



I AM STILL THANKFUL: GOD IS IN CONTROL

For many, 2020 has been a very challenging year. Although we entered this year full of expectation and excitement regarding what we would clearly see and what we would confidently do, the year has been filled with the Covid-17 Coronavirus (sickness, hospitalizations, death, fear and anxiety); murders of unarmed Black citizens at the hands of law enforcement (no charges for the officers, no justice for the families, peaceful productive protests, opportunist who engaged in rioting and looting); lying, toxic and self-serving politicians from the White House to local governments (politicization of best care health practices, manipulation of facts and data, alternative facts, disregard for human life, dismantling of democratic norms, voter suppression and voter disenfranchisement, erosion of confidence in free and fair elections); and the list goes on and on and on.

Some are filled with so much hopelessness, despair, discouragement, depression and concern and distress that they find little for which they are thankful. Consequently, they place their hope in the expectation of the changes that will occur in the next administration and the belief that things cannot get any worse and therefore, must get better moving forward.

I want to encourage you on today to remember that God is in control, and since God is in control, I am still thankful.

Over the years, I have resolved that far too many Christians give too much power and authority to the devil. For far too many Christians, when things do not materialize as they had anticipated, they inevitably give the credit to the devil. They can be heard saying, "Devil, you a lie..." or "Look at what the devil did." Unfortunately, if we give the devil that much power and authority in our lives, we will place more emphasis and attention on him than we place on God.

Note in Job Chapter 1, Verse 10, the devil said to God, *"¹⁰ Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?"* God did not say that He had a hedges around Job. The devil said that God had a hedge around Job. The devil knew that he could not touch Job because of God's hedge of protection around him. The devil said it, and God did not deny it. We can also be assured that God has a hedge of protection around us and the devil cannot touch us without the permission of God.

Therefore, when we, like Job, lose people and things close to us and when we lose our health and things personal to us, we can still be thankful because we know that God is in control.

WHEN I LOSE PEOPLE AND THINGS CLOSE TO ME

In one day, Job lost everything that he had and everyone that he had with the exception of his wife. As well, some of us have lost people and things close to us this year. We have lost family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. We have lost jobs, money, possessions and many things that were close to us. In response to his loss, Job gives us a perspective to assist us in responding to our losses:

Perspective: *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there"* For Job, when I came into this world I had nothing, and when I leave this world I will have nothing. Job recognized that none of us can take our possessions with us. We have heard the phrase, "You never see a U-Haul truck behind the hearse." It will assist us greatly to adopt a similar perspective - If I leave this world with what I came with, it has been a good life.

Principle: God is in Control: Everything Belongs to God. Job's perspective was accompanied with this principle. When I accept the reality that everything belongs to God – that includes me – I acknowledge the reality that I do not have to worry about losing what I have. Everything belongs to God – I belong to God – God will ensure that I have what I need.

Moses affirmed this in **Deuteronomy 8:18**, ¹⁸ *“And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. Additionally, David affirmed this in **1 Chronicles 29:14**, ¹⁴ *“But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You.**

Therefore, I am still thankful: The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord: When I lose people and things close to me, I am still thankful. If things never turn out the way that I desire, I am still thankful. If I lose everything that I thought was necessary for me to have a successful life, I am still thankful. Why? Because God is in control

WHEN I LOSE MY HEALTH AND THINGS PERSONAL TO ME

Job lost his health as he was afflicted with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. As well, some of us have had serious challenges with our health this year. Some of us have suffered through the Covid-19 virus, some have had other health challenged that have caused pain and discomfort in our bodies. For others, it is as if our bodies have forsaken us. In response to his health, Job gives us a perspective to assist us in responding to our health:

Perspective: As Job’s wife conceded to Job’s health challenges and requested that Job, “Curse God and die,” Job responded, “You are talking like a foolish woman.” Job’s perspective was based upon ignoring the ignorant. Job recognized that there are those who do not know nor understand our relationship with God. Consequently, it is easy for them to request that we give up, give in and give over to our losses of health and the things personal to us. As we adopt the perspective of ignoring the ignorant, it assists us in keeping our faith and focus on God and what we expect God to do for us.

Principle: God is in Control: Everything Balances Out. Job’s perspective was accompanied with this principle. When I accept the reality that everything balances out, I acknowledge the reality that I do not have to worry about losing my health and things personal to me. Everything balances out. I may not be able to do this, however, I can do that. I may not have the strength to accomplish this, however, I can accomplish that. When it is good, God is in control. When it is bad, God is in control.

Therefore, I am still thankful: Shall we accept good from God and not accept the bad?: When I lose my health and things personal to me, I am still thankful. If there are things that I cannot do, I am thankful for the things that I can do. If there are things that take me twice as long to accomplish than it used to, I am thankful that I can still accomplish them. I am still thankful. Why? Because everything balances out.

Therefore, **I AM STILL THANKFUL: GOD IS IN CONTROL.** In examining Job’s story, who initiated everything that Job went through? God did. Likewise, when I examine my life, who initiates everything that I go through? God does. Even more importantly, in examining Job’s story, who established the limitations that were placed upon what the devil could do to Job? God did. Likewise, when I examine my life, who establishes the limitations that are placed upon what the devil can do to me? God does.

Therefore, I am still thankful: **God is in Control – Everything Belongs to God, and God is in Control – Everything Balances Out**

WORK FOR THE WEEK

NOVEMBER MEMORY VERSE

²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:27

NOVEMBER MEDITATION QUOTE

“We are created in the image of God...Differences in outcomes derive from differences in opportunities.”

Samuel D. Proctor

TODAY'S STUDY QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION:

Is it easier to do the hard things or the easy things? _____

What is the level of my belief? _____

FOR THE YOUTH

Do you believe in miracles? _____

Do you really believe that God CAN and WILL perform miracles for you? _____
