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Introduction to Spiritual Formation

PMN101 NLS

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Hurnard Reflection Paper

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*Hurnard Reflection Paper-Hind's Feet on High Places*

“Every circumstance in life, no matter how crooked and distorted and ugly it appears to be, if it is reacted to in love and forgiveness and obedience to your will can be transformed” (pg. 241). These were Much Afraid’s words when the Shepherd asked her of the lesson she learned throughout the journey she made to reach the High Places. Although Much Afraid named three other important lessons, this one resonated the most with me because of the imperative word “transform.” The same way the Shepherd transformed Much Afraid into Grace and Glory was the same way God transformed me from Worrisome and Doubtful to Discerning and Steadfast.

My spiritual journey is a very interesting one because of all the tribulations I encountered throughout. When I first became saved it took me four months before I became filled with the Holy Spirit. During those four months, I experienced a lot of doubts and worry. I would see other members of the church become filled with the Holy Spirit and wondered why hadn’t it happened to me yet. Was I not ready to give up the ways of the world? Was I not worthy? Did God believe that I wasn’t steadfast in my relationship with him? All these questions plagued my mind the same way Much Afraid had to deal with her enemies Craven Fear, Resentment, Self-Pity, Bitterness, Pride and her own negative thoughts. The thoughts that bombarded my mind, made me feel as if I wasn’t ready for this journey and made it very difficult. Much Afraid always second-guessed her ability to be changed from having lame feet to hinds’ feet but always called on the Shepherd when her enemies and fears became too overbearing and overwhelming. This is the same way I prayed to God to help me remove the doubt, fear and feelings of unworthiness and asked to be used to do his work.

Finally, after four months I became filled the Holy Spirit which, unfortunately, caused yet another adversity in my spiritual journey. Many people were unaware that I speak Chinese as a second language, and when I became filled with the Holy Spirit I spoke tongues in Chinese. The members of the church were very confused and unsupportive. After, I became filled with the Holy Spirit the Lord would move me, they would block my bench so I couldn't come out and they would hold me away from going up to the pulpit. Knowing, I didn't have support from my church family caused me to experience a lot of distress. I would get depressed and go home and cry. I realized that the Holy Spirit had blessed me with the gift of discernment but I was always blocked from using it in the church.

Just as I got over one stumbling block of not being filled, I had to deal with another barrier. This was similar to Much Afraid's journey because every time she thought she passed one impossible or dangerous point she found herself in another one and would become doubtful all over again. For me, taking so long to be filled was like Much Afraid's journey to the desert. Instead of going up to the High Places or in my case, towards God, we both felt like we were going the other way—the wrong way. However, just like much Afraid, we both overcame that step, but then I had to deal with the Shores of Loneliness. I felt alone, I didn't have a support system in the church and the doubts came flooding into my thoughts again. At one point, I even thought about not going back to church altogether. The only difference between Much Afraid and myself was that even though I questioned my ability to continue with this journey, I never second-guessed God's ability or his purpose for me. I continually called on God and would fast and pray and ask for his help. This allowed for me to become much stronger to where I became able to stand up for myself.

Throughout my entire journey, I had different obstacles I had to continually face including changing my lifestyle to be the reflection of God's will and ways and letting go of certain word-like traditions such as attending parties with friends and family members. I was even in the middle of dating a man who I had to cut ties with in order to live a holy lifestyle, free of temptation where I could be purified and sanctified. When I began cutting ties from my old lifestyle it came with a lot of backlash, especially my past relationship. The man began to harass me, similarly to how Much Afraid was harassed by Craven Fear—trying to pull her back into the Valley of Humiliation, which for me would have been comparable to a Valley of Temptation.

Throughout this process I felt so many negative emotions ranging from sadness, depression, anger, doubt, uncertainty, insecurity and hesitancy. It wasn't until I became closer to God and wholeheartedly devoted my life to him that I realized all these feelings were necessary to lead me to this path. Now, I have a strong sense of spiritual discernment, which I often use to communicate with God and to help others. God transformed all my fears and my life the same way he transformed Much Afraid into Grace and Glory. Having to deal with all those negative emotions was like Much Afraid having to travel with Sorrow and Suffering. Even though they sound bad, they played a fundamental role in helping her to reach the High Places where they were too transformed into Joy and Peace. God took all of my doubt, uncertainty, and hesitancy and transformed it to steadfastness, conviction, calmness and trust. Each obstacle that I went through, every teared that I cried, every pain my heart felt was needed to get to my own hind's feet in order to reach the High Places where God has total authority and jurisdiction over my life. It is just as the Shepherd said to Much Afraid, "It was these lessons which you have learned which enabled me to change you from limping, crippled much Afraid into Grace and Glory with the hinds' feet" (pg. 242).

Work Cited

Hurnard, H. 1986. "*Hinds' Feet on High Places*" Tyndale House