

"CRISIS"

"DESPAIR OR OPPORTUNITY?"

By Dr. Shirl DeBay

HELP! I'm having a CRISIS.
Stop this world and let me off!

Do you sometimes feel like 'life' is going from one crisis to another crisis????

You don't know which way to turn.
You feel like you're at the edge of a cliff and you can't turn back.

Then JUMP!
God will either catch you, or teach you to fly!

TRUST!
SIMPLE TRUST!
Let's learn to simply trust regardless of the crisis.
Just how can we trust more, when it's just not there? Discuss!

FAITH????
Faith gives you what GRACE has made available.
Don't keep trying to get God to do what He's already done.
GRACE plus FAITH equals TRUST!

What exactly is a CRISIS? Discuss..
What do you call a crisis????

It's a 'crucial' tune' when you feel like you're thrown 'off balance'.
It's a 'turning point' in the course of anything.
A crisis involves a 'temporary loss of coping abilities'.
Your 'rational actions' seem to be paralyzed.
You just can't think of what to do.

A CRISIS IS A TURNING POINT!

A turning point? What to do? Which way do I go? I'm too scared and frustrated to
JUMP! Now what?

A 'turning point' in the course of anything implies you can go either way.'
You can be a 'better person' or a 'bitter person'.
And the choice is yours.
You can 'grow up' or 'give up'. THE CHOICE IS YOURS!
A crisis means sometimes, 'You're in hot water.'

Christians are like tea. Their real strength is not drawn out until they get into hot water.
Now that hot water will bring you out in a different form.
You can either be 'better' or 'bitter'.
THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

The Chinese word for 'crisis' is made up of two symbols or characters.
One symbol is 'despair', the other is 'opportunity'.
Put the two together and they spell 'crisis'.

CRISIS IS NOT ALWAYS BAD.
It can get your attention because **CHANGE IS NEEDED!**
It represents a 'turning point' in a person's life.
It can bring **OPPORTUNITY**, or it can bring **DANGER** or **DESPAIR**.
It always comes with a **CHOICE**.

Here's an example of 'Crisis opportunity'.
The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none came.
Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood for protection. Then one day, after scavenging for food, he arrived back to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky.
The worst had happened; everything was lost.
He was stunned with grief and anger, "God, how could you do this to me?" he cried.
Early the next morning, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him.
"How did you know I was here?" He asked his rescuers.
"We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

DESPARATION OR OPPORTUNITY:?

It is so easy to get discouraged when things are going bad. But we shouldn't lose heart, because God is at work in our lives, even in the midst of pain and suffering.
WHILE WE'RE WAITING GOD IS WORKING!
Remember, the next time your little hut is burning to the ground, it just may be a 'smoke signal' that summons the grace of God!

**"When troubles come your way, consider it an OPPORTUNITY for great joy!
For you know that when your faith is tested your endurance has a chance to grow.
So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing." James 1:2-4**

OUR CRISIS IS TO HELP US DEVELOP AND BE MORE COMPLETE!

Jesus said, **"In this world there will be troubles and sorrows, but I have overcome the world." John 16:33**

TRUST!

"Since God is directing our steps, why try to understand everything that happens along the way"

TRUST AGAIN!

Jesus has overcome the world.

If the Lord is directing our path, why do we have troubles, struggles, and hard times?
DISCUSS.....

Does God direct us into troubles?

Again, Jesus said, **"I have told you these things, so that in ME, you may have perfect peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration, but be of good cheer, take courage, be confident, certain, undaunted! For I have overcome the world. I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.**

John 16:33 (Amplified Bible)

Things happen!

TRUST AGAIN!

Why is the 'trust factor' so difficult? DISCUSS.

Is it easy to trust God or is it hard^{9?999}

We don't know God that well, or if we do, we don't believe what He says fully.

He promised **"to NEVER leave us nor forsake us."**

"I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." Hebrews 13:5

SO JUMP! TRUST!

LET'S LEARN FROM THE EAGLE.

