

THROUGH THE FOG

by Katie Wilson

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Don't Believe Your Fortress Is Invincible

One of the great myths in life is when men think they are invincible. Too many think that they are men of steel, strong enough to withstand [anything]. They delude themselves into thinking, "It cannot happen to me." Borrowing a thought from Bertrand Russell, "We are all like the turkey who wakes up [Thanksgiving] morning expecting lunch as usual. Things can go wrong at any time"... it *can* happen to any of us at any time. So much of our course in life is influenced by forces we only partly perceive.

— James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 2002

"Happiness," in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it." (*History of the Church*, 5:134.) Often that path includes affliction, trials, and suffering—physically, mentally, and even spiritually... Adversity in the lives of the obedient and faithful may be the consequence of disease, accidental injury, ignorance, or the influence of the adversary. To preserve free agency, the Lord also at times permits the righteous to suffer the consequences of evil acts by others.

--Ronald E. Poelman, *Ensign*, May 1989

If a sudden, stabbing light exposes the gap between what we are and what we think we are, can we, like Peter, let that light be a healing laser? Do we have the patience to endure when one of our comparative strengths is called into question? A painful crisis may actually be the means of stripping corrosive pride off of that virtue.

--Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1989

Adversity teaches us humility. Humility teaches us everything else.

Get Your Bearings While It's Clear

But how can we fortify ourselves against the irony in our lives and cope better when it comes? By being more like Jesus, such as by loving more... Wise self-denial shrinks our sense of entitlement... Another cardinal key is to "live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which [God] doth bestow upon you"... Another vital way of coping was exemplified by Jesus. Though He suffered all manner of temptations, yet He "gave no heed unto them." Unlike some of us, He did not fantasize, reconsider, or replay temptations. How is it that you and I do not see that while initially

we are stronger and the temptations weaker, dalliance turns things upside down?

--Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1989, 62

We all must deal with adversity. There may be periods, sometimes long ones, when our lives seem to flow with little difficulty. But it is in the nature of our being human that comfort gives way to distress, periods of good health come to an end, and misfortunes arrive. Particularly when the comfortable times have gone on for a while, the arrival of suffering or the loss of material security can bring fear and sometimes even anger.

--Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, May 2009

Have a Sure Vision

Can we absorb the irony of being hurt while trying to help? Having done good, when we are misrepresented, can we watch the feathers of false witness scatter on the winds?

-- Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1989

From such teachings we conclude that the Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts—what we have *done*. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts—what we have *become*. It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. The commandments, ordinances, and covenants of the gospel are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a plan that shows us how to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become.

-- Dallin H. Oaks, "The Challenge to Become," *Ensign*, Nov 2000, 32–34

Prepare for the Haar

This life *is* a test. It is only a test—meaning, that's *all* it is. Nothing more, but nothing less. It is a test of many things—of our convictions

and priorities, our faith and our faithfulness, our patience and our resilience, and in the end, our ultimate desires...

--Sheri L. Dew, BYU Women's Conference, 1998

Don't be afraid of the testing and trials of life. Sometimes when you are going through the most severe tests, you will be nearer to God than you have any idea, for like the experience of the Master himself



in the temptation on the mount, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross at Calvary, the scriptures record, ‘And, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.’ (Matt. 4:11.) Sometimes that may happen to you in the midst of your trials...

--Harold B. Lee, Munich Germany Area Conference, 1973

(Referring to the wise man and the foolish man who built houses on different foundations) It is interesting to

notice that the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew against both houses! Living the gospel does not mean that we will everlastingly escape adversity. Rather, it means that we will be prepared to face and endure adversity more confidently.

-- Rafael E. Pino, *Ensign*, May 2009

Know Your Landmarks

It is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds... it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless woe.

--Helaman 5:12

Consistently attending sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps. So too will fasting, praying individually and as a family, visiting teaching, controlling our bodily appetites, teaching gospel principles, nourishing and nurturing, watching over one another, studying the scriptures... Keeping the commandments and following the words of the prophet may be the greatest preparation we can make for any eventuality to come."

--Barbara W. Winder, *Ensign*, Nov. 1988

First, follow the prophets. Listen to and abide by the counsel of the Brethren. Prophets often raise a voice of warning but also provide steady, pragmatic counsel to help us weather the storms of life... Second, keep an eternal perspective. Understand that change and challenges are part of God's plan... Third, have faith... President Thomas S. Monson has counseled us that "faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time, for one will dispel the other"... Fourth, be of good cheer... During the early, difficult days of the Church, the Lord counseled the Saints to be happy: "Be of good cheer, little children; for I am in your midst, and I have not forsaken you" (D&C 61:36).

