

## Caution: Slippery Road Ahead

“Peep! Peep! Peep!” Chirping noises resounded from an underground parking garage and I saw a flock of baby chicks wandering, lost. I wanted to get to a Bible class on time, but how could I ignore them? I noticed their mother waddling frantically, quacking to her children from a nearby greenbelt. I imagined the lost baby birds being crushed by the wheels of oncoming cars, so I decided to intervene. It seemed easy enough—all I needed to do was to shepherd them back to their mother.

But as I advanced toward the chicks, they fled from me, scurrying *into* the path of oncoming cars! Afraid, they misunderstood my efforts to help. Frustrated, I suddenly grasped how God might feel when I run away from Him. Although He directs events into my life that I don’t understand, I forget that He harbors my best interest. When I run away from Him, I blindly run into danger like those baby chicks that desperately needed help, but ran into harm instead.

I may not fall beneath an oncoming car, but spiritual blindness is no less dangerous. When I close my eyes and turn my heart from God, I fall victim to fear and worry because my eyes and heart are set upon some unpleasant trial. I’m no pillar of faith but fearful as well as forgetful.

I forget God’s help is always available, and that He is the giver of the very thing I’m afraid of losing, whether it’s money, a job, health or family. I feel as if I’m the only one who’s ever faced this test, conveniently forgetting about Job who lost everything but still blessed the name of the Lord.

Clearly adversity is a test, but prosperity can be even more dangerous. Agur said, “Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’” (Proverbs 30:8,9). Amidst prosperity, I don’t complain that life is unfair; instead I might lose God as my focus. Or worse—I might proudly think that it’s I, not God, who’s responsible for my blessings. But woe to me then! I’d be like the Laodicean church, outwardly rich, but unaware of my true condition—blind, naked and depraved (Revelation 3:17).

How can I be sheltered from danger, both in and out of season? Jesus described two builders (Luke 6:48-49) who each built a house, but chose different foundations. They both built in fair weather, but the wise man didn’t presume that these conditions would last forever. Nor did he use good weather to slack off, work on his tan, or simply do a half-baked job; instead he used the opportunity to lay down a rock foundation. It took greater effort to dig deep (v.48), but the house built on rock withstood the storm, unlike the unsupported structure on sand.

Likewise, if we hear and do God’s Word in the good times, we build upon a strong foundation for stability to withstand bad times. Focusing upon God rather than our circumstances gives us proper perspective; with God as our Master, we won’t be a slave to circumstances—whether good or bad. But God, Who allows each of our life’s experiences, also says “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). His goodness is incomprehensible: though we may not know the reason for trials, we can always know He will never fail us. Through thick and thin, when we make God the foundation of our trust, He is glorified; and though vanishing, the vapor of our transformed life sparkles, reflecting the light of His glory.

I don’t know whatever happened to those baby chicks—I hope somehow they made it back to the shelter of Mom’s wings. But when I think about them from time to time, I am reminded of the everlasting safety prepared for me in the shelter of the Almighty Father’s wings.

By Mary Nixon