



A Blended Family Workbook
Finding God In
The Impossible

Create Peace & Harmony
In Your Home

Overcoming The Impossible Situation

by David A. DePra

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Finding God in the Impossible

Have you ever been in an "impossible situation?" I mean, as a Christian who is walking with God? An "impossible situation" is one in which we do not have what we need -- AND -- have no way of getting it. Now, while that may sound a bit frightening, it is exactly the place where God wants to bring us. It is the place of spiritual bankruptcy, and of utter reliance upon Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian walking with God, God will again and again bring you to face the impossible. You will face the impossible regarding yourself, and the impossible regarding the rest of this fallen creation. Only then can you see the Truth: You ARE helpless. Jesus Christ HAS won the victory.

Does that sound strange? Many Christians think that God has called them to win great victories for Him, to attack the enemy, or to overcome great obstacles. But He has not. God has called us to become weak and reliant upon Him, as "little children." This means that we must again and again face our true self, and see our death in Christ. Again and again, we must see the sufficiency of Jesus over all that would otherwise defeat us.

"The Impossible Situation" is God's vehicle for making this Truth operative in us. Most of us already KNOW we are nothing, at least from a factual standpoint; a doctrinal standpoint. But few of us really KNOW it by experience. God wants to take what we know, in principle, and bring us into the reality of it. For this, He uses "The Impossible Situation."

The "Super-Christian" Syndrome

There is a common notion among Christians that true spirituality is a matter of such "maturity" in Christ that you are no longer human. We have this idea of a "super-Christian" to which we aspire. This "super-Christian" is so mature that he never reacts terribly to anything. He is always calm, full of love, and filled with faith.

He hardly has a thought cross his mind which isn't linked up to a Bible verse. He rarely sees anything in this world which does not speak to him some wonderful spiritual lesson. Rarely is he exposed as the "wretched man" of Romans 8, for he is sort of "beyond all that." And no matter what comes his way, he wins the victory. He is able to overcome in the most fiery trials, coming through as gold every time. His every word is almost inspired. He is someone who "has arrived" in God. He has reached a plateau of spiritual fellowship which few have reached.

This exaggeration aptly describes where many Christians think they ought to be spiritually. They are convinced of it for several reasons. One is that there are those in the Body of Christ who give the impression that they have arrived at such a plateau. They act like they are living on a higher level than the rest of us. And because we all want to get there, or give the impression that we are there, we tend to set up this "super-Christian" as our goal. We use it as the standard by which we take our "spiritual temperature."

Another reason we think the "super-Christian" should be our goal is that we are governed by natural thinking. Natural thinking will always create God in man's image. Or, to put it another way, natural thinking will always construct a natural substitute for the spiritual -- and then accept it as the genuine. Thus, we have the "super-Christian" model. He is nothing but prideful man's idea of greatness super-imposed on God's idea. He is clothed with spiritual clothes and described with spiritual terms. But he is a lie. And he needs to be eradicated from our thinking.

Our false ideas of spiritual maturity carry with them a real danger. Such error can literally come to govern a person. Many Christians live in constant defeat because they are trying to achieve this false standard -- a standard which is not of God. Some fear they have actually backslidden. But this "super-Christian" is not of God, and God is not working in us towards that end. Unless we see this, we will continue to try to achieve something which is totally foreign to God's grace. We will continue to work at cross-purposes with God.

God has not left it up to us to find our own freedom in these matters. He has taken the initiative to set us free. And the primary vehicle He uses is that of "The Impossible Situation." Through the impossible situation we learn, by experience, not only what we are made of -- flesh -- but we learn who Jesus Christ is.

We learn, by experience, some other things, too. We learn that life is the product of death. We see that we must decrease that He might increase. We learn what it means to lose our lives to find them. And we learn what it really means to experience our weakness, and His greatness. Only if we learn these things by experience have we learned them. The impossible situation is our teacher.