When the eagles are mating, Mama Eagle picks up a piece of wood and flies high with it and then drops it.

Daddy Eagle catches it in his wings and then flies back up to her.

When he catches it, it shows that he is a reliable mate.

The Mama Eagle can lift her wing and make a pocket for her baby.

She carries her baby in her wing, rises high and then drops it.

Dad is below and catches it, bringing the baby to safety.

Later, Mama Eagle stirs up the nest, kicks all the babies out and Dad is there to catch

those who yet don't know how to fly.

But they soon learn. They don't have to free fall too many times to learn that they can actually fly.

Sometimes God teaches us higher heights in discomfort.

The discomfort, fears, uncertainties, as we stretch out to fly high like the eagles, is to strengthen us, to mature us, to give us courage, to show us we can do it.

God says, "Try it, I'll catch you. You won't fall. Trust me. I'm always here.
God will either catch you or teach you how to fly.

Reminds me of Pastor Doug, my son, who tells the story of our granddaughter, Anna, when she was 3 years old. She was walking down the stairs and almost slipped. Doug reached down and held her in his arms, as Anna hugged his neck saying, "I've got you, Daddy."
No, Doug said, "I've got you."
Never fear, God has us.

God wants us to know that we're not 'softies', we're powerful, and strong, in the Power of His Love.
Stretch out with the courage to fly high, above all the storms of life, and BE AT PEACE, in every situation, every single time.

**"For He, God himself, has said, 'I will not in any way fail you, nor give you up, nor leave you without support.
I will not, I will not, I will not, in any degree leave you helpless nor forsake you nor let you down, or relax my hold on you! Assuredly not!
So we take comfort and are encouraged and confidently and boldly say, 'The Lord is my Helper; I will not be seized with alarm, I will not fear or dread or be terrified! What can man do to me?'" Hebrews 13:5-6 (Amplified Bible)
Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled. Neither let it be afraid."
"For Lo, I am with you even to the end of the world."**

When you're in despair, you can't see the OPPORTUNITY.
It's time to experience God's special LOVE and CARE, and see how clever God really is in bringing you thru it.
It doesn't have to be your cleverness.
It's God's cleverness. Use it!

DESPAIR? Or OPPORTUNITY?
That is our choice in every crisis.

As a person searches for a method of coping, you may choose a path of destruction, or you may discover new and better methods and insights for coping and living with life's stresses.

Someone said, "I'm thankful for my struggle, because without it, I wouldn't have stumbled across my strength."

STRUGGLES GIVE US STRENGTH???

WOW. Listen this illustration

A research team took 100 caterpillars, just ready to hatch, and laid them on the table.

Inside the caterpillar cocoon, were butterflies trying to struggle out.

So the scientists decided to gently cut the butterflies out.

They were just ready to struggle on their own, so they decided to help them.

They laid the newborn butterflies on the table.

"Fly, little butterflies. Fly, little butterflies."

Nothing happened. They just lay there.

"Fly, little butterflies, fly."

Not a single one flew. They were immovable, stuck in one place.

The study demonstrated that the time of struggling and fighting and pushing through the walls of the cocoon actually gives the wings of the butterfly the strength to take to the air.

The scientist took the struggle away and they were handicapped and weakened.

They noticed another thing.....

All the butterflies had big fat stomachs filled with liquid, and their wings were dry and weak.

It's through the struggle and pushing through, that releases the fluid from the stomach to their dry wings so that they can fly.

Without the struggle on their own, they were handicapped.

They could not fly.

They could not function as God intended.

Without the struggle, they were not complete.

Remember that James I says, **"When your life is full of difficulties, then be happy, and you will be full and complete."**

Or you can panic, get mad, and be incomplete.

It's going thru the crisis and stress and struggle, with the positive attitude that strengthens us, and helps us grow, and fly high, and accomplish more.

THE FACTS JUST DON'T MATTER WHEN YOUR ATTITUDE IS RIGHT.

Daily, have ATTITUDE CHECKS.

In every struggle. In everything.

