

**HOW I MET THE MAN WHO SIGNED  
MY DEATH CERTIFICATE**

**- or -**

**HOW OUR FAMILY  
WALKED THE COVID ROAD IN 2021:  
OUR YEAR OF  
TRAGEDY, LOSS,  
MIRACLES &  
ULTIMATELY, VICTORY**

**By:**

**Rev. Dr. N. Patrick Marica,  
D. Min., M.A.**

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**A Publication of  
Amherst Theological Seminary  
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## **WHO IS NICK MARICA?**

Let me introduce myself. I am the discipleship pastor at Solid Rock Baptist Church about 10 miles north of Lynchburg, Va. Kathy and I have been married since 1985. We have 3 children.

In 2021, I spent 6 months in 3 different hospitals recovering from Covid. A mere 2 months later we would lose their oldest daughter to Covid. In this short booklet, I will talk about how Covid struck our family and gave rise to our year of tragedy, loss, miracles and ultimately, victory

## **THE LOW POINT: FEBRUARY 17- MY DEATH**

The low point came on February 17<sup>th</sup>. They had replaced the ventilator with a trachea. I went into cardiac arrest due to a mucus block in the trachea. The device that was supposed to save me killed me. My heart stopped. Two nurses who were in the room told me later that the conclusion was I was gone. They had tried everything and nothing further could be done. Then, over 2 minutes later, without human intervention, my heart started beating again.

God had intervened and raised me from the dead.

It was a miracle.

He was not done with me.

It would not be the only miracle.

All told, Satan tried to kill me 5 times:

- There was a grotesque bed sore that should have killed me. It was the size of my fist. You could see bone.
- The night of February 17 when God resurrected me. My heart stopped beating for over 2 minutes
- They put a “do not resuscitate” band on my wrist without our consent
- I should have lost my voice which would have been the equivalent of killing me.
- In early January, I died twice one night. My vascular system shut down twice. I was reportedly bleeding everywhere. My blood pressure had plummeted to zero.

They even made out my death certificate and signed it.

Little did I know that 6 months in medical institutions lay ahead of me. I don't remember the first 2 months. Two nurses who cared for me in the first 2 months later told me: “Trust me - you don't want to remember”.

## **HOW I MET THE MAN WHO SIGNED MY DEATH CERTIFICATE**

It happened on a Sunday morning. I was talking with pastor Dave. He told me someone was coming that morning who I should meet. The gentleman soon entered, and Dave introduced me to John. John proceeded to tell me that he was a nurse and cared for me the first few weeks of my 6 month hospital stay in the first half of 2021. We soon began talking about my case from 2021. I told him I didn't remember any of the first 2 months. He detailed how gruesome my case was. He told me all about the night in early January that I died not once, but twice that night in early January (obviously they were able to revive me). John said he was amazed to see me alive. He told me not long after that fateful night in January, he had come into work one evening and found mt bed empty.

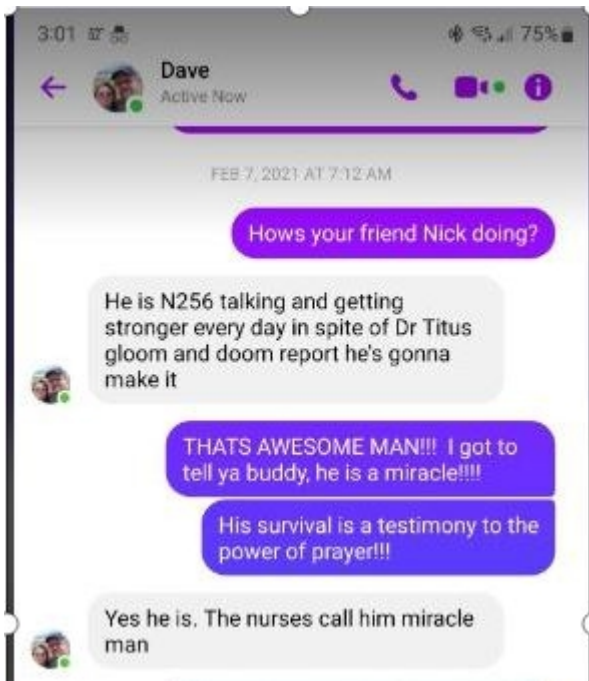
He presumed I has passed. He said he had expected to see me in wheel chair with a traec and a feeding tube.

Then he told me he had signed my death certificate the night I died twice.

