

# When God Seems Hidden

(Zeke Flores, Source: some material from Boyd Jennings)

## Intro: *Sometimes people feel 10 feet tall and bulletproof!*

### A. Then, reality happens.

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1. Former heavy-weight boxer James (Quick) Tillis is a cowboy from Oklahoma who fought out of Chicago in the early 1980s. He still remembers his first day in the Windy City after his arrival from Tulsa. "I got off the bus with two cardboard suitcases under by arms in downtown Chicago and stopped in front of the Sears Tower. I put my suitcases down, and I looked up at the Tower and I said to myself, 'I'm going to conquer Chicago.' "When I looked down, the suitcases were gone."
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### B. The same can happen to Christians.

1. We feel like we can conquer the world for Christ, then suddenly feel like the world is beating us.
2. Must have felt that way for ancient Israel. We know that God "hid" Himself from them for their sinfulness.
  - a. *"Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear."* **Is 59:2**
  - b. *"There is no one who calls on your name, who arouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us into the power of our iniquities."* **Is 64:7**

### C. What about when He seems hidden through no fault of your own? It's easy & enjoyable to be "Christian" when blessings are abundant and times are pleasant.

1. Then, trouble hits in its various forms and God seems to have removed Himself.
  - a. Abraham was called the friend of God yet there were long stretches of time when God didn't speak to him.
  - b. David was a man after God's heart, yet sometimes felt like he was abandoned.
    - 1) **Psalm 10:1, 22:1, 43:2, 44:24, 88:13-14**
2. What seems to be may not actually be!
  - a. God didn't forget Abraham's friendship & He didn't forsake David.
  - b. What *seems* to be may not *actually* be!

# What To Do When God Seems Hidden

## I. Speak Your Mind To God

- A. Don't talk back, but let Him know how you feel and that you need His help.
  1. Job believed he could "vent" – speak freely – to God and He would listen. – **Job 7:11**
  2. Moses poured his heart out to God – **Num 11:10-15**
- B. We must approach God carefully and respectfully, but we can approach Him *honestly*.
  1. Cast your cares on Him – **1 Pet 5:6-7**
  2. Believe that He will help you – **Phil 4:6-7**

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    - a. When the Crystal Palace Exhibition opened in 1851, people flocked to London's Hyde Park to behold the marvels. One of the greatest marvels back then was steam. Steam plows were displayed. Steam locomotives. Steam looms. Steam organs. Even a steam cannon. Of all the great exhibits that year, the first-prize winner was a steam invention with seven thousand parts. When it was turned on, its pulleys, whistles, bells, and gears made a lot of noise, but, ironically, **the contraption didn't do a thing. It had seven thousand moving parts making a lot of commotion, but no practical use.** Perhaps our lives are somewhat like that worthless machine. We run around in every direction, worried about this and that, and making a lot of noise, but accomplishing nothing. Let us stop being anxious about a lot of things that don't really matter, and focus on things which are truly important.

## II. Remember God's Character Does Not Change

- A. He's not moody or unpredictable; He doesn't play favorites. He's always wanted the best for you and still does.
  1. **Psalm 102:25-28, Heb 13:8**
- B. He knows your difficulty and wants to help
  1. **Psalm 103:13-14**
- C. He can do His best work when we're weak.
  1. **2 Cor 12:9-10**
  2. There was an old violin-maker who chose the wood for his instruments from the north side of the trees because this was the side that faced the fiercest windstorms. When the storms raged, the trees groaned under the lashings but this is what gave them their strength. As the violin-maker said, "They are simply learning to be violins." Let us remember that by difficulties and hardships we are made strong.

### III. Remember What He's *Already* Done For You

- A. Sometimes we have short, or simply selective, memories.
  - 1. We can remember other difficult times, but what about the countless other *good* things God's done?
  - 2. **James 1:17** speaks of blessings. The same Father who is allowing you to mature through difficulty is the same One who has given you every "good thing" and every "perfect gift."
- B. Hymn "Precious Memories" (#464, HFW) reminds of the importance of recalling God's past goodness.
  - 1. Notice especially vs 3:
    - a. *As I travel on life's pathway, know not what the years may hold; As I ponder, hope grows fonder, Precious memories flood my soul.*
- C. Even if nothing good *ever happens again*, God has *still* demonstrated His love for you, Jesus has *still* become a man and died in sacrifice for you, and heaven *still* waits for those who trust Him!

### IV. Trust Him To Keep His Promises

- A. When life is demanding and challenging, it's difficult to keep trust and faith in God.
  - 1. The devil works that way; he wants you to think that God is somehow holding back on you but you must rise to the challenge!
- B. Circumstances don't change God nor do they alter His promises.
  - 1. **Heb 13:5-6**
    - a. Man can do a lot: Frustrate you, discourage you, anger you but he can't take God from you!
  - 2. Perhaps Job said it best: "***Though He slay me, Yet I will trust in Him.***" **Job 13:15**

**Conc:** *When we feel forsaken by God, we need to be reminded of James 1:2-8*

- A. Troubles are a test of faithfulness.
- B. The result is maturity.
  - 1. Doesn't make trouble any less painful.
  - 2. It may still be hard to have the desire to worship and serve Him in the throes of discouragement. Remember, someday our faith may have to face something a lot more formidable than our feelings.
  - 3. God may be preparing you for that!
- C. **INV**