

## From Thirst to Glory



By Pastor Jack Cohen

When I am thirsty it is hard to focus on anything but finding the right drink to quench my thirst. In difficult times of life, when I feel "spiritually thirsty" for something more from the Lord, seeking relief can sometimes be hard. *Psalms 42 and 43* are good examples of these times as they were written when the psalmist is in a place of spiritual depression. Honestly, there are times in my life when I feel the same.

At the beginning of *Psalm 42*, the psalmist writes, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God..." During trying times in life, I have often felt like there is a thirst for God, but it seems like the "usual" ways of connecting to him do not fix things as they may have in the past. The psalmist, too, remembers a time when he felt so connected to God: "These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng." For years, those mountaintop times in the Lord have

made me feel so connected, but honestly, in the points where "my soul is downcast" I have found myself bitter, tired, upset, frustrated, confused, disconnected, etc. As I ask the psalmist's question, "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?" I find the same trials in life that he did -- (1) physical issues; (2) people issues; (3) desire for vindication -- and each of these disconnected him from a joyous relationship with God as well.

Physical Issues - Ailments contribute greatly to our entire being unless we are completely in tune with the Holy Spirit. Look at the great number of people Jesus healed and see the change in their "spiritual temperature" before and after healing. Healing brought tremendous joy in the Lord after they were made whole. For us, the goal is not to allow physical limitations or challenges to influence living in the Spirit.

People issues - These have become the biggest triggers for our "soul

### IN THIS ISSUE

#### God's Word in Action



Check out stories of Christians around the world putting God's word into action in their lives and communities!

#### What do you think?



Your chance to see, reflect and respond on important issues that impact the lives of people all over the world. We'd love to hear from you!

#### Kohath Happenings



Check out the most recent Kohath schedule and make plans to join us soon!

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." - Matthew 28:19

downcast times". One of the key sources of strife for the church has become individuals who have their desires and thoughts over God's. In *2 Timothy 3*, the Apostle Paul wrote, "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - having a form of godliness but denying its power." I am sad to say I have come into contact with each of these in the workings of the church, and I am consistently shocked at how individuals who raise hands in praise, are called church leaders and even quote scripture

## From Thirst to Glory (continued)

can harshly react when the direction the Lord differs from their thoughts or agendas. Why do we believe we are only the keepers of God's leading?

Desire for vindication - With the list mentioned previously from 2 Timothy 3, we often find ourselves distracted by a need to be proven right or justified in the eyes of others. The psalmist writes, "Clear my name, God; stick up for me against these loveless, immoral people. Get me out of here, away from these lying degenerates." The source of his "downcastness" resides in hurt. He knows what he needs do to find peace, but he is hurt, tired, depressed, distracted and he wants God to do something.

Reading the Psalmist's words, I can truly relate. Sometimes I just want God to do something. But from years of being a Christian and a pastor, I, too, know what I need to do. I need to chase more after God's presence, be deeper engaged in God's Word and more sold out to prayer and praise of the Lord by living in the Spirit. I need to seek this, search for this, bask in this, and live life that way! How? By focusing, hoping

and trusting in Jesus and Him ultimately not allowing situations, individuals or feelings to alter commitment.

I also need to go to the altar - the place of sacrifice. The psalmist writes, "Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God." The altar is not historically a place of joy or a place for a party, it is the place where we bring sacrifice. We must take all those distractions that have stolen our focus from Christ and sacrifice them to move on.

Finally, I must live by the Holy Spirit as the book of Galatians says, "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want." Jesus is greater than our thoughts, our emotions, our physical limitations, our relationships, and all the things that distract us. In "spiritually thirsty" times seeking

"living water" of the Holy Spirit is the only drink that satisfies and leads us to experience Christ's Glory. In 1 Peter 4:13, Peter says, "But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed." God wants to shine through each of us and he is calling us all to delve deeper.

As we delve deeper there will be more distractions and more struggles. We need to fill our lives with God's Spirit and desire to experience His glory above all things. As we look at the closing words in Psalm 43, we find a powerful way to be filled when running on empty, "Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God." Hope and trust in the Lord, praise Him in good and bad, and know you have a Savior! His name is Jesus!

Shalom & Agape,



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## What do you think?



We are excited to announce the launch of our new Bible Study/Devotional Series "REAL LIFE: Living in Abundance". This new 4-part study is based on John 10:10 --"I came that they might have life and have it abundantly," and the first topic available for sale now is called "Life Is A Pain: Understanding and Dealing with Pain in Life." We hope you will take a moment to watch a sample video of this study ([www.kohath.org/product\\_demos.html](http://www.kohath.org/product_demos.html)) and to pray that God will touch people's lives through it.

Also see [www.kohath.org/kolonnade](http://www.kohath.org/kolonnade) for more information. We'd love to hear from you!

## God's Word in Action: "Learning to Lean on God"

Life is hard. Jesus told us in *John 16:33*, "In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world". As Christians, we believe that in spite of our troubles, God can bring us peace. Yet, so few of us truly live out this belief in our own lives.

For Nancy Yoder, living out this belief is truly a daily act of faith. The 44-year old wife, mother of two and public school teacher not only deals with the stresses of life, but she does so with only one leg. Four years ago, a diagnosis of bone & cartilage cancer forced Nancy to choose her life over her leg. It also forced her to trust God more than ever before.

"My life is like a Rubik's Cube", Nancy said, "I play around with it and when I get frustrated that I can't do it, I hand it over to God to fix. When he gets it almost done, I grab it and shuffle it up again." Although she laughs as she gives this illustration, her experience is very real. "God is so merciful," she says, "Any struggles I face are not because of my leg, but because I'm not relying on Him."

Nancy admits that it has been hard at times for her and her family. Yet, in

spite of that, they have seen God working in and through their circumstances. Nancy's return to teaching has provided an opportunity to share her faith more openly than ever before. Her independent spirit has inspired others to face illnesses with faith. And God has used her unique sense of humor to break down walls with others and with her.

Nancy explains, "God created me with a sense of humor, and he has used some great one-liners to teach me to never take myself too seriously." From picking the hymn "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" for her testimony Sunday to telling people her stand on an issue is "a little wobbly," Nancy seeks to use humor whenever she can to make an impact.

In the end, Nancy will freely tell you, life still has its challenges, but a commitment to living God's word is key. "I've been puzzled that people think I have this miraculous faith

because of what I've been through; when the truth is, I struggle like everyone else," she says. "But for me, I've come to one conclusion for my life: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (*Daniel 3*) is the way to go. My God is able to save, but even if he does not, I will still praise him." She wraps up her whole story this way: "I still don't understand the purpose of all that's happened, but God is in control; and if one person can come to Christ from my story, that's well worth one leg!"



Nancy with her husband, Matt and her sons Daniel and Nate.

## Kohath Happenings



<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
5/15/09	Opening of Kohath Kolonnade & Launch of "REAL LIFE" Bible Study: Topic 1 - "Life is A Pain"
5/17/09 - 5:30 pm	Spiritual Renewal Encounter, Lewes, DE: "Communicating with God"
7/1/09	Launch of "REAL LIFE" Bible Study: Topic 2 - "Love Life"
7/19/09 - 5:30 pm	Spiritual Renewal Encounter, Lewes, DE
7/20/09 - 5:00 pm	Baptism Service, Lewes, DE

For more information, visit [www.kohath.org](http://www.kohath.org) or contact us on 302-438-2473. God Bless!