

**M**y husband came home from work drained from the latest corporate shenanigans. As I listened to the details of his day and heard how the games people play were a blow to him and, in turn, to us, I shared what had become clear to me during my prayer time earlier that day. “Perhaps we’re going through a time of humbling,” I suggested. My husband nodded in agreement.

What did I mean by a time of humbling? Our plans weren’t coming to fruition the way we had thought they would—money wasn’t flowing at a pace we had anticipated; career dreams were stalled or, in my case, dashed; our living situation had not changed in eleven years. And the latest news about a boss who had used her power to affect my husband’s bonus just added to the pile. Everything felt so hard.

As I mulled over our current situation, I asked this question of my two best friends: “Have you ever gone through a time of humbling?”

We are the very best of friends and share everything, but their responses floored me. Their honesty was raw. My friends’ humbling experiences—though soul-crushing at the time—had propelled each of them to a better place.

The first friend shared one of her most uncomfortably demeaning times. She had purchased her dream house and was doing well in her career, finally breaking the six-figure salary barrier. But then the rug was pulled out from under her in the form of a devastating job loss. The company she worked for had gone under. The realization of this situation forced her to let it all go. She got rid of prized possessions, endured a house foreclosure, and was forced to pack what little she had left and relocate across the country to start all over. She learned that possessions meant little and that God was with her the entire time, because she desperately clung to Him as she tried to decipher her next steps.

My other friend shared that she fights being humbled, even when God is clearly indicating she’s where she needs to be right now. She fights accepting what God has in store for her. She thought she was entitled to more—more things, experiences, and accomplishments. In particular, she felt that she wasn’t where she thought she should be in this stage of life. But she admitted that when she fights, it doesn’t feel rewarding. And

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that, in and of itself, eventually humbles her. She realizes that her arms are too short to box with God and is learning the blessing of being humbled.

God often brings the faithful to the brink of despair. And our humbling produces humility. Humility is a necessary component for navigating life with Christ. Humility recognizes the omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence of God. Humility realizes that because God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere, we are nothing without Him. Humility is without pride or arrogance. As we are humbled, we begin to understand the truth of Proverbs 15:33: “The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.” This fear is a reverence and an acknowledgment that everything flows from Him and goes hand in hand with humility.

To be humbled is to accept where God has you even when you can’t make sense of the situation. It is to know that He is with us and has promised us peace as we navigate the trials and tribulations of life. Sometimes we think we have arrived, especially when we are at the pinnacle of success. But life is not a destination. We think we should be further ahead, but the God Who sees all and knows all, says, “That’s not exactly what I have in store for you right now.” So He shifts and turns us by our circumstances, and it takes us a while to see what He is doing. We know He controls everything, but we don’t act like it. But when the rug is pulled from under us, when we absorb curveball after curveball, we remember it’s all in His hands. We cry out to Him, we lean on Him, and we cling to Him. In humility, we begin to see, understand, and accept His sovereignty.

Many people in the Bible went through a time of great humbling. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was told by the angel Gabriel that she would birth the Messiah. When the angel Gabriel spoke with her, he called her highly favored. Mary wondered if he was mistaken, and at the end of his announcement, said, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (Luke 1:34). Joseph thought to publicly put her away since she was unwed and pregnant with another man’s child, but he, too, had a visit

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from an angel. Even so, both Mary and Joseph accepted God's will for them in that very difficult moment. They both followed the instructions of the angels that visited them. And we know the result: Jesus, the Savior of the world.

We will all have humbling times. Perhaps for you, it's your season of singleness or an ill-timed word within your marriage. It may be dealing with an exasperating child or trying to climb the corporate ladder while being outmaneuvered by a demanding boss. Perhaps your health is failing or you are grieving a sudden loss. Whatever the situation, don't fight it in your strength and reason. You will become exhausted, bitter, and defeated. Instead, humbly rely on God's strength to carry you through, for His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). His strength is available and made for times such as this if you will part into it.

Being humbled has increased my faith. I've learned that God is with me and will give me what I need for each battle. I've learned that He empowers me to fight with the weapons He has provided. I've also learned to rest in His loving arms. When you go through a time of humbling, it can lead to a new appreciation of God's sovereignty, as it did for my friends and me.

Know that you're not alone. God is always with you, and it also helps to have friends that can walk this road with you. In humbling times, reach out to Him first and to those you trust. None of this is for nothing. Remember, "He forgetteth not the cry of the humble" (Psalms 9:12). And He is with us during the times that humble us. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15). ■

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*Nylse is a wife and a mother of four who currently resides in Los Angeles, California. She is a Christian blogger who writes to encourage others from a godly perspective at [www.lifenotesencouragement.com](http://www.lifenotesencouragement.com). She never turns down the opportunity for conversation over a hot cup of tea.*