-- Steven E. Snow, "Get On with Our Lives," *Ensign*, May 2009, 81–83

Don't Close Your Eyes to the Haar

Why is adversity often such a good schoolmaster? Is it because it teaches so many things? Through difficult circumstances we are often forced to learn discipline and how to work. In often unpleasant circumstances we may also be subjected to a buffeting, a honing, and a polishing that can come no other way.

--James E. Faust, *Ensign*, Feb 1998

Our Father in Heaven does not wish us to cower. He does not want us to wallow in our misery. He expects us to square our shoulders, roll up our sleeves, and overcome our challenges... That kind of spirit—that blend of faith and hard work—is the spirit we should

emulate as we seek to reach a safe harbor in our own lives. ...Use your ingenuity, your strength, your might to resolve your challenges. Do all you can do and then leave the rest to the Lord...

--Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 2000

Adversity is the first path to truth...

--Lord Byron, *Don Juan*

Trust Your Commanding Officers

Difficulty is a severe instructor, set over us by [one] who knows us better than we know ourselves, and he loves us better too. ...He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. This... conflict with difficulty [makes us acquainted] with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations. It will not suffer us to be superficial.

--Edmund Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France"

If our lives and our faith are centered on Jesus Christ and his restored gospel, nothing can ever go permanently wrong. On the other hand, if our lives are not centered on the Savior and his teachings, no other success can ever be permanently right.

--Howard W.

Hunter, *The*

Teachings of Howard

W. Hunter



We learn as our knowledge grows that the wind whistles loudest around the highest peaks. It is in this stage that we learn

the difference between cobwebs and cables. But as we nourish our seedling testimony, building on our portion of sure knowledge by stretching further the reach of our faith, our confidence matures and our perspective broadens. Our learning from experience over time yields knowledge having a special kind of depth, for the maturing of our spiritual understanding reflects itself in the maturing of our own character...

--Bruce C. Hafen, *The Believing Heart*

When You Can't See... Listen

Your trust in the Lord must be more powerful and enduring than your confidence in your own personal

feelings and experience... To exercise faith is to trust that the Lord knows what He is doing with you and that He can accomplish it for your

eternal good even though you cannot understand how He can possibly do it. We are like infants in our understanding of eternal matters and their impact on us



here in mortality. Yet at times we act as if we knew it all. When you pass through trials for His purposes, as you trust Him, exercise faith in Him, He will help you. That support will generally come step by step, a portion at a time. While you are passing through each phase, the pain and difficulty that comes from being enlarged will continue. If all matters were immediately resolved at your first petition, you could not grow...

--Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, 1995

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

--John 14:27

Embrace the “New Normal”

In his last conference talk, six months ago, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught how to respond to adversity. Part of his counsel included: “The next time you’re tempted to groan, you might try to laugh instead. It will extend your life and make the lives of all those around you more enjoyable.” Laughter and a good sense of humor can soften the bumps along life’s journey.

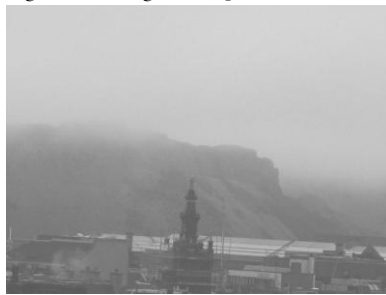
-- Steven E. Snow, “Get On with Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 81–83



I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection.

--Thomas Paine, *The Works of Thomas Paine*

Let us not presume that because the way is at times difficult and challenging, our Heavenly Father is not mindful of us. He is rubbing off our rough edges and sensitizing us for our great responsibilities ahead. May His blessings be upon us spiritually, that we may have a sweet companionship with the Holy Ghost, and that our footsteps might be guided along paths of truth and righteousness. And may each of us follow the Lord’s comforting counsel: “Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days” (D&C 24:8).



-- James E. Faust, *Ensign*, 1998

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

--2 Timothy 4:5–8

Pictures in order of appearance:

- 1, 2) Edinburg Castle, Scotland
- 3) View from Edinburg Castle
- 4) The Fog (Haar) Begins to Roll in from the Sea
- 5, 6, 7) The castle is going, going, GONE!

Katie Wilson lives in Virginia and has been homeschooling her four children for 10 years. She graduated from BYU with a B.S. in Psychology and a minor in English, then attended George Mason University, where she received her Master’s Degree in School Psychology. Throughout her graduate program, she was firmly committed to making public schools better. However, by the time her oldest son started first grade, Katie knew that homeschooling was the path her family was to take. She served as LDSEHE secretary for three years, and is now president.