



THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY

EMBRACING TRIALS, OVERCOMING
TEMPTATION, AND STANDING FIRM
IN FAITH

MARTINA KEAST

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Embrace the Foundation: Spiritual Wellness Coaching for a Balanced Life.

By participating in "Embrace the Foundation: Spiritual Wellness Coaching for a Balanced Life," you will embark on a transformative journey from insecurity and uncertainty to a life of authentic self-acceptance, spiritual grounding, and purposeful living. You will find the strength, support, and guidance needed to overcome past traumas, rediscover your true purpose, and build a resilient and fulfilling life anchored in faith and love.

About me:

I am a Spiritual Wellness Coach. I apply my 25 years of experience as a job coach for mentally and physically challenged adults, a Christian school supervisor, an intake at a women's shelter, a chaplain, a woman's pastor, and a recovery coach for a Christian ministry. I was a security guard, and I worked with sexually exploited men and women, and victims of domestic abuse.

I partner with clients wishing to embark on a spiritual journey leading to improved self-acceptance, spiritual grounding, and purposeful living.

I am passionate about creating a sacred space where individuals can journey inward, explore their spirituality, and thrive in mind, body, and spirit.

I have four mini-courses that may be taken independently or in progression based on clients' needs.

The ideal student:

You are looking for spiritual balance in daily life and a more profound relationship with Jesus Christ, one of the Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are very much involved in humanity.

This student values their relationship with God and will commit time to study and apply the knowledge as a potential world changer.

You may experience triggers, some sudden and some subtle. If you have any concerns, you will bring them to the facilitators, who may suggest additional counselling or therapy.

Our courses may address some of the triggers; however, it is advised to always have a trusted professional or pastoral counsellor on hand should the need arise.

Good Questions to ask yourself.

Do I want to learn about and from God?

Do I want Godly wisdom?

Do I want to experience spiritual transformation?

Or am I happy to be in control of my life?

Am I satisfied living my life guided by my flesh, myself?

If you desire Godly transformation, you are in the right place. If you wish to me more like Jesus, He will take you on a journey inward.

Psalm 63:1

O God, You are my God,
Early I will seek You,
My soul thirsts for You
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.

Modern-Day Student

As a modern-day student, three courses from graduating with a doctorate in Christian Ministry, I can genuinely say I've come past the point of reflection; I am now experienced in coaching my avatar: college, seminary, postgrads, and university students who look for spiritual balance.

What makes me a Spiritual Wellness Coach?

In 2017, while I was in seminary studying Spiritual Formation, Creative Streams took me hostage and released me when I completed several creative projects in their first draft. I was confused, bewildered, and frustrated because I could not control my journey. I found myself on a pilgrimage to an unforeseen destination.

All I could gather was that God must have a purpose for these textbooks. Yes, more than one. I didn't know then that I would offer online course materials to students as far away as Hong Kong, Pakistan, Kenya, and Alaska.

How could I? At 58 years old, I was lost in the academic world. As a grandmother and daughter, I was overwhelmed with academic work, social obligations, and family responsibilities. My creative brain, the right side, was in total control. The left side was non-existent, for the most part. Occasionally, I would get an energy and wisdom release to complete particular assignments. Today, I am happy to say that I can use my right and left brain freely.

I recall not knowing how to care for myself, even though I had burnt out thrice. PTSD diagnoses, too much stress, and lack of sleep brought me to my knees—again.

I learned about spiritual formation, and a few years later, I learned about soul care. I am still struggling in the realm of physical care. My body complains often.

Have you ever heard of the furnace of transformation, the cloud of unknowing, or the Dark Night of the Soul or Spirit? I have, and I have experienced each of those encounters.

Spiritual formation is a pilgrimage filled with suffering and incredible highs of

accomplishments, only to be back in the valley of the unknown. What is next on the pilgrimage of spiritual wellness? Why don't you join me to find out?

I created an online course textbook, **The Dwelling Place: Reflections on my Journey Toward Spiritual Wholeness**. I love the fiction/non-fiction approach used throughout the textbook. A workbook comes with the package.

There are three ways to benefit from reading and applying the information presented in **The Dwelling Place Project**.

