

Assignment Title: GRIEF JOURNAL

FROM FAILURE TO FAITH / Report by DEBORAH ANN REED

Name: Deborah Ann Reed
Campus Location: ATS/New York City

Course Title: Personal, Professional, and Theological Foundations For Ministry
Course Number: SF505
Semester & Year: Spring 2021
Professor: Dr. Ronald Walborn and Guest: Dr. Wanda Walborn
Date Submitted: February 26,2021

From Failure to Faith Job Insecurity

Here I am again Lord, coming to the end of my contract facing the possibility of vanquishing loss. In the fall of the year 2019 I experienced Unemployment: December 31, 2019 was my last day of employment. In Prior years, I had experienced unemployment for a one-and-a-half year's duration. I was dismissed from a work contract before the contract term. And although I searched diligently for employment, no one would hire me. My bills began to fall behind as my bank account slowly depleted. My mortgage fell behind and debt collectors began call demanding payments.

During this time, the day I looked at the balance in both my checking and savings accounts, and read a balance of \$0.00, I felt a knot in the pit of my stomach. I was alone and had no one to help me. That reality of loneliness, no money, and no Job security rendered an overpowering panic that came over me. It was the worse feeling experienced only one other time in my life. I had to get out of the house into the fresh air. I remember picking up a stool and walking into the backyard; it was a bright and beautiful sunny day. I walked over to the fence, sat on the stool and said this prayer: *“Lord here I am, I am in desperate need of a financial breakthrough, I have no money nor employment prospects. Debt collectors are calling me daily and I am declaring that I will secure employment any day now. Help Lord, I am utterly humbled and penniless, and in your care.”* Immediately after saying that prayer, the feeling of panic completely left me. A peace that surpasses all understanding came over me. My tongue began saying *“Thank you Lord”*, I could hear my voice saying, *“Thank you Lord”*. I had not secured employment at that instance, but I was continually and uncontrollably saying *“Thank you Lord”*

As I walked back into the house, praise and worship, was all over me. I was still saying *“Thank you Lord”*. A few days later, an employment headhunter, which I had previously submitted a resume, called stating she had recently secured a large contract with the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and was looking for experienced, qualified individuals to fill the position. I was invited for an Interview. After the call ended an overwhelming spirit of thanksgiving came over me and I began to pray saying *“Thank you Lord”* over and over again.

On August 1, 2016. I was hired by the headhunter to work on the DDC contract, and an interview with DDC was scheduled. On August 8, 2019. I met with the DDC Regional Director and Deputy Director for the position of Construction Field Inspector. Prior to the interview, I

prayed asking the Lord for favor with those of authority and in charge of hiring. My prayer included the sentiments of my heart, that if there was the probability of my becoming overwhelmed with the assigned job task; if potentially the job would turn out to be beyond my qualification, knowledge, and capabilities, please let this job opportunity pass. A few days later, I received a call from my headhunter stating that the position was mine. I immediately began to pray; *“Thank you God for favor, for your grace and mercy, for always being present in my life.”* I knew with assured confidence that this was God’s will for me to have this Job.

The Job

I reported to work in the DDC Brooklyn Field Office, on August 15, 2016. The government Build-It-Back project was created to meet the emergency needs of the public after Hurricane Sandy. I and the other inspectors were responsible for monitoring the Construction Manager previously hired for the project and documenting the construction process: quality of material & construction, and reporting of the construction progress to the DDC Managers. During the first week I worked tediously in accordance with my personal work ethic. In the second, the engineer assigned to supervise the field was release from the project due to non-performance of his job duties. I was summoned to the Regional Director’s office. Entering her office, I noticed the Deputy Director was there waiting along with her. She began to tell me how impressed she was with my professional performance, the project controls I had established for my inspections, and my meticulous reporting of the field inspections; how she and her deputy often discussed the thoroughness of my work, all of which was revealed in paperwork submitted. She offered a position of Project Director. As I am sitting there in the office listening to both the Regional Director and the Deputy Director giving me accolades, I am thinking to myself, I have no idea what the responsibilities of the Project Director are, but I dare not say a negative word. I humbly accepted the offer and there in that instance, within a week and a half of employment, I was given a prestigious promotion and a substantial financial increase of the salary terms contracted with the headhunter; more money than I had ever made. I silently began praying: *“Thank you God for Favor”*.

