

OUT OF THE FIRE INTO GOD'S LOVE

At 70 years of age my life was good. A few bumps along the way, but I was enjoying new relationships, various trips, exciting ministry times and best of all, riding my 800 Suzuki. Then an accumulation of events happened and my life was filled with confusion and disorder.

I struggled through several horrible months. Nothing seemed to be going right—everything kept piling up. I couldn't get a breath in edgewise before something else slammed me to the ground. I couldn't break through the oppressive darkness. I started wearing the “*I'm fine*” and the “*I've got it together*” masks again and the energy it took to keep up the daily “*pretend*” front was incredible. I knew all the “*hiding*” was taking its toll. Physically I was exhausted. My smiles were less and less. I started to isolate from everyone on the pretext of being too busy.

Now I've been in these places before, but never to this degree. Many of us experience hard places in our Christian walk from time to time, but this was different. I couldn't shake it. I started to lose heart and didn't care about life or anything else. Pride reared its ugly head and prevented me from sharing and asking for help. This bout with depression was scaring me. This time I didn't have the strength or the will power to fight it anymore. I felt I was going down for the count and I wasn't getting back up. Had Satan won after all?

Don't ever count God out. One day God said, “**Enough!**” and through an anonymous donor, He sent a monetary love gift to me that confirmed His unconditional love. When I saw it, I cried and cried. And because it came from an anonymous donor, my mind stayed focused on the gift of love being from the hand of God rather than on the donor who was part of God's blessing. I thanked God for His love and for His obedient servant far into the night

The truth that I could mean so much to my Heavenly Father, and also to a friend, totally overwhelmed me. I was loved! Someone did care! Why had I been so foolish to believe Satan's lies? Once again his rotten scheme was not enough to keep God's blessing from me. From the moment I saw the gift, I felt a gigantic crack began to split apart the deceptive, dark shell of depression that held my mind and body captive. The way I felt was incredible, far surpassing prior experiences. This was divine—a God moment I will never forget.

The following Sunday God continued the work He'd begun to rid me of any remnants of depression that were perhaps still lingering. I was sitting in church listening to my pastor preach on “Job”—and I was relating—big time—okay, I was having my own little “pity party”. Suddenly, in the spirit, I heard the Lord call my name (you know, in that stern, but loving voice of a parent with a wayward child), “KATIE!!” He said, “What are you doing?”

Startled, I replied, “I don't know.”

“Why are you in this place of depression? It is NOT from me!”

Revelatory wisdom hit my spirit like a bolt of lightning and instantly brought home God's truth.

“Wow, God!” I cried out, “This ‘junk’ isn't from you is it? So what AM I doing? You're right! I don't have to be in this depressive place! I don't belong here! And, I'm NOT staying another minute! I'm out of here!”

As I purposed in my heart to receive and to walk in God's truth, immediately the shell broke in half and fell off. I was instantly set free. God's truth had broken the stronghold. Light surrounded me, freedom replaced the darkness and peace and joy flooded my soul. The old Katie was back. My spirit was light. I was soaring in the Lord and all I could do was smile. I made the right choice—to listen to God and not the deceiver. Over the next two weeks I watched as many difficult circumstances turned around. God was at work. Hope soared again.

"*What a faithful God we serve!*" a phrase I've often said, but after journeying through shadowy valleys for so long, with hope eluding me, and encased in darkness; YET experiencing God's faithfulness, it became one of the most important phrases in my vocabulary. It is burned into my spirit and is five hundred feet tall, highlighted, in caps, bolded, colored, underlined, and fills a full page compartment in my heart!

Several weeks prior, in my oppressive state, I had shared with a pastor friend who listened and prayed for me. Following my breakthrough, I couldn't wait to tell him what God had done. He was thrilled at the transformation that had taken place in such a short time.

"Katie," he said, "You have fresh start now. God has given you a powerful deliverance; no more stuck in the valley, but walking the high hills. Your experience will be used to help people through the darkness that you have just escaped. You can be their inspiration and hope. So, what are your plans? What are you going to do now?"

Grinning I replied, "*Out of the frying pan into the fire and out of the fire into God's love.* I'll write and share it!"