Seeing What God Has Always Seen

Any trial which God brings is for the purpose of "proving" us. That means that it is for the purpose of "proving" who we really are. This is, however, a double-edged sword. It means that a trial will have to expose us for who we are in Adam -- naked and spiritually bankrupt. But then, if we respond to God, the trial will refine us, bringing forth the character of Jesus Christ.

The first part of this process is terrifying at times. No one likes seeing themselves for who they really are. But despite the fact that we are shocked and surprised at our terrible condition, it is nevertheless impossible to surprise or shock God. If, through a trial, we are beginning to see ourselves in a light that terrifies us, then we are only seeing what He has already seen. And it is cause for rejoicing. God is revealing the Truth to us. That spells freedom.

Reduction and depletion is quite disorienting. We aren't adjusted to live in it. But through the course of time, and through a series of on-going "impossible situations," we will experience an adjustment of spirit and focus. We'll live IN spiritual poverty, but rejoice in the greatness of Jesus Christ. We'll not lament about our spiritual condition; neither will we exalt ourselves. We'll be too absorbed with Jesus Christ for any of that old stuff.

Types of Impossible Situations

The "impossible situation" which all people have in common is our condition in Adam. It's an impossible situation because there is absolutely nothing we can do about it. None of us chose to be born with the sin nature, and none of us can deliver ourselves from it. Without the initiative of God to save us by His grace, we would all remain in that hopeless, impossible condition.

There are, of course, all of the continual manifestations of our impossible condition in Adam. These are the specific sins and habits which govern us. Although they vary from individual to individual, they are nevertheless manifestations of the same impossible spiritual condition into which we are born. As much as we might try to purge ourselves from them, we cannot. We cannot obey ourselves out of them, nor can we simply snap our fingers in faith and make them go away. There is nothing of ourselves by which we might find freedom.

A third type of "impossible situation" we face are trials. All Christians will meet testings and trials which seem to be impossible to overcome, indeed, impossible to endure. These unreasonable trials can go on for years. Left to ourselves, these trials can be impossible to reason with, deal with, and live in.

It is vital that we understand what God is after in these impossible situations. He is not expecting us to get ourselves out of them. No. How do we know that? Simply because He has seen to it that we are in them to begin with!

God has specifically planned and orchestrated many of the impossible situations we face as Christians for the expressed purpose of reducing and depleting us. He is doing a work in us by His grace.

What About Sin?

Once we understand that God orchestrates the impossible situation for our good, we might ask another question: "What if our impossible situation is the result of some sin or mistake on our part? Does God leave us to fend for ourselves if that is the case?"

No. Once we surrender our impossible situation to God, it becomes HIS impossible situation. And besides, ALL impossible situations involve sin on our part. How could they not? There is little we do that is not tainted with some form of unbelief or disobedience. If God only helped us through a trial when we were perfect, we'd never received help at all. If God depended upon us to do the right thing before He would do the right thing, He'd never get anywhere with us.

God is a redemptive God. As such, He will take even our sin and mold it into an instrument by which He might conform us to the image of Christ. That doesn't mean sin is good, or that we can in the slightest regard justify it. It simply means that God, before the foundation of the world, took sin upon Himself in the Lamb Who was slain, and is able to use even the worst about us as a tool for His eternal good.

For example, suppose you are someone who has problems controlling anger. The more you try, the more you fail. It is an impossible situation. Your constant failure to overcome anger, and the fact you are continually exposed as a sinner through your manifestation of anger, is a tool God will use to prove to you how much you need Him. He will use your sin to show you how bankrupt spiritually you really are. That's good. But that doesn't make anger good. It makes God, who works redemption through all things, VERY good.

Sin is never God's will. But sin IS. Rather than try to hide it, God intends to expose it for what it is. He does this so that we might realize our condition, and see our need for the provision He has made through Jesus Christ.

Out of Egypt

We find a blueprint of God's pattern for the impossible situation in the book of Exodus. There we find out not only how God views the impossible, but also what He wants us to do IN the impossible.