Continued Blessings

The work continued for the next three-and-a-half years. When initially hired as a Consultant on the Build-It-Back Project, the term was one-and-a-half-years. When it came time for my contract to end, both the Regional Director and the Deputy pleaded with the DDC Main Office

and my headhunter to extend the contract. I remained on the Job for another term. Again, I went into prayer and praise; *"Thank you Lord for Favor"*. I was the last person to leave, the Lease on the building expired and we were required to move into a new facility.

The New Facility

The Build-It-Back project moved into the new office facility in Manhattan, NY the following Monday Morning. The Regional Director and I were given a corner office we shared, and the Deputy and remaining staff were assigned individual open area cubicles outside of our office. The Regional Director told me that she was so impressed with my management of the "Move" and preferred me in her office space rather than her Deputy. Praise be the Lord for continued favor. We were all now able to breathe a sigh of relief and continued preparing the material for the Close-Out team.

My daily commute was now one hour, one way (two hours round trip) daily. I would no longer drive three hours to and from the office; I was now commuting on Long Island Railroad and NYC Subways. This was good for me, occasionally my eyesight would be progressively worse, causing me to see the lane lines in the road, in double and at times, triple. Because of the location of the Brooklyn Field Office, the train commute would have been two-and-one-half-hours one way, five hours round trip daily and would require my going into Penn Station NY, to make a connecting subway back in the opposite direction to the Brooklyn Office. Also, this commute would have been more costly than driving. God continued to bless and protect me in this employment cycle. *"Thank you, Lord."* Sitting on the train, the first day of the commute to the new facility, I remember praying and thanking God for his guidance during supervision of the "Move" and for his continued covering and protection; bringing me to this time of continued employment.

During my final two months in the new facility, I was told that my contract would finally end at the end of the year. There were only a few months remaining in the year, and I aggressively searched for new employment. Prior to leaving the company, the Regional Director, as well as the Deputy and DDC Corporate Director had given an incredible recommendation, both written and verbal, to myself and the Headquarter Office principals. I was able to interview for positions within the DDC company and at each interview, I left thinking the interview was successful. However, none of the job offers came through for me. I also sent out resumes to prospective construction companies offering employment and my headhunter was searching for a

new contract assignment. I remain prayerful, I trusted that, as in the past, God's intervention was imminent. The Deputy Director had several discussions with me regarding future employment. He would always comment on my calm demeanor, knowing that in a few weeks I would be unemployed, having no income to live. He also searched within his circle of influence for employment for me. With the job prospects applied, interviews attended, assistance of both the DDC Deputy and my headhunter, nothing was yielding employment. The Deputy would constantly comment on my faith, he said it strengthen his faith, that he had never seen anything like it. Through this period, I continued to pray. The DDC company Christmas party was scheduled for the week prior to the New Year. The Deputy and I thought this would be a perfect time to network with the HR Manager and several Department Heads of DDC. I attended and had several conversations with the appropriate individuals however each would convey the lack of employment opportunities. Here it was, the last week of the year, Tuesday, December 31, 2019, and I had not secured employment nor has any company indicated the possibility of future employment. I had experienced the blessings of God in this wonderful Job which afforded more money than I had ever made, and today was the Last Day. This was a tremendous loss for me. Negative thoughts began to bombard my mind: at the age of 65 years old who was going to hire me? How was I going to pay my bills? Would I lose my home? Yet, I held strong to my faith. I knew that God had provided means of support for me in the past, and he was not going to leave me now.

Unemployment

The very last day of working on the Build-It-Back Project came to an end. The day prior, the Project team had taken me out to a wonderful lunch. We ate, reminisced, spoke of accomplishments and occasionally laughed about funny events that occurred during my term as Project Director. I gathered my boxes; walked through the office building and said my goodbyes to the Deputy Director and remaining staff. The Deputy looked at me in my calm and peaceful demeanor with amazement, he commended me for my faith. As I entered the elevator corridor, I began praying, thanking God for Goodness and Mercy; for the past three-and-a-half years of employment. As I am walking out of the building, into the subway, and into Penn Station I found myself musing over the glorious feeling of thanksgiving for the incredible remarkable prosperous experience. *"To God Be the Glory,"* I could hear myself praying and talking to myself on how

wonderful God is; he never leaves you. I knew in my heart of hearts that I would find employment, God's will be done.