The first way is to read for the sake of reading.

The second way is to read it and engage further using the workbook.

The third way is to join an online class. The benefit is a more profound transformation.

These Four Entry Levels,

The Search, The Pilgrimage, The Journey, and The Balance are prerequisites to the 3 month-long course called: *The Dwelling Place: Reflections on my Journey Toward Spiritual Wholeness*.

The Dwelling Place is a book about spiritual growth with characters to illustrate the content presented in the 26 chapters.

Some of the topics discussed:

Dark Night of the Soul/Spirit

Furnace of Transformation

Movement

Lectio Divina

Biblical Meditation

Two-Way Journaling

Spontaneous Creativity

Chapter 1: Persecution and Opposition

John 15:18-19 (NIV) *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."*

Introduction

Persecution and opposition are recurring themes throughout the history of Christianity. Jesus Himself faced intense hatred and persecution during His earthly ministry, and He prepared His followers to expect the same. This chapter delves into the significance of this scripture and its implications for believers today.

The Nature of Persecution

Persecution can manifest in various forms, from social rejection and ridicule to physical harm and even death. The early Christians faced severe persecution for their faith, yet they remained steadfast and committed to Christ. Understanding the nature of persecution helps believers to prepare mentally and spiritually for the challenges they may encounter.

The Reason for Persecution

The root of persecution lies in the world's rejection of Christ and His teachings. As followers of Christ, we are called to live in a manner that is counter-cultural, reflecting the values of the Kingdom of God rather than the values of the world. This distinction often leads to hostility from those who do not share our faith.

The Response to Persecution

Jesus encourages His followers to respond to persecution with love, grace, and forgiveness. Rather than retaliating or seeking revenge, Christians are called to pray for their persecutors and to continue living out their faith boldly and courageously, trusting in God's sovereignty and His promise to be with them in their suffering.

The Assurance of God's Presence

Despite the challenges and hardships associated with persecution, believers can take comfort in the knowledge that they are not alone. God promises to be with His children in their suffering, providing them with the strength, courage, and perseverance needed to endure and overcome persecution.

Conclusion

John 15:18-19 serves as a poignant reminder of the cost of discipleship and the reality of persecution that believers may face. However, it also offers encouragement and assurance that our identity and security are found in Christ, and He will equip us to stand firm and remain faithful, even in the face of opposition and hostility.

C.S. Lewis

"Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny."

C.S. Lewis' quote resonates with the biblical understanding that hardships and challenges are not obstacles to God's plan but rather instruments that shape and prepare believers for greater purposes. This perspective encourages Christians to embrace their trials with faith and hope, trusting that God can use their difficulties to refine their character, deepen their faith, and prepare them for the extraordinary plans He has for them.

Chapter 2: Doubt and Uncertainty

James 1:6-7 (NIV) *"But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord."*

Introduction

Doubt and uncertainty are common struggles that many Christians face in their faith journey. James 1:6-7 emphasizes the importance of faith and trust in our relationship with God, particularly when we approach Him in prayer. This chapter explores the significance of this scripture and offers insights into overcoming doubt and cultivating a steadfast faith.

The Nature of Doubt

Doubt can arise from various sources, including unanswered prayers, challenging circumstances, or intellectual questions about the Christian faith. While it is natural to experience moments of doubt, allowing doubt to persist and overshadow our faith can hinder our spiritual growth and relationship with God.

The Consequences of Doubt

James warns that those who doubt are like waves of the sea, tossed by the wind. Doubt can lead to spiritual instability, making it difficult to trust God fully and to experience His peace and guidance in our lives. Persistent doubt can also hinder our prayers and our ability to receive God's blessings and answers to our petitions.

Overcoming Doubt Through Faith

Overcoming doubt requires intentional effort and a commitment to cultivating a strong and steadfast faith. This involves immersing ourselves in God's Word, praying fervently, surrounding ourselves with a supportive Christian community, and focusing on God's faithfulness and His promises, even when circumstances seem bleak.

Trusting in God's Goodness and Sovereignty

Central to overcoming doubt is trusting in God's goodness, wisdom, and sovereignty. Even when we do not understand His ways or His timing, we can trust that God hears our prayers, knows what is best for us, and is working all things together for our good and His glory.