"Now your attitudes and thoughts must constantly be changing for better. Yes, be a new and different person, Holy and Good, Clothes yourself with this new nature."
Ephesians 4:23

Your attitude is more important than facts.

Your attitude is more important than circumstances.

Your attitude is more important than past failures.

Your attitude is more important than what people think or say.

Someone said, "I used to care what people thought about me until one day I tried to pay my bills with their opinions."

Your attitude is more important than appearance. God looks on the heart.

Your attitude is more important than your skills or giftedness.

Your attitude is more important than the discomfort you get from the crisis.

YOUR ATTITUDE CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOU.

WE HAVE A CHOICE EVERYDAY REGARDING THE ATTITUDE WE HAVE FOR THAT DAY.

The right attitude will set the right atmosphere, which gets the right responses from others.

THE STIMULUS YOU GIVE OUT, DETERMINE THE RESPONSE YOU RECEIVE FROM OTHERS.

OUR ATTITUDE CANNOT STOP OUR FEELINGS, BUT THEY CAN KEEP OUR FEELINGS FROM STOPPING US.

OUR ATTITUDE IS A CHOICE WE DAILY MAKE.

CRISIS CRUSHES!!!

It can be an overwhelming feeling.

But in crushing, it often 'refines and purifies'.....

Like the crushing of grapes to make 'pure grape juice'.

Ancient methods of crushing grapes is 'trampling with your feet'.

You may feel 'kicked and trampled on with crushing blows'.

The attitude with which you handle it determines the results.

Unfortunately it often takes brutal blows of affliction to soften and penetrate 'hard hearts'.

Psalms 119:67 & 71 NIV

"Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I obey your Word....."

It was good for me to be afflicted, so that I might learn your decrees."

After crisis crushes sufficiently, God steps in to comfort and teach.

God can use every affliction to bring about His plan.

Example.....My personal Crisis with tuberculosis, while living in Japan.

I worked hard for two years to learn the Japanese language, and just as I felt comfortable in it and ready to really work for the Lord, I became ill with TB.

"Why now, Lord? I'm just ready to really minister to the Japanese."

CRUSHING LEADS TO SURRENDER.

I gave up to Shirt, "Total surrender, Lord. If you want to call me home, Honestly O.K."

What I learned, "God had my FULL attention. I'd been too busy doing GOOD things

FOR God, I didn't take enough time WITH God. God wanted ME, not my WORKS.

I hope I've learned that lesson well.

They could do no more after 2 months in the hospital so sent me home saying, "Just hire another maid, don't touch your children and rest, wait and see."

I walked into my home, my 6 year old daughter grabbed me and said, "Oh, Mom, are you OK?" I said, "I will be." And then she said, "I'm going to pray for you."

"Dear Jesus, heal my Mom, not tomorrow, Jesus, but today, right now. Thank you, Jesus, Amen.:

"OK, Mom, you're O.K. now, cause I prayed for you; go in and cook my dinner."

And I did! I felt energy go thru my whole body with instant health and strength.

I went back to the hospital for an Xray.

Healed scar tissue. Totally healed. The doctors were amazed.

SOME PEOPLE DON'T LOOK UP, UNTIL THEY'RE REALLY DOWN!

A Crisis is a good 'ATTENTION GETTER'!!!!

God always knows how to get our attention.

A certain young man was driving thru the neighborhood when a 10 year old boy threw a brick denting the side of his new jaguar.

He jumped out to scold the boy but suddenly he saw a wheel-chair over turned and an older boy crumbled beside it.

The scared little boy apologized profusely saying, "I'm sorry, sir, but my brother fell over and I can't pick him up and I had to 'throw the brick' to get your 'attention' and some help.

After the man helped him, he never got his car door repaired.

He wanted it as a 'reminder', to never be so busy that a brick has to be thrown at Mm to get his attention.

Could a 'crisis' be that 'brick' that got our attention????

Let's learn from our 'crisis' or wait for the 'next brick'!

God loves us so much He always has His way to get our 'attention', and He knows well what it will take.