In the first week of unemployment, January 2020, I became extremely sick with the common flu. It was about a week before I began to feel better. I continued to search unwaveringly for a job; sending out resumes, reading newspapers and responding to job listing, making phone calls, contacting headhunters and prior licensed co-workers; for a call back from potential employers. Nothing would break-through for me. This continued for several weeks flowing into several months, and to this day. However, during this timeframe I applied for Unemployment Insurance and was approved. I began to receive benefit payments. Although the income was only a very small fraction of the income I had become accustomed to, with the monthly assistance received from my son, it was enough to meet my financial obligations, "Praise be to God." The year passed, and I had not secured a job. My unemployment Insurance period ended and here I was again with no income. I began to focus on the goodness of God and how he had kept me from contracting the Corona Virus, I am healthy, my family is healthy, my refrigerator is packed with food, and I have not missed a day of mortgage payments. I have more to focus on, and thank God for, rather than fret over the loss of employment. I knew in my heart of hearts that God would provide. I began to pray, praise and chant: God is my refuge, The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Due to the Pandemic and economic hardship experienced in this country, the government unemployment laws were adjusted. I reapplied for Unemployment Insurance and was approved for a second time. To my knowledge, this had never happened before, however, through the grace of God, I was approved for a new full year of unemployment weekly benefit payments at the same rate as the previous year. "Praise be to God."

From Failure to Faith

Marriage & Divorce

My experience began 1972. I met my husband attending college. He and I were students in the School of Engineering. It was the first year that the all-male school allowed females to enroll. It was also the first year the campus dormitory allowed female residency. The school renovated two floors for female occupancy. During that first year, I met my husband, and we became "boyfriend and girlfriend" (very young minded).

We both grew-up on the east coast, he in New Jersey and I in New York. He graduated and we moved back to the east coast. Within two years after leaving the school, we married. I

immediately became pregnant and we produced two sons, born eighteen months apart. I was a young born-again Christian, raised in a deeply religious family. My parents taught me; and my religious belief was, that marriage is a life-long commitment according to the bible, and the prospect of divorce was unthought of. My husband was an adoring, proud father, he loved his sons dearly.

Divorce

For the first five years of marriage, we thoroughly enjoyed our family and parenting: pampering our two sons with love continually. I re-enrolled in college throughout my pregnancy birthing my sons, and graduated. In the latter years of our living together, my husband and I began to argue and fight often. He became very restless. Eventually we came to a mutual agreement of trial separation. During the split-up my husband began to grow further and further apart from me and our sons (emotionally and physically). By this time, my faith had begun to weaken. I felt he did not love me and that I was alone with two dependents. He rented an apartment in the neighboring town and I remain with the boys. I would often follow him, visiting, trying to keep a bond between him and his sons. I asked for overnight sleepover with his sons only, but he was reluctant. It seemed as-though he had no interest in spending time with them. This pursuit continued for three years. My heart was broken, and faith depleted. I was truly “lost”. Although I did not believe in divorce, I succumb to the reality that the marriage was over, and I that had to move on with my life and the children. I divorced.

Healing

I gathered my belonging and two sons and moved to Atlanta, Georgia. I joined a church of my Pentecostal denomination and re-dedicated my life to the Lord. *What a peace of the Spirit, Praise the Lord!* My broken heart and spirit began to heal as I communed with the Lord. I remained in Atlanta for over two years and then relocated back to New York near my family. The family immediately embraced me with love, care, and kindness. At this juncture in my life, I knew I was loved and was not alone. The pain, break-up, and dissolution of my marriage had truly crushed me. Thank you Lord, Thank you family, I am not alone.

I continue to commune with the Lord and focus on my career. To this day I am healed, God has continued to bless me. A portrayal of my journey from failure to faith, I am renewed.