Everyone remembers the story of Israel's deliverance through the Red Sea. It is the blueprint mentioned. Israel had waited for 430 years to be delivered from captivity. Now that day had finally arrived. They could hardly believe it. They were actually leaving Egypt. Their freedom had not come easy. Pharaoh had hardened his heart so many times, and had vowed never to free them. But God prevailed. Here they were, marching out of Egypt.

There are many lessons we can learn from God's dealing with Pharaoh. Have you ever asked as to why there had to be so much "back and forth" with Pharaoh? That is, why did God allow him to keep changing his heart?

Futhermore, why did God require Pharaoh's "permission" to let His people go in the first place? God could have smitten Egypt so badly that Israel could have left unopposed. Or

He could have caused Israel to rise up and win the victory over Egypt. God could have done anything He wanted. But instead, He seems intent on trying to get Pharaoh's "permission" for Israel to leave. Why?

From a natural standpoint, God was trying to give Pharaoh a chance to obey Him. Yes, even Pharaoh was not a lost cause, at least in the beginning. It was only after his continual choices to harden his heart in the face of Truth that he became so. In that entire "back and forth" affair of plagues, God was trying to bring redemption to Egypt. He was giving them the chance to turn and acknowledge Him; a chance to obey Him.

That's the natural perspective. However, it is in the spiritual type that we find the real Truth. Egypt is a type of old creation. It stands for our captivity to the sin nature. It is a bondage to death. Pharaoh, on the other hand, stands not for the Devil -- but for US. The old man. The fundament of what we are in Adam.

This tells us why God had to deal with Pharaoh the way He did. God had to illustrate that nothing short of DEATH can take care of "our Pharaoh." All the plagues in the world cannot whip Pharaoh into shape. He and Egypt must DIE. What a message this is to remember! All the religion, ascetism, trials, plagues, arguing, and reasoning, cannot solve what is wrong with the human race. Only death --followed by a resurrection can solve it.

Jesus said it best. He said, "A bad tree cannot bear good fruit." He also said, "That which is born of flesh IS flesh." It does not matter how successful you are at making your flesh behave. When all is said and done, it is still flesh. And it must die in Adam. There is no other path unto eternal life in Christ.

The first Passover pictures the death which grips humanity being carried out. When the first-born of Egypt died, their means of handing down inheritance, indeed, of handing down life itself, is cut off. The death of the first-born in those days was a devastating thing. It meant that the present generation had no one to whom they could pass on their wealth, culture, inheritance, and existence. They had no way to perpetuate themselves.

It was only by eating the Passover lamb, and by smearing it's blood on the door posts that Israel could escape this death. Here we see the Truth of salvation. Only in Christ do we find deliverance from the death which abides in the old creation.

By God's Grace

God dealt with Pharaoh the way He did because, as we find in the book of Hebrews, He wanted to show His glory. That doesn't mean that God was "showing off." It means that He wanted to show that He could win a complete victory despite opposition from Pharaoh. And spiritually, He was showing that He has victory over that old creation, despite it's total inability to cooperate with Him. Note that. It's important. Some of still think that, no, we can't save ourselves, but at least we deserve "credit" for believing God.

We think that we somehow drew God's attention to us with our faith. We at least cooperated with God, and sort of "gave Him permission" to save us. But that is nonsense. God tells us that "none are righteous, no, not one." We can't do a thing to generate an ounce of faith, or a deed of righteousness. We CANNOT initiate our salvation.

If we could, it would NOT be by God's grace alone. This doesn't mean that God saves us against our will. It means that if we accept Jesus Christ, it is because God first took the initiative to speak the Word of Truth in our hearts. There is no question about this. Romans says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

(Romans 10:17) Jesus said, "No one can come to Me except the Father who sent me draw Him." (John 6:44) He also said, "You did not choose Me. I choose you." Man can initiate NOTHING. Not salvation. Not any revelation. Not his freedom from error. God must initiate all of these things. But once

He does, we then have a choice. We can either allow God to adjust us to the Truth, or choose to adjust the Truth to fit our own spiritual agenda.

Israel's deliverance from Egypt was solely by the grace of God. Did you ever notice that they had absolutely nothing to do with winning their freedom? Nothing. God did it all. All He required of them was that they accept the Passover Lamb and abide under His Blood by faith.

