

A Deeper Experience

DAY 9—A STRENGTH GREATER THAN DOUBT

“For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Tim. 1:12).

“The test is positive; you’re pregnant!” I could not wait to share this good news with my husband. Our daughter was almost two, and this pregnancy would space the children perfectly. Our joy turned into sadness, however, not once, but twice. Later that same day I experienced some pain in my lower abdomen and ended up in the hospital. Testing proved the doctor’s suspicion—an ectopic pregnancy. One of my fallopian tubes had ruptured, causing life-threatening internal bleeding. Surgery repaired the physical damage, but not my disappointed heart.

After many years of unsuccessful attempts to get pregnant, my physician told me that it was impossible due to the tissue damage caused by the hemorrhaging. I was determined to prove him wrong! In my heart I said, “I serve a big God; He performed a miracle for Sarah, allowing her to get pregnant against all odds, and He is able to perform a miracle for me.” I put all my faith in the hands of God, and it wasn’t long before I found myself pregnant again. God answered my prayer! We were so excited. Our faith in God’s promises and our love for Him increased.

My husband and I were walking along a peaceful river on a sunny Sabbath afternoon when I felt a familiar pain in my side. I had felt this way before, but quickly dismissed it. Later that evening, the pain intensified, and again, I ended up in the hospital. Tests confirmed my fears—it was a second ectopic pregnancy, and I needed emergency surgery.

What happens when a Christian puts all of his faith in the promises of God, only to be disappointed? Where is the good spoken of in Romans 8:28? Clouds of doubt covered me. I wondered, *Why, God? I don’t get it! Why did you answer my prayer, then take it away? Why did You let me down?*

I lay in my hospital bed feeling very discouraged. I was physically in pain and emotionally drained. I didn’t want to see anyone! My nurse assured me that hot water would help me feel better and helped me into the shower. Tears streamed down my face. I thought I should pray but couldn’t. I felt totally abandoned by God. The steam from the shower was like the dark clouds of a storm. The devil was right on time to suggest, “Is this how God rewards those who place their trust in Him? Is this how He shows His love?”

But God had not left me. I was impressed to repeat the following words aloud: “God loves me.” I wasn’t sure I could—or even wanted to. But I was impressed a second time with great intensity, so I said, “God loves me.” I repeated the same phrase three times, each time emphasizing a different word. “GOD loves me.” “God LOVES me.” “God loves ME!” With the third declaration, the darkness left me! I returned to my bed totally exhausted and wanted to be alone.

When the hospital chaplain entered my room, she looked at my chart and asked, “Mrs. Genson?” When I responded, she came to my side and took my hand in hers, saying, “It’s hard to lose a baby, isn’t it?” The clouds returned! Not wanting to burst into tears in her presence, I covered my head with my blanket and said aloud, “God loves me! I know whom I have believed! I have given my life to Christ, and what He decides to do with me is OK, because my life is hid in Christ.” With this, the clouds once again left me.

These words that Jesus spoke to Peter brought comfort to my heart later: “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this” (John 13:7). I wrestled with God over my loss. I couldn’t understand why it had happened, especially when I exercised faith. It would be ten years before I understood that God wanted me to experience that faith must reach beyond the clouds to what is unseen, that His grace is made perfect in our weakness. I prayed for a miracle, and God gave me one. But I learned that the real miracle was that God’s strength was greater than my doubt and that He could keep me

together through any difficulty. Like Job, I can say, "Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him." "He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 13:15; 23:10).

"God gives us lessons of trust. He would teach us where to look for help and strength in time of need. Thus we obtain practical knowledge of His divine will, which we so much need in our life experience. Faith grows strong in earnest conflict with doubt and fear" (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 116, 117). "In the future life the mysteries that here have annoyed and disappointed us will be made plain. We shall see that our seemingly unanswered prayers and disappointed hopes have been among our greatest blessings" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 474).

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR THE PRAYER TIME

Praise

- Lord, we praise You that You are the Father of all compassion, the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-7).
- We praise You for healing our broken hearts and binding up our wounds.
- We praise You for letting us lay our burdens on You. You will sustain us in our hour of grief, for You have experienced grief.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin

- We ask for Your Holy Spirit to point out any sins that are separating us from You.
- Forgive us, Father, when our doubts overwhelm our ability to trust in You.
- Thank You for the forgiveness You so wonderfully offer.

Supplication and Intercession

- Lord, we pray for wisdom and grace to accept our disappointments, knowing that You love us and will work all things for good, though we may not understand it now.
- We ask that our faith will be strengthened as we face doubt and fear.
- Please let our families reveal Your love in our homes and communities. We ask You to bring harmony into homes, heal broken relationships, protect the vulnerable from abuse, and reveal Your sanctifying power in seemingly hopeless situations.
- May our church members, pastors, and leaders around the world feed on God's Word every day. May we also seek You daily in personal prayer. Remind us that without You, we can do nothing.
- We ask You to raise up nurses and doctors to plant new churches among the 1,978 people groups in the 22 countries in West-Central Africa Division.
- We pray for the 49 million people in the 19 least-reached cities of Trans-European Division.
- We pray for the seven people on our prayer lists. Give them hearts to know You as Your Word says in Jeremiah 24:7.

Thanksgiving

- Father, thank You that because Christ is interceding for us, we have a hope and a future.
- Thank You for comforting us in all our troubles, so that we may comfort others.
- Thank you, God, that Your strength is made perfect in our weakness.

SUGGESTED SONGS TO SING

"I Know Whom I Have Believed" (SDA Hymnal #511); "Moment by Moment" (SDA Hymnal #507); "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" (SDA Hymnal #517); "It Is Well with My Soul" (SDA Hymnal #530)

PROMISES TO CLAIM AS YOU PRAY

- "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).
- "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10).
- "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved" (Ps. 55:22).