Conclusion

James 1:6-7 serves as a timely reminder of the importance of faith and trust in our relationship with God, particularly in times of doubt and uncertainty. By actively cultivating a steadfast faith, focusing on God's promises, and trusting in His goodness and sovereignty, believers can overcome doubt and experience a deeper, more intimate relationship with God.

Corrie ten Boom

"When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer."

Corrie ten Boom's analogy beautifully illustrates the importance of trust and patience during challenging and dark periods in life. Just as passengers trust the engineer to safely navigate the train through the darkness of a tunnel, Christians are called to trust God's guidance and provision during times of uncertainty, knowing that He is in control and will lead them through difficult times to a place of safety and light.

Chapter 3: Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV) *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

Introduction

Spiritual warfare is a reality that every Christian faces. Ephesians 6:12 provides a profound insight into the nature of this spiritual battle, emphasizing that our true enemies are not other people but spiritual forces of evil. This chapter delves into the significance of this scripture and offers practical guidance on how believers can engage in spiritual warfare effectively.

The Reality of Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare is a constant battle against the forces of darkness that seek to undermine our faith, lead us into sin, and hinder our relationship with God. While the battle is invisible, its impact on our lives and our spiritual well-being is very real.

The Weapons of Spiritual Warfare

God has provided believers with spiritual armor to equip them for battle against the enemy. This includes the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Understanding and utilizing these spiritual weapons is essential for victory in spiritual warfare.

Engaging in Prayer and Fasting

Prayer and fasting are powerful weapons in spiritual warfare. Through prayer, believers can communicate with God, seek His guidance and protection, and intercede on behalf of others. Fasting can help believers to draw closer to God, strengthen their faith, and gain victory over the flesh and the enemy.

Standing Firm in Faith

Standing firm in faith and resisting the devil's schemes are essential components of spiritual warfare. This involves maintaining a close relationship with God, immersing ourselves in His Word, obeying His commandments, and relying on His strength and power to overcome the enemy.

Conclusion

Ephesians 6:12 serves as a powerful reminder of the reality of spiritual warfare and the importance of being spiritually prepared and equipped to engage in this battle effectively. By understanding the nature of spiritual warfare, utilizing the spiritual weapons provided by God, engaging in fervent prayer and fasting, and standing firm in faith, believers can experience victory over the enemy and live victoriously in Christ.

Oswald Chambers

"Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading."

Oswald Chambers' quote captures the essence of faith as a journey of trust and obedience. Faith often requires stepping into the unknown, and trusting in God's guidance and provision even when the path ahead is unclear. This quote encourages believers to embrace the uncertainty of their faith journey, knowing that while they may not always know where they are being led, they can trust in the One who is leading them and rest in His love and faithfulness.

Chapter 4: Temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV) *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."*

Introduction

Temptation is a universal struggle that every Christian faces. 1 Corinthians 10:13 offers a comforting assurance to believers, reminding them that they are not alone in their struggles and that God is faithful to provide a way out of temptation. This chapter explores the significance of this scripture and offers insights into overcoming temptation and living a victorious Christian life.

The Nature of Temptation

Temptation is an enticement or invitation to sin, often appealing to our desires, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. While temptation is common to all people, the specific temptations we face can vary based on our individual circumstances, backgrounds, and areas of weakness.

God's Faithfulness in Temptation

God is faithful and understanding of our human weaknesses and vulnerabilities. He promises not to allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear and assures us that He will always provide a way out so that we can endure and overcome temptation. This promise underscores God's love, grace, and commitment to helping His children remain faithful and obedient in the face of temptation.

Overcoming Temptation through God's Strength

Overcoming temptation requires reliance on God's strength, wisdom, and provision. This involves being vigilant and alert to potential sources of temptation, fleeing from situations and environments that could lead to sin, and actively resisting temptation through the power of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and Scripture.

Seeking Accountability and Support

Seeking accountability and support from fellow believers can be instrumental in overcoming temptation. By sharing our struggles, praying for one another, and holding

each other accountable, we can encourage and strengthen one another in our fight against temptation and sin.