God's Purpose

On the morrow after that first Passover night, Israel went forth from Egypt. As the terrible night symbolized death in Christ, so did their emergence from Egypt symbolize resurrection in Him. They had spent the night in their "tombs," covered by the Blood. Now they came out, leaving the land which had held them captive for 430 years.

Note here that the Passover night and following morning are symbolic of our initial salvation experience. As with Israel, our initial salvation is, at first, judicial and "in fact only." We really haven't lived in it yet. But it is nevertheless a finished reality. We aren't going to get "more saved" than we are at that point. Likewise, Israel couldn't get more delivered than they were that wonderful morning. They WERE free. They simply needed to begin experiencing it.

So Israel came forth unto freedom. They were headed to the promised land, which God had promised Abraham. In the mind of the average Israelite, probably about the last thing expected was trouble. Yet that was exactly where they were headed.

Here we once again see ourselves. Seldom when we begin walking with God do we imagine trouble. No. We expect blessings, success, and exaltation. After all, God is on our side, isn't He? Israel was about to learn a vital lesson which is recorded for our admonition. Never think that when the Bible says that God works all things together for "good," that any of us have insight to define what "good" IS. "Good," according to God, is something ETERNAL. "Good" is God's eternal purpose being worked out in us. Everything that is natural and temporal is secondary and subservient to that eternal purpose.

That may not sit well with many of us. But it is true. God's primary goal is not to make our temporal lives happy, comfortable, healthful, prosperous, or successful. His goal is not to give us what WE want. It is to give us, and work in us what HE wants. And if we would only believe and yield, we'd find out someday, in eternity, that He was right all along. God really does know what is GOOD. It is a GOOD that lasts forever.

God's purpose in this age is to conform us to the image of His Son. He wants us to become living witnesses to His grace. That purpose, however, isn't in addition to salvation. It IS salvation -- being worked out. The impact which salvation has upon an individual, if that individual will yield, is to make them weak and spiritually bankrupt. It is to bring them to the place of utter reliance upon God. Then, and only then, will we begin to manifest the Son of God.

Led Into the Impossible

The vehicle which God uses to bring us to the place of depletion is the "impossible situation." God will deliberately maneuver us into that place so that He might expose our weakness and His sovereign grace.

God led Israel into the impossible, immediately after He led them out of Egypt. He gave Israel specific instructions through Moses. He told them exactly WHERE to encamp. d He told them WHY. He said, Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over and against Baal-zephon. Before it shall you encamp by the sea. For Pharoah will say of the children of Israel, "They are entangled in the land. The wilderness has shut them in." And I will harden Pharoah's heart, that he shall follow after them. And I will be honored upon Pharoah, and upon all his host, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. (Exodus 14:2-4)

There can be no doubt in reading this passage that God deliberately told Israel to encamp where He knew they would be trapped. In other words, Israel got themselves into an impossible situation, not because they sinned, and not because they made a mistake, but because they OBEYED GOD. Their entire situation had been orchestrated by God for His purposes, and for the good of Israel.

It is so easy to assume that when we find ourselves in the impossible that we got there through disobedience, a lack of faith, or by somehow missing the will of God. But this is not necessarily so. We may be in an impossible situation because God Himself has led us there. But even if we did get ourselves there through some sort of disobedience, we can always surrender ourselves to God, right now, in our situation. It then becomes HIS situation, and one through which He is able to work.

Israel found themselves trapped. They had the Red Sea in front of them, and the Egyptians at their backs. They were hemmed in. There was no escape. But God had Israel right where He wanted them. There was absolutely

nothing they could do to help themselves. Either God would take the initiative to act or they were doomed.

Have you ever felt like this? Yes, sometimes circumstances in life do make us feel this way. But that is the outward. Have you ever felt this way about your inward life? Does it seem as if God has led you out into salvation, only to allow your old nature and temperament to pursue you? Does it seem as if you have no hope of possibly overcoming your inward problems? Do you feel as if you have totally exhausted yourself trying to become a spiritual person, only to fail again and again?