Often times, with a 'crisis in our life', God has a reason for it, to accomplish His will in our lives.

"The Path God leads us in our life, is the SHORTEST AND BEST PATH possible to accomplish his will in our lives."

GOD WILL USE EVERY CRISIS FOR GOOD, IF WE WILL LET HIM.

Maybe with a Crisis, God is just giving us 'tools' to use for Him in better ways.

The process is just as important as the end result.

In Japan, I prayed earnestly for God to give me the 'tools' to reach the Japanese people. My illness with TB was just the 'tool' God had planned.

A church in Southern Japan heard that there's a God who can heal TB and they asked me to come to give my 'healing testimony'.

That was my first sermon I preached in Japanese.

I told the people that there's a God in Heaven who can heal and that He'll do it for them, too.

Five young men came forward, just released from the TB sanitarium next door, to hear the message. They said, "Here we are. Heal us!"
I was so scared. I believed God could, but would He? All the Christians prayed.
The 5 men went back to the Hospital, and I received word from them that ALL 5 were healed and released with a clean bill of health. They went around praying for everyone and many were healed. Twenty nine of the thirty nurses received Jesus in their hearts. Three of the 5 men came to Kobe to our Bible College and became ministers of the Gospel.
All because of a 'Crisis TB' and God used that as a 'tool' to get his plan accomplished.

(Testimony of crippled man healed.)

DESPERATION or OPPORTUNITY????

In 2012, we were on our last trip to China and at the border just ready to enter but blocked from going into China because they had record of our 15 years of work there, which included teaching the Bible and building a church, not legal activity.
We were so disappointed so we stayed in Seoul, Korea for 3 weeks, wondering why. Why, Lord?
We had 50 Mandarin Bibles hidden in our luggage to take into China.
Now what, Lord???
We were able to take 50 Chinese Bibles into Seoul to 50 Chinese students at the Bible College. We never could have done that in China.

DESPERATION or OPPORTUNITY???

Let God do what God does! Everything to perfection.
"Accept the way God does things and fall in line. For who can straighten what He has made crooked. Don't fight the ways of God." Ecclesiastes 7:13
Our Crisis was God's opportunity!

The story is told of a King who in ancient times wanted to test his people.
He put a huge rock in the middle of a well-traveled road.
Several passer-bys went around the stone never bothering to take it out of the way.
Finally, a peasant stopped, got off of his horse, and with difficulty, removed the blockage.
Under the rock, was a purse filled with gold, with a note from the King stating that it was for the one who removed the rock!

DESPERATION or OPPORTUNITY????

How many times have you continued in a 'desperation mood' when God is showing you 'opportunity', BUT your focus is still in 'desperation'?

Let God do what God does best!

BE GOD!!!

He's a God that cares for every detail of our life.

The next time your 'little hut' is burning down, look for the purpose of the burning.

The smoke is signaling for the answer to save you.

"The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He cares for every detail of their life."

Psalms 37:23

God may lead us down a path we've never been, but will lead us to a place we've always wanted to be.

God can be so very creative in accomplishing His plan for our life.

Each step God leads us is always "opportunity", and NEVER meant for 'despair'.

Our attitude and relationship with God make a great big difference.

At that time, do some serious interior investigation.

And find out what God is up to!

"Accept the way God does things and fall in line. For who can straighten what He has made crooked. Don't fight the ways of God." Ecclesiastes 7:13

DESPERATION or OPPORTUNITY????

When crisis comes, spend all your energies focusing on the answer, not the problem.

Let's learn from a 'mule'. Do we have as much sense as a mule???

This old fanner owned an 'ole mule'.

Now the mule fell into the farmer's well.

The fanner heard the mule 'praying', or whatever mules do when they fall into a well.

The farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth saving.

So he called all the neighbors together, and enlisted their help to haul dirt to bury the mule in the well, and put him out of his misery.

At first, the old mule went hysterical.

But the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling, and as the dirt hit his back, a thought struck him.

He was a RESOURCEFUL mule.