Conclusion

1 Corinthians 10:13 serves as a powerful reminder of God's faithfulness and provision in the face of temptation. By acknowledging our vulnerabilities, relying on God's strength and wisdom, seeking accountability and support from fellow believers, and actively resisting temptation through the power of the Holy Spirit, believers can overcome temptation and live a victorious Christian life.

A.W. Tozer

"To be right with God has often meant to be in trouble with men."

A.W. Tozer's quote highlights the reality that living a life aligned with God's truth and righteousness may often lead to opposition and persecution from the world. This quote serves as a reminder that true discipleship and faithfulness to God may require believers to stand apart from the world and face opposition, ridicule, or persecution for their convictions. Despite the challenges and hardships that may come from conflicting with the world, this quote encourages Christians to remain steadfast in their commitment to God and His truth, trusting that obedience to God's Word is ultimately more valuable and rewarding than the approval of men.

Chapter 5: Suffering and Trials

Romans 8:18 (NIV) *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."*

Introduction

Suffering and trials are inevitable aspects of the human experience, and Christians are not exempt from them. Romans 8:18 provides a profound perspective on suffering, encouraging believers to maintain hope and perspective in the midst of hardships by focusing on the eternal glory that awaits them. This chapter delves into the significance of this scripture and offers insights into finding hope, comfort, and purpose in the midst of suffering and trials.

The Reality of Suffering and Trials

Suffering and trials can manifest in various forms, including physical illness, emotional pain, relational difficulties, financial hardship, and persecution for one's faith. While suffering is often painful and challenging, it is a universal experience that every person faces to some degree.

The Purpose and Value of Suffering

Suffering and trials serve various purposes in the life of a believer. They can refine our character, deepen our faith, strengthen our perseverance, cultivate empathy and compassion for others, and draw us closer to God. Understanding the purpose and value of suffering can help believers to endure and navigate their trials with grace, resilience, and hope.

Finding Hope and Comfort in God's Promises

Central to enduring suffering and trials is finding hope, comfort, and strength in God's promises and His presence. God promises to be with His children in their suffering, to provide them with the strength, comfort, and support needed to endure and overcome their trials, and to work all things together for good for those who love Him.

Embracing the Eternal Perspective

Romans 8:18 encourages believers to maintain an eternal perspective in the midst of suffering and trials, recognizing that their present sufferings are temporary and insignificant compared to the eternal glory that awaits them. By fixing their eyes on the

promises of God and the eternal hope found in Christ, believers can find strength, perseverance, and joy even in the midst of suffering.

Conclusion

Romans 8:18 serves as a powerful reminder of the hope, comfort, and perspective that believers can find while suffering and trials. By embracing the purpose and value of suffering, finding hope and comfort in God's promises, and maintaining an eternal perspective, believers can endure their trials with grace, resilience, and hope, trusting that God works all things together for good for those who love Him.

Charles Spurgeon

"Trials teach us what we are; they dig up the soil, and let us see what we are made of."

Charles Spurgeon's quote offers a profound insight into the purpose and value of trials and hardships in the life of a believer. Trials serve as a refining fire, revealing our true character, strengths, and weaknesses. They provide opportunities for self-reflection, growth, and transformation, enabling believers to recognize areas of spiritual growth and to deepen their dependence on God. This quote encourages Christians to embrace their trials with a spirit of perseverance, humility, and faith, knowing that through them, God is shaping and molding them into the image of Christ and preparing them for greater maturity and usefulness in His kingdom.



As an artisan who is a spiritual wellness coach, I embody a blend of mastery in my craft, a deep understanding of spirituality, and a genuine desire to facilitate growth and transformation in others.

I created a sacred space where individuals can journey inward, explore their spirituality, and thrive in mind, body, and spirit.

I am masterful because of my life experiences as an immigrant, growing up in alcoholic, violent homes, sexual abuse, spiritual abuse, and the resilience and testimonies these opportunities provided.

I faced my own consequences of being a codependent, workaholic, and absent mother.

I envision making a difference in women's lives who relate to my life experiences and educational journey toward freedom.