Rejoice and be glad. This hopeless situation is not because you have fallen away from God. It is because God has you in His hand. Christians must get this. It is vital. We must understand that when we find ourselves completely at our wit's end, with nothing we can do to help ourselves, it is because God Himself has brought us there. It is His will that we be there so that we might realize our real condition. Then, and only then, are we reduced enough to be willing to freely receive His grace.

The "Cost" of Grace

Reduction and depletion -- the exposure of myself as spiritually bankrupt -- is the "cost" of grace. It is the "cost" of Truth. It is the price I must pay if I want to truly experience the resurrection freedom on the other side of the Cross.

But isn't grace free? Absolutely. The "cost" spoken of here is really no cost at all. It's merely a letting go of death itself; of the terrible bondage brought upon us through Adam. I cannot pay anything for grace. But if I am to walk in grace, I must let go of those things which bind me when God brings me to the choice.

Can you see how completely distorted our view of God and His grace have been? You and I think that we deserve a reward for our suffering, trials, and faith. Seeing things this way is difficult at first. Most of us tend to view suffering and trials as things we have done for God, rather than vehicles God has used for our freedom.

We tend to focus upon "all that we have given up for God," or upon "all that we have suffered for God." But this is nonsense and pride. None of us have done anything FOR God. He has done everything for us. All suffering which we experience, and all loss which we experience, is nothing more than our flesh coming under the power of the redemption.

Even those sufferings which are the product of a burden God lays upon us are a part of the greater redemption He is working in the Body of Christ. We should stop focusing upon what we have done for God, and begin worshipping Him for what He has done for us. We would be amazed at the freedom which would come.

Imagine Israel saying to God, "Well, Lord, we know that you have delivered us from Egypt, and have even opened up the Red Sea for us, but it sure was terrifying for us. And we did suffer as we went through these things. What a price you expected us to pay for our freedom. We hope you appreciate all of this."

Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? Yet that's about the way Israel did talk to God. They cried out to God and actually accused Him of betraying them. They said, "Because there were no graves in Egypt have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore have you dealt with us to carry us forth out of Egypt?" God forbid that we repeat this in our lives.

Faith may not know what God is doing. But it trusts Him to know. And as far as the way we react to suffering, we can trust God even if our reactions and emotions do not line up with faith. That is part of what it means to STAND.

We stand firm in faith even if our reactions seek to move us. God doesn't want us to merely possess salvation. He wants His salvation to possess us. And the only way this can become a reality is if we face our actual NEED for salvation, and then taste God's grace and sovereignty in Jesus Christ. Facing our need is never fun. It means standing at the Red Sea with the Egyptians coming down upon you. But tasting the grace of God is worth it. It results in the death and resurrection of Christ being made more manifest in us.

God's Pattern for the Impossible

As Israel cried out to God, God told Moses what they needed to do. He said,

Fear Not
Stand Still
See Salvation
Move Forward

This is God's four-fold pattern for us in the impossible. Regardless of what situation we are in, and no matter how impossible it seems, we can obey these commands. They are always the result of believing and resting in Jesus Christ.

Again remember -- God orchestrates the impossible in order to reduce and deplete us, that we might obey these commands and thus pass through a death and resurrection experience. It is His vehicle for conforming us to the image of His Son.

Fear Not

Fear is always a lie. Always. This is easily proven from the Bible. Paul writes that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind." So, if God has not given us a spirit of fear, then NO fear can be of God.

John likewise writes, "There is no fear in love. But perfect loves casts out fear, because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us." God is love, and God is perfect. Therefore, there can be no fear in God, and no fear that is of God. None. Ever.

There is no maybe about this. It is certain. Fear and condemnation, both of which beset many Christians, are lies of the enemy. What makes them so powerful and convincing is that they consist of more than just words and arguments. They are accompanied by feelings. They are carried by spiritual forces which mold themselves to fit our individual tendencies. The enemy knows exactly what kind of fear and condemnation we will more easily accept. He knows what to appeal to in us.

