

BOUNCING BACK

INTRODUCTION

Over the past six months, our lives have changed in a big way. The Covid pandemic has impacted almost every aspect of our lives. We wear masks when we go out, we all have sanitisers in our homes, vehicles and in our workplaces and we seem to be washing our hands all the time. Our social engagements have changed, church has changed and even something as simple as going to the shop to buy necessities such as bread and milk has changed.

All this has placed severe strain on us. There has been a psychological impact that many of us have felt. Some people have become accustomed to staying at home now find it quite traumatic to go out. Others who were used to working in an office environment may now work from home. Still others are having to cope with financial changes. On top of this, some have lost loved ones or are dealing with illness or the constant threat thereof.

With all that has taken place, is it possible that we as children of God can return to a place of stability, consistency, peace and success in the Lord? How can we deal with the trauma and stress that we have probably all encountered? Can we bounce back? Is it even possible for us to bounce back?

MESSAGE

John Maxwell wrote this about bouncing back from difficulties. *“for me, when things get to their most difficult, there is only one place for me to turn—and that’s to God. Sometimes life is filled with challenges that stretch us so far that we fear we may never snap back. You may find yourself struggling to make sense of your emotions, your thoughts, your very place in this world. Times like these require more than human strength. In the dark moments, I encourage you, bring your pain to God. He knows not only how to comfort you, but to bring you through the pain and into a new and better life. And if you reach out to Him, He will bring you through.”*

ITS ALL ABOUT GOD!

Psalm 37 is a good place to find some answers:

Psalm 37:3-4 (NKJV) Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Surely the desire on most of our hearts right now must be for the Lord to restore us from this crisis we have been experiencing. How can we receive the desire of our heart?

- **By trusting in the Lord** – do we still trust Him regardless of what we are experiencing?
- **By continuing to do good** – has this trial stopped us from doing good? We need to re-focus and get on with our calling to do the good works God has prepared in advance for us to do.
- **We need to dwell in the land** – Life must go on – let us choose to dwell in the land – maybe it's time to come out of hiding and start living again.
- **By making the Lord our delight** – God must be our central source of joy and fulfilment. The words of the old chorus say, *“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of the world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.”*

It's all about God! Is it possible that this crisis has taken our eyes off the One Who can be trusted? When we focus on life in Him, Psalm 37 tells us He will give us the desires of our heart.

Say this with me today: “My trust is in the Lord”.

COMMIT YOUR WAYS

As we continue reading Psalm 37, this theme of trust is further established, and we are encouraged to “commit our way” to the Lord.

Psalm 37:5 (NKJV) Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.

As I studied what it means to “commit our way” to the Lord, I was blessed by what I found.

- The word “commit” here comes from the Hebrew, “galal”. It means “to roll down, roll away, or remove”.
- The example given in my Bible's commentary is that of removing the load off a camel's back. The camel must first kneel down with all it's legs, then it tilts its body to one side, resulting in the load on it's back rolling off onto the ground.
- Can you picture it in your mind?
- Interestingly, there are two well-known words that come from the word “galal”:
 - Galilee, meaning circuit or district – Jesus was a Galilean.
 - Golgotha, meaning scull, or head – the place where Jesus was crucified.

This is a wonderful example of the truths and mysteries hidden in the Bible. Picture this: When a person kneels before Jesus the Galilean, who gave His life for us on Golgotha's cross, He invites us to roll all our cares, hopes and dreams onto Him and He takes responsibility to make our way successful and cause our troubles to come to pass!

Say with me today, "Jesus, I commit my ways to you".

COMMIT YOUR WORKS

Not only are we encouraged to commit, or roll our ways onto the Lord, but also our works:

Proverbs 16:3 (NKJV) Commit your works to the Lord, And your thoughts will be established.

The Amplified Bible says it even better:

Proverbs 16:3 (AMPC) Roll your works upon the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him; He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will, and] so shall your plans be established and succeed.

- What we need at this time is for our plans to be established and succeed!
- What are the ventures you want to attempt?
- What are the good works that you want to do?
- They can all be established and succeed if you are willing to "commit them" or roll them upon the Lord.

Today as we focus on bouncing back, we need to realise that the best way to do it is by committing everything we do to the Lord. It means handing them over to Him. We may have to do this on our knees as we humbly surrender to Him and give Him our hopes and dreams and ambitions.

Say with me today, "Jesus, I commit my works to you".

COMMIT YOUR CARES

As they say in the classics, "but wait, there's more". As I thought about us rolling our ways and our works onto the Lord, another precious scripture came to mind:

1 Peter 5:6-7 (AMPC) Therefore humble yourselves [demote, lower yourselves in your own estimation] under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you, 7 Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.

What an amazing example of progressive truth. The word "casting" here means "to throw upon". It's much the same as the camel which leans to the

side and the load rolls onto the ground. Here we are encouraged to roll our cares and troubles and worries and anxieties upon the Lord.

- Once again, as with the picture of the camel on its knees, we need to come in an attitude of humility. God exalts those who say, "Lord, I can't deal with these things, will you please help me with them".
- This is an invitation to trust in God's love – the verse says, "for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully".
- When we cast our cares upon Jesus, we are placing our full and utmost confidence in Him.

Are we willing this morning to come humbly before the Lord, even with tears if necessary, and cast each and every one of our anxieties, worries, and concerns, upon Him once and for all?

Say with me today, "Jesus, I cast my cares upon you".

A DIVINE EXCHANGE

There is one more thing we need to do to ensure that we bounce back. The process doesn't stop with us rolling or casting something off ourselves and onto Jesus, we need to complete a divine exchange. When we roll everything onto Jesus, He invites us to receive something from Him in return:

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT) Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Just when we thought it can't get better, it does. Let me read that again from the Amplified Bible:

Matthew 11:28-30 (AMPC) Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest. [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. 30 For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.

Once we have rolled and cast our ways, our works and our cares upon Jesus and He has given us His rest, He invites us to pick up something much better in its place, we pick up His good, comfortable, gracious and pleasant yoke which is not a burden but a pleasure to carry.

What a fantastic divine exchange. This is the secret to bouncing back. This is just what we need at a time such as this.

Are we willing to make the divine exchange today?

Say with me today, "Jesus, I take up your light and easy yoke".

CONCLUSION

At some stage in our lives, we all face difficulties, but the choice is ours, we can either allow the heavy load to overwhelm us, or we can bounce back. How do we do it?

We commit our ways, our works and our burdens onto the One who will help us achieve success. It's a divine exchange. Jesus carries our heavy load and in turn, we take up His easy load.

All that is required is that we trust in Him and humble ourselves before Him, realising that we cannot cope in our own strength.

We can bounce back. Is that the desire of our heart today? If so, let us re-focus on our God and King and on our Saviour Jesus Christ. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. He will establish us in all our ways!