

Study Guide: Surviving the Storms of Life

By Dr. David B. Whitlock

Introduction:

1. Have you ever been surprised by a storm? Tell about your experience. What did you do? Were you afraid? How did you survive?
2. Why do you think it is often difficult to look for Jesus in the midst of the storm?
3. I wrote: “Without storms we wouldn’t know his (God’s) faithfulness” (p. 27). Do you agree? Has this been so in your life? How? How not?

Chapter Two: Be Prepared

1. What are some practical things you can do to be prepared for a storm?
2. “Christians can be like a frog in a kettle” (p.42). When it comes to the storms of life, how is this statement true? What are some dangers of being unprepared for the storms of life?
3. When Horatio Spafford and his family experienced tragedy after tragedy, some of the people in his church wondered what he had done to offend God. What Old Testament character(s) does this remind you of? Why do you think we tend to wonder why someone has sinned when repeated tragedies strike a person?

Chapter Three: Find a Safe Place

1. As you think about the storms you have faced, reflect on the word “sanctuary,” as I use it in on pages 63-65. What has been your “sanctuary” in your trials?
2. Why is it important to make a decision to find a safe place before the storm hits? How can we do this spiritually?
3. I quote Oswald Chambers on page 81. “God answers prayer on the ground of redemption and on no other ground.” Do you agree with him? Why? Why not?

Chapter Four: Know When to Call for Help

1. When has “the hour” come in your life? Share an example.
2. What are some ways we can know God cares for us in the midst of the storm?
3. Do all storms have “benefits”? Do some storms simply not make sense? Is it possible to experience growth even in the midst of the storms that do not make sense? How?

Chapter Five: Stay Tuned to a Reliable Source

1. Does Larry Crabb identify any of your images of God? (See page 113) How can we be assured that we have an accurate image of God? How does our image of God affect our behavior in the midst of a storm?
2. I wrote, “If we want Jesus to guide us through the storm, we have to let him guide the ship” (125). Have you experienced times when you have wanted to guide your own “ship”? How did that affect your response to the storm?
3. Can you think of situations when it seemed like God protected you from the brink of danger, and you did not even know it?

Chapter Six: Faith: It Come by Hearing the Message

1. I wrote, “It is a great mystery of our faith that although God chose us from eternity, we still have freedom of choice” (p. 140). Do you agree? Why? Why not?
2. C.S. Lewis stated that one thing Christianity cannot be is “moderately important” (p. 142). Discuss the danger of trying to make Christianity “moderately important.” Is your relationship with Christ only “moderately important”? What about most of the Christians you know. Would you describe their relationship with Christ as only “moderately important?”
3. How did you first hear the message of the Gospel? What was your response? What are some ways you can pass it on?

Chapter Seven: How to be filled with Joy in the Midst of the Storm

1. Explain why/how joy is more than a feeling.
2. What are some ways we can abide in Christ?
3. On page 172, I wrote, “Contemplation is really nothing more than looking to God and finding your true self.” Describe your “true self”? Have you ever thought about who you are, really?

Chapter Eight: Holiness: A Faintly Familiar Fragrance

1. Read pages 177-182. How would you describe holiness?
2. How do we obtain holiness?
3. If you are alone, experiment with the steps of *lectio divina*. Did you draw closer to God through it? If you are in a group, walk through the exercise of *lectio divina*. Talk about your experience with the group.

Chapter Nine: Mission-Mindedness: Set Apart to be Sent Out

1. Do you think the story told on pages 205-206 bears any semblance to the church today? If so, how?
2. In one sentence, can you state what the mission of the church is?
3. How does involvement in the mission affect how we respond to the storms of life?

Chapter Ten: Unity: The Power of Many in One

1. What is the difference in unity and uniformity?
2. How does unity in the body of Christ, the church, help us face the storms of life?
3. What are some ways unity manifests itself?

Chapter Eleven: Security: A Place with Him Forever

1. How is heaven both “here” and “there”?
2. How does our concept of heaven affect our response to the storms of life?
3. Has our familiarity with the things of the world dulled our longing for heaven?

Chapter Twelve: Love: Passing it On

1. What are some practical ways you can pass on the love of Christ?
2. How is God’s love different from mere human love? How can we acquire God’s kind of love?
3. Is it possible to be intentional in sharing Christ’s love or is this something that can only happen spontaneously?

Chapter Thirteen: Crossing your Own Kidron Valley

1. Can you identify your “Kidron Valley”?
2. What fears threaten to keep you from fulfilling God’s plan for you?
3. What is your “take away” from this book?
4. How does the knowledge that Jesus is praying for you comfort and strengthen you in the storms of life?