### “THE MIRACLE MAN”

To have people come up to you and tell you that you are a walking talking miracle is a very humbling thing! The miracle of my survival (and prospering!!) in both January and February prompted the staff to start calling me “the miracle man”. Word got around: several weeks later, an EMT who was taking me to dialysis exclaimed: “You’re the one in a million guy!”

Following is a screen shot between John and my senior pastor:



## THANK YOU...

We cannot begin to express our appreciation for all who supported us. We want to thank the congregation at Solid Rock Baptist Church as they pulled together to support us in countless ways. We also want to thank Kathy's workmates who came to our house and did a ton of yard work. To those who cared for our vehicles we thank you. To Tina and the food bank here at Solid Rock, we thank you. We thank our daughter Erin who came up from her home and family in Texas and spent 3 months supporting Kathy. We want to thank Kathy's friends who gave of their time and expertise. To the thousands (literally!) of people who prayed for us we express our undying gratitude. To the medical professionals who cared for me we thank you. To Dr. Cook at CHS who advocated for us when no one else could or would, we thank you. All these contributions were significant in helping us get thru those 6 months.

Finally, I want to express my love and admiration to my wife, Kathy. Her love, loyalty and faithfulness were inspirational to me. Day after day she came bringing her smile and unlimited love. She came whether I was awake or not. She snuck in treats that I wasn't supposed to have. I would not be here today if it wasn't for her. 3 times she could have said yes to terminating my life. She could have reasoned "He'll be better off in heaven". But she said no 3 times. She thinks she's weak but her incredible courage and determination say otherwise. Time and time again she advocated and protected me when she was the only one who could. Many times "Mama Bear" would surface when she would march down to the nurses station. (You don't wanna see the claws!). She cried with me and laughed with me. I am alive today largely because of her.

## ”MERRY CHRISTMAS”

My story begins in the ER on Christmas Eve, 2020. I tested positive for Covid and I was admitted. Things went south quickly. My oxygen levels plummeted. My blood sugar tested at 172 and I was told I was diabetic. I would later learn that my A1C score was 11.7 when it should be around 6. I was a walking time bomb and didn't know it. Because I was in quarantine Kathy was not allowed to see me until January 7th. I was to be in the Covid ICU unit until January 17th. I was put into a medically induced coma and a ventilator was inserted. Kathy's understanding was that the ventilator meant that the end was very near.

It was during this time that both Kathy and Valerie (our daughter) both contracted Covid. Val's case was mild; she was sent home from the hospital in a matter of hours. Kathy's case was mild as well; she was admitted for several days and then sent home. Both recovered quickly.

The doctor called Kathy and allowed her to bring one other person on January 7th. Pastor David Cash and Kathy were allowed to be with me for about an hour or so. Dr Titus explained the possible outcomes. Kathy was confronted with a heart wrenching decision. My lungs and kidneys were destroyed he said. It was hopeless he said. Kathy told the doctor to treat me as aggressively as possible. That decision saved my life. Pastor Cash advised Kathy to fight for me with everything she had. Kathy told the doctors to treat me as aggressively as possible.

Kathy would soon discover that a “Do Not Resuscitate” bracelet had been placed on my wrist. Neither Kathy nor I had consented to that. Kathy told them she would not leave the hospital until it was taken off.



## THE FEBRUARY MIRACLE

I recount here the night of February 17. Due to a mucous block, I went into cardiac arrest. My heart stopped beating for over 2 minutes.

Then, without human intervention, my heart started beating again.

God had resurrected me.

Again, the staff had literally started calling me “the miracle man”. John would later tell my pastor “that man should be dead!”

There was also the time when I was being transported via ambulance to go to dialysis. The second hospital I was in (Virginia Baptist) did not provide dialysis services so they drive you to a dialysis facility in an emergency vehicle. They have both a driver and an EMT who sits in the back with the patient. The EMT was reading her paperwork and she said “marica...marica...marica - I know that name....” then she gasped and said “Mr. Marica!!! You’re the one in a million guy!”

## THE TRACHEOTOMY

When I was originally admitted to Lynchburg General, my oxygen levels plummeted, so they inserted a ventilator. When my oxygen levels finally stabilized, the ventilator was replaced by a trachea. I was told I would have a hole in my throat for the rest of my life and I would have to subsist on a pureed food diet (the equivalent of baby food) for the rest of my life. I told them I would rather die than eat baby food the rest of my life. Because of the tracheotomy diet of pureed foods I was on I lost 60 pounds; over 1/4 of my body weight. There were

only 4 different pureed meals that would be served in rotation day after day after day. One of the complications of Covid in my case was the significant loss of muscle mass. I wasn't getting "real" food, so my muscles kept deteriorating. The staff was acting out of fear of another mucous block or that I would choke on "real" food. The trachea issue would haunt me for weeks. The issue with food would not be resolved until I moved to Virginia Baptist Hospital - The second facility I was in.