Suddenly, it dawned on the mule, that every time a shovel full of dirt landed on his back, HE'D SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP!

This he did... shovelful after shovelful

SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP!

He repeated this on and on no matter how painful the blows.

No matter how distressing the situation seemed.

The old mule fought 'panic' and just kept right on.

SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP!

It wasn't long before the men had filled the well with dirt, and the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped **TRIUMPHANTLY** over the wall of the well.

**WHAT SEEMED LIKE IT WOULD BURY HIM, ACTUALLY HELPED HIM....
ALL BECAUSE OF THE MANNER IN WHICH HE HANDLED HIS ADVERSITY.**

THAT'S LIFE!

If we face our challenges and crises and respond to them positively and refuse to give up, or give in to panic, or bitterness, or self-pity, the adversities that come along to bury us, usually have within them the very real potential to benefit us.

It's our attitude, it's our focus.

**BE RESOURCEFUL. MAKE EVERY SITUATION BENEFIT YOU.
JUST SHAKE IT OFF, AND STEP UP TO HIGHER GROUND, AND RELAX!
EACH STUMBLING BLOCK THE DEVIL PUTS IN YOUR PATH, MAKE IT A
STEPPING STONE TO HIGHER GROUND!**

Remember that James I says, **"When your life is full of difficulties, then be happy, for when your way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow, so let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For in the end, you will be FULL and COMPLETE."** (Living Bible)

There was a life boat floating out in the Atlantic for two days. The men on the life-boat were so thirsty and the sun was so hot, their tongues were parched and they cried out for water.

"Water, Lord, give us water!" "Water, Lord, give us water!"

The third day, they saw a ship coming over the horizon, and they shouted even louder, "Water, water, Give us water!"

Just as the ship drew closer, the captain hollered over the bow of the ship,

"Dip your buckets over the side. You've drifted into the fresh waters of the Amazon. Fresh water all around you."

They were so engrossed in their 'problem', they didn't see the 'answer' when it came.

How often are we so engrossed in our despair, in the crisis, wondering what to do, and the answer is so obvious but we've focusing all our energies on what is wrong, we don't see the answer.

We'll NEVER see the answer unless we change our focus and look for it.

How long we stay in the 'despair', is determined by our focus.

Ask the Lord, "What are you teaching me?"

What am I to learn from this situation?

Is this a test? And you want to help me pass it?

Is this a growing time?

Is this a changing time?

Is this a 'waiting' time?

Is this a 'learning' time?

In everything that happens to you, do you see 'desperation or opportunity'?
God knows how to make 'roses' out of 'ashes'.

You can't make a mess out of anything but what God can fix it, and use it in an amazing way.

"OUR PROBLEMS ARE BUT RAW MATERIAL IN THE HANDS OF GOD TO PERFORM AND PERFECT A MIRACLE." (Corrie ten Boom)

Let God do what God does best! To be God!
God molds our problems and our trials into great opportunities every single time,
IF we'll let Him.

Let go and Let God do what God does best. To be God!

Do you know how they catch monkeys?
They fill a quart jar full of food and set it out for the monkey to feed.
A monkey fills his hand so full and tries to bring his hand thru the opening and it won't go, because he refuses to let go of what's in his hand, and they catch him.

When you're in a 'crisis', 'let go and let God'!
'Let go' of your way, of what is in your hand, and let God make a great opportunity out of it.
Don't hold on to your way! Let go!
God knows.
Let God do what God does best! Be God!
God is so trustworthy!

DESPERATION or OPPORTUNITY????

God? Where are you when I need you?

God says, **"I'm right here, beside you, in you, holding you, loving you, providing for you. What do you *need*?"**

With each crisis, You either get better or you get bitter.
It's simple!
You either take what has been dealt to you and allow it to make you a better person,
Or you allow it to tear you down.
The choice does not belong to fate.....
IT BELONGS TO YOU!

LIFE IS A MIRACLE AND EVERY BREATH WE TAKE IS A GIFT FROM GOD!

ENJOY YOUR GIFT!