God's admonition to us regarding fear carries no instructions as to how to argue with it. We are, in fact, never to argue or reason with fear. Fear is utterly UNreasonable. God simply tells us to "fear not." In other words, no matter how real fear seems, and no matter how convincing the doubts are which it creates, "fear not." You may not be able to shut fear up, or to hide from it. But stop allowing yourself to be moved by it.

This will not be easy at first, especially if you are well-trained to obey fear. But the only way to "fear not" is to...well...fear not. Right now. You have to begin by doing it. And as you do, you'll find that the realness of fear will be exposed in the light of the Truth you are obeying. How do we fear not? Not by attacking fear, or by trying to purge it out of ourselves. We "fear not" by treating fear the way we would treat any lie which won't stop talking to us: Tune it out. By tuning in the Truth. The greatest tool to combat fear is speaking the Truth in your heart.

Israel was told to "fear not." God knew that fear was motivating them to say the things they were saying about God. He knew that if they would just "fear

not" they would come to their senses and then be able to obey the next aspect of His command: Stand still.

Stand Still

"Stand still" is the result of obeying "fear not." Fear seeks to move me out of my stand by faith in Christ. Once I "fear not" I will be able to stand still in the Truth. It takes faith to "stand still." That's because it takes faith to call everything fear suggests what it is, a lie, and to hold to the Truth. By faith I must refuse to be moved by my feelings, emotions, desires, fears, and self-will. I must cast these down and stand against them in the Truth, regardless of cost.

Standing still will cost me much of the flesh. God will allow all kinds of contradiction to come to what I believe about His faithfulness. I'll see the Red Sea in front of me, and the enemy behind. And I won't know where God is. That's terrifying. But God says, "Fear not. Stand still. And you will see salvation."

This is a normal experience for a Christian. It is not a sign that something is wrong. It is a sign that everything is right. It's the way God works to bring us into the reality of our salvation.

About the last thing Israel wanted to do was stand still. The Egyptians were coming down upon them. They wanted to run. But notice something here. If they had tried to run, they would not have been in the position to either see the miracle, nor experience it. They would have been dispersed in many directions.

That is always the result of NOT standing still. It is confusion and spiritual fragmentation. God doesn't want that for us. He says, "Stand still!"

A Stand

The Bible reveals that the Christian life, indeed, all spiritual warfare and overcoming, is primarily a STAND. There is a reason why God pictures the life of faith as a stand. It's because "It is finished." The victory is complete.

There is nothing we can do to add to Christ's finished work. We can only STAND in it. And we must stand by faith. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to STAND against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness

in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withSTAND in the evil day, and having done all, to STAND. STAND therefore, having your loins girt about with the Truth. (Eph. 6: 10-14)

Do you see the clear indication here of a victory ALREADY won? Sure. You can't STAND in something which isn't there. But now that it is there, we must stand in that victory, by faith, against all that would oppose it, contradict it, move us from it, or deceive us into giving it away. Even the "wrestling" mentioned in the above passage is not a wrestling to win ground. It is a wrestling to HOLD ground. We are not called to win a victory. We are called to "stand still" in His finished victory.

The failure to see this creates terrible strife and confusion in the life of a Christian. That's because such blindness causes us to operate in a way which is contrary to all Truth. Things could not possibly work right for us. If we spend our lives trying to win something which is already freely given to us, we'll never experience the real victory.

There are many other ways the Bible has of picturing our stand. For instance, it tells us to "hold fast." Or it may say, "endure to the end." And then there is the wonderful way which the book of Hebrews pictures our stand as the true sabbath rest. But when all is said and done, the Christian life is a STAND upon the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Now, that is a very simplistic Truth. But how complicated we make it! So much unnecessary difficulty in Christian lives is the result of not seeing and believing this foundational Truth. We are not to spend our energy trying to win a victory! We are to STAND in, and refuse to be moved from, His finished victory!

Examine your spiritual life and ask yourself, "Am I operating in this problem as if the victory is already won in Christ, or am I acting as if it is up to me to somehow win the victory?" We need to meditate and pray upon such questions and ask God to bring us to a fresh realization of them.

