seen people quit when:

- They were corrected.
- They were corrected when they were right!
- The church did not do things the way they wanted.
- The church did not grow fast enough.
- Someone fell into sin and refused to be restored the way the church prescribed.
- They were offended and felt they were not liked by certain people in a church.
- They were not given the praise or recognition they deserved.
- They were not given a promotion, ministry title or position they coveted.
- Doing a ministry they did not like and got bored with.
- The church did not match their expectations compared to the mega church down the street or on TV.

It is the easiest thing to quit when things are difficult in your life. In fact you will have more "peace" if you do. The peace of no pressure is relief. But as satisfying as that will be temporarily it is not the "peace of God that passes all understanding". That peace promises to "guard your hearts and minds" (Philippians 4:6-7). Feeling relieved does not equate to God's peace and perfect will.

I have been anxious, miserable and unhappy in the will of God because my will and plan was in the way. I wanted things done my way. As one song went, I was in the front seat doing the driving. Jesus was in the backseat. I have found out since Jesus doesn't take direction well and of all things likes to have the wheel and be in charge directing me.

The scripture says, "Let the peace of God rule your heart". The term rule means umpire, one who oversees the rules and direction of a sporting event. It is possible to have that God of peace that guides you even in the midst of adverse circumstances and emotions. Can God's will actually be in adverse circumstances that wants to kill self will and pride? YES!

The biggest mistakes I have seen people commit is to make major decisions during difficult times emotionally. They often waste years of their life and spend more time wandering in the desert, not fulfilling God's will and promises for their life. I will put off decisions 2 weeks to 1 year!!!! It protects me from getting out of God's will and making a mess of my life.

In my early years as a Christian and budding minister I attended a church whose beliefs were different than mine. I was more prophetically gifted and motivated - they weren't. I had strong convictions on faith teaching - They were not excited about faith. They were a small church - I wanted something bigger to provide better opportunity. I was more charismatic and aggressive - the pastor of this church was more mellow and not near as outgoing - He was the turtle and I was the hare. Some people in that church did not like me and opposed some of my beliefs. I was sure God wanted me to leave that church and be a part of larger, more dynamic church that "had it together". I convinced myself it was God's will. The prospect of leaving excited me. I had more peace!

I was attending a service at a different church where Dick Mills was ministering. Dick is known for memorizing scripture and giving them prophetically. As he was leaving the building after signing a book I purchased He gave me a scripture. Isaiah 48:17 in the NIV which says, "God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go". Right when he said it I was convicted and knew what it meant. God wanted me to stay in that small church and be a blessing to them. He was going to use my differences to compliment and edify that pastor and body, and not compete with them and force my beliefs down their throats. After a weekend wrestling match with God the issue was settled and I had real peace. By the way He won the match.

God used that pastor and church in my life teaching me to be faithful in and not despise the small things. The pastor knew my beliefs and trusted me to preach and head up ministries. When I became a traveling minister that pastor recommended our ministry to other pastors and opened many doors to me. He told pastors, "You can trust him". After being in ministry 30 years I look back and realize that the pastor was not an air head after all. He was very balanced, wise, mature, patient and kind man. He loved me and wanted the best for me. God used that season of humbleness and faithfulness in that small local body to teach me and raise me up. It wasn't my idea but God's. It was best for me.

The next time you are tempted to quit I encourage you to work through God's dealings in your life. Ask what your motives and attitudes are. Let go of offenses, setbacks and disappointments. Look at the big picture and trust God's initial leading when it does not line up with your current understanding. Unbearable situations can turn around from a change of heart and mind. Even when misunderstood "yielding pacifies great offences".

I leave you with a quote on my computer that brings great encouragement to me when I feel like quitting:

"You're not finished when you are defeated ... You're finished when you quit" Van Crouch