

Worthy Women's Words

"The Way of the Transgressor Is Hard" *by Joella Pickup*

Proverbs 13:15; Matthew 7:13–14

Joy or heartbreak can fill a person when reading and applying the admonition of the Scriptures to one's own life. There is nothing so upsetting to a parent as a child's actions which diametrically oppose the wise counsel of a parent. Also there is nothing so joyful as the heart of a parent whose child comes penitently asking for forgiveness and mercy (Proverbs 23:15). (Remember the parable of the prodigal and his unforgiving brother?) Godly wisdom and propriety should ever be the guidon we look to and live by. We are the children of the Lord God. He did not create us as automatons moved by electrical impulses, or as animals regulated by instinct, having no concept of Right or Wrong, Wisdom or Folly, Morality or Transgression. Animals live their life-spans, following their instincts, then die.

It is not so with humankind. Besides having a different kind of blood from that of animals, we were given a conscience to help us make life-decisions that would lead us along the path of righteousness, pointing us toward a final home in Heaven.

If it weren't for the possibility of God's willingness to forgive, scattered through the Bible as "points of light," it would be almost too formidable to read about the consequences of sin. It did not take long after the Creation for the sin of Adam and Eve against the warning of God and against their own consciences to take root. Tested by Satan, Eve rationalized that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was probably not only good to eat, but it would make her wise. She reasoned simple-mindedly, but Adam did not. He knew exactly what he was doing. So their consciences were tested, defiled and recompensed by their being driven out of the Garden and losing their sweet fellowship with God. Thus Sin entered into the world (Romans 5:12).

As mankind multiplied, greater sins became the norm so that God repented Himself that He had made man (Genesis 6:5–6). The man, Noah, however, found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Only Noah and his family still made the effort

to be righteous before the Lord. As for the rest of the people, God determined to eradicate every living thing off the earth. Transgression had taken over the whole known world. Ever since that time, Satan has sought to be the supreme ruler of the hearts of men (Genesis 6:5–8; Job 14:1).

God chose Abraham, a Chaldean who believed in the one true God, to begin a nation of people who would be God's faithful children, honor His Name and follow His Will, and to whom would be promised a Messiah, a Savior who would take all man's sins upon Himself. This Savior, Jesus Christ, was God's last offer and man's last chance at Salvation. Abraham's grandson, Jacob, one of the twelve, was renamed Israel by God and his lineage would be called the "Children of Israel." God's hopes for faithfulness of Israel did not come to pass. God gave them the Ten Commandments and other stringent laws through Moses, and later,

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judges. But what they really wanted was a king like the nations round about them. By this time the nation of Israel was very many in number and warred against all those nations as they tried to settle Canaan, which God had promised through Abraham. Saul, David and Solomon became their first kings.

King Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem and the kingdom was united for 120 years. Then Solomon died and his son, Rehoboam, came to the throne. At this point I must pause, wondering if Rehoboam ever read his father’s proverbs. During his reign the kingdom was divided because of the folly of Rehoboam. He was not wise in his dealings with the people, listening to the words of the young men instead of the wisdom of the older generation. Ten tribes broke away under Jereboam, leaving two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, to Rehoboam. Eventually, the Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians because their sins were so many and so abominable. The Kingdom of Judah had several good kings and were faithful to God for some time, but then Evil again reared its ugly head and they too were taken into Babylonian captivity for seventy years before finally being allowed to go back to Judea.

Why did Rehoboam not follow the wise sayings of his father? Why did God have to raise up prophets to remind the people of who their God was and why they should faithfully serve him? The prophets proclaimed God’s vengeance upon the idolatrous condition of the whole Jewish race, but few believed them and therefore their nation was taken over, the people scattered by the Medes and Persians, by Alexander, and then by Rome.

During Roman times, the death and resurrection of Jesus occurred, and with His death, the old Law was fulfilled and the Jews were God’s chosen people no more. The term Jew is a corruption of Judah. The children of Israel became known by that name during and after the captivities. The prophets fell silent with the words of Malachi, who was a contemporary with Ezra

and Nehemiah. Over 400 years passed with no word from God, no vision seen, no prophecy by God to man until John came to prepare the way of the Lord (Matthew 3:1–3; Isaiah 40:1–5).

Think of the billions and billions of people, multiplied over and over, who warred and raged and sinned against one another, stumbling over each other, killing and hateful to each other. If only Rehoboam had listened to his father’s counsel and made his choices wisely! His reign was difficult because he oppressed his people. Jereboam, the rebel, did not care about the living God and his kingdom suffered mightily (Proverbs 2:21–22). Think of our world now.

“The way of the transgressor is hard”—because it’s so crowded! (I found this ditty by Hubbard in the *Tampa Tribune*. It is so apropos to this lesson!) 🌸

■ **Faith** *by Mary Lou Campbell*

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen.”*

Do I have faith to stand up tall in the face of persecution?

Do I have faith to face it all surrounded by temptation?

Do I have faith to take it all when shunned by my relation?

Do I have faith to bring it all to Christ in supplication?

Lord, help my faith increase today

That I may walk the narrow way

And one day when my life is gone

I’ll hear Thee say to me, “Well done.”