In Israel's situation, they needed to "stand still" upon the fact that God had delivered them, and had promised them the land. That was their natural counterpart to the salvation experience, followed by life in the Lord. Only if they stood still by faith would they be in the physical position to cross the Red Sea where God parted it. Likewise, unless we stand by faith, we won't be in the spiritual position to experience the victory Jesus has won for us.

See Salvation

Israel HAD salvation. They were delivered from Egypt. But there, at the Red Sea, it sure didn't seem like it. In fact, it seemed as if they had nothing but death all around them. The only way in which Israel could actually come to SEE the salvation which God had given them was to "fear not," and to "stand still."

So it is with us. If we choose to fear, we will not lose our salvation. And if we allow fear to move us from faith, then we are still forgiven and saved through Christ. But we won't "see salvation," that is, we won't actually experience the reality of what God has done. The reality of it will remain only a judicial fact.

As mentioned earlier, everything we experience as a Christian is actually the same salvation we receive by grace being made manifest. Everything is. We know this is true because in Christ are all spiritual riches, and it is Christ whom we receive once for all by faith. The rest of our experience is merely the working out of what God has deposited within us. Our experience is a "seeing" of the salvation which we first received by faith.

How did Israel "see salvation?" They saw it when Egypt was drowned. God told them, "For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall see them again no more, forever." In other words, "Right now you are seeing your enemy. That is all you can see, feel, or sense. But if you will, by faith, fear not and stand still in the Truth, you won't see this terrible enemy anymore. You'll actually see the death of it. You'll actually experience the freedom I've given you."

God is telling us that we walk by faith and not by sight. Christians "see" many things which seem to contradict the Truth. We "see" our fears and feelings about things. We "see" based on our point of reference. But God says, "These things may be all you can presently see. Maybe you can't stop seeing them right now. But don't believe what you "see." Don't be moved from your stand in faith by them. Instead, believe what I've said. Stand by faith even if it kills you to do so. If you do, the day will come when you will "see" your enemy no more. You'll SEE SALVATION."

If you ever wondered how Christians are able to gain insight into Truth, or how they are able to come to the place where they know Jesus Christ in an intimate way, this is the answer. You must stand by faith against all of the forces of the flesh and hell, to the point where it kills you. Then you will be raised in the matter in Christ. You will gain a perspective and discernment which cannot be gained through any other means, but that of death and

resurrection. Because your salvation has been worked out in you to a greater degree, you see things you cannot see otherwise.

Move Forward

The next words God spoke to Moses are amazing. Here was Israel trapped by the Red Sea with the Egyptians drawing near. They had no where to go. God tells them to, "Fear not, stand still, see salvation." Then He says, "Why are you crying to Me? Tell the children of Israel to MOVE FORWARD." (Ex. 14:15)

Move forward? To where? The Red Sea had not yet been parted. And they didn't have the slightest idea that God would do such a thing. Yet God speaks to them almost as if they should have known. In this we see that our stand by faith is not a passive one. There is a definite "moving forward" in obedience. Yet even as we move forward in obedience, we nevertheless continue to "stand still" by faith in the victory of Christ.

It is not without significance that God expected Israel to "move forward" BEFORE they actually came to "see salvation." It is not without significance that God expected them to "move forward" even before He parted the Red Sea. God never gives us the power to obey, or acts upon us, forcing us to do anything. We are empowered AS we obey.

Things tend to open up spiritually only a few steps ahead of us. Imagine yourself in a prison cell. You are told that you are set free. But you are still in the cell. Until you actually believe what you've been told, and get up and push open the door, you won't see your salvation. You would still be free, in a factual way, but not free in an experiential way. God says, "I've delivered you. It is finished. Now fear not. Stand still by faith in that Truth. You'll see salvation."

But then He says, "As you fear not, and as you stand still by faith, I want you to move forward." He is telling us that we are to move in obedience. Faith always results in works.

But Where are We Going?

Israel's journey through the Red Sea was not a type of initial salvation. No. Initial salvation occurred on Passover night, and the next morning when they left Egypt. Rather, the journey through the Red Sea is typical of our "seeing salvation" worked out. Just as Israel finally experienced the death of "their Egypt," so we must too pass through many death experiences if we are to "see our enemy no more."

Here we come to the conclusion of the impossible situation. The conclusion is death and resurrection. It is the death and resurrection, not of some circumstance or trial, out here. No. It is the death and resurrection of ME. I must actually pass through a spiritual experience designed by God to WORK OUT the salvation which He has WORKED IN by His grace. I was planted into the death and resurrection of Christ when I was saved. Now I must grow to manifest the fact that I am planted, and come to manifest that death and resurrection in my heart and life.

Jesus said that when a woman is in travail, her focus is on her pain. She is suffering greatly, and that is what occupies her. But once the child is born, she forgets her pain. She now has a child to concentrate upon. And seeing that child makes it all worth it.

This is what God is teaching us through the impossible situation. He is saying, "Fear not. Stand still. And you will see the salvation of the Lord." The sufferings of this present time are not comparable to the glory which is to be revealed in us.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Individual Help with Current Difficulties

We can work with you individually or as a couple to work through and resolve current difficulties. This is not therapy but an action oriented approach that focuses on helping you achieve the outcome you desire.

Call **800-946-8112** to schedule an appointment.

Initial Consultation -- \$199

Single Issue Call -- \$90/ hour

Often you will choose to work with us for a longer period of time in your life. That's why we also offer discounts off our hourly rate for pre-purchasing multiple sessions.

Specialized Programs

We offer specialized programs on key stepfamily related issues. All programs offer personalized support and will go a long way towards helping you build the happy marriage and family situation that you really want. Each program offers a 100% no questions money back guarantee.

"Don't Jump Without a Parachute" A six week pre-marriage course that includes all of the information a couple needs to get their new family off to the right start.

"Your First Year in a Stepfamily" A six week course that provided couples with the information, tools and support they need to survive their first year of marriage.

"Pattern of Success for Stepfamilies" A six week course in which couples learn a proven system used by almost all successful blended families and how to apply it to their own specific situation.

"The Art of Discipline in a Blended Family" A two week course in which couples learn positive discipline techniques to create a more harmonious home.

"Fight Less – Talk More" A six week course in which couples learn 7 vital skills to help them have more fun and argue less.

"How to Deal with a Hostile Ex" A two week course on how to minimize the disruption and pain that can be caused by a hostile ex. Learn 5 ways to minimize the impact it has on your children.

"Mastering Loyalty Conflicts" A two week course on how to balance the conflicting needs that occur as a natural result of living in a stepfamily.

"Help Your Children Succeed in School and in Life" A six week course in which couples learn how to motivate and their children to learn and do better in school and in life.

ABOUT WINNINGSTEPFAMILIES

Winning Stepfamilies is dedicated to providing practical support and help to couples who have formed blended families. Our vision is to become the number one source of blended family support and education in the United States.

About Steve & Barbara Straub

The challenges of working through the issues of remarriage and stepfamily life is what led Steve and Barbara to start Winning Stepfamilies. Their goal is to offer hope and encouragement to single parents and stepfamilies by sharing their own successes, failures, and what they have learned through their extensive research. Steve and Barbara believe this journey should never be taken alone.

Steve has studied early childhood education and development, divorce, remarriage, stepfamily dynamics, and the development of human potential intensively for over 20 years. He has first-hand experience with not only the impact of divorce but the struggles of remarrying couples who were not prepared for the daily challenges of stepfamily living.

Barbara understands the immense challenges facing today's stepparents and stepfamilies. She is a stepmother, a stepfamily small group leader, and has studied leadership, group dynamics, human development, marriage improvement, remarriage, and how to overcome the daily challenges of stepfamily living for over 15 years. She has helped hundreds of individuals solve some of the most difficult problems

Phone: 800-946-8112 Fax: 800-946-8169
www.winningstepfamilies.com