## **THE WOUND**

They had put me in a medically induced coma in January for over 3 weeks. The results of the coma were horrific. Because I was not turned, I was left with a grotesque and potentially deadly bed sore at the base of my spine that you could fit your fist into; you could see the bone. It would take almost a full year to heal completely.

## **"GET BUSY LIVIN..."**

It was on February 24<sup>th</sup> - 2 months to the day after I was admitted - that I remember becoming aware of my surroundings. The first person I saw was Kathy. She was sitting at the end of the bed and I asked her what day it was. She told me what day it was. My first thought was that I had missed the Super bowl. I began to realize that I had "lost" 2 months of my life - they were mentally "just gone". As I began to comprehend my situation and pray about it, I asked myself as a pastoral therapist "what would I advise?" I concluded: "live day to day, keep active, and let Jesus take care of the rest." I would "get busy livin" (Thanks to "Shawshank Redemption"). There would be no turning back. I was going to live as normal a life as possible regardless of what it took.

## **THE MASSIVE PRAYER EFFORT**

I was soon to find out that a massive prayer effort was underway on my behalf. Apparently, word went out quickly. Literally thousands of people were praying for me. People overseas were praying for me. People who had no idea who I was. There was an entire elementary school class taught by a friend's sister that was praying for me - every day! A fellow student from graduate school in Michigan had people praying for me - they would message Megan and ask how I was doing. People from my church would gather outside under my hospital window and pray and sing hymns - in February!

## **ERIN TO THE RESCUE!**

It was in early 2021 our daughter Erin came from Texas to live with Kathy and Val to help out at home. Erin stayed for 3 months. Both Erin and Kathy could work from home. Erin set up shop in our guest room and was able to work from our house. Kathy and Erin got to spend 3 months together; little did we know that would be the last time we would see her. Of the times she came to the hospital, I still remember vividly the last time she came to visit me before she left to return to Texas. Her husband, Alex came to see me as well. We are forever grateful for Erin and her husband Alex for stepping up to the plate in such a manner. Again, it would be the last time we would see Erin alive.

## **HOSPITAL DELIRIUMS**

I am told that I would thrash about on my bed and cry out. I was also informed that I had actually hit a nurse. Much to the staff's discredit, they chose to tell Kathy I was "confused" when in fact I was delusional and was hallucinating.

These delusions and hallucinations are better known as “hospital deliriums”. In my early stay at Lynchburg General I experienced many deliriums. They were very unnerving for Kathy and made a difficult experience even more taxing. I would see ants crawling on the ceiling. I saw a bowling ball floating in water. The smoke detector would come “alive” and “walk” across the ceiling. I saw cats: a black one and a gray one who would chew on my feet. They loved to chew on my big toes. The unnerving thing about this was that I could actually feel it. At times the gray one would show up with a razor blade in its mouth and start to use it on the surface of my feet. I could actually feel a razor blade cutting in the top of my feet as strange as that sounds. Of course there was nothing there but the feeling was unmistakable. I found that I could use my big toe to “freeze” their jaws. This particular hallucination finally stopped when I employed this strategy. Its worth noting that If I tried to grab either one, they would simply “poof” away.

Deliriums are different than dreams. You don't know that you're in a delirium; you think it's real even though much of them are ridiculous. In one I saw an old friend of mine from Delaware. It was so real it was frightening. He put his hands on my shoulders and I could feel it. At one point in the delirium our faces were inches apart. I had my arms on his shoulders and I could feel them. I could smell his breath. For all intent and purposes it was him.

Another delirium was when I panicked about paying the bills. I just had to get home to pay the bills. So, in my delirium I got out of bed, and tried to walk home. In the rain. In my hospital gown. In my underwear. My delirium didn't end well; I ended up getting “lost”. Despite the fact that was really in my hospital bed the entire time, I was convinced at the time I had actually tried to walk home in the rain.

Another delirium was when I thought I was going to die because of a mucus block. I suspect this particular delirium reflected what was actually happening at the time in real time.

## **REHABILITATION**

I couldn't get into a rehabilitation facility because of all the complications I presented. God sent us an angel in disguise when we couldn't get me into a rehab facility.

I asked her: "what are we supposed to do? You don't want me here - you need the bed. I can't get into rehab; I can't go home - Kathy can't take care of me." What are we supposed to do? She arranged a meeting. The result: I was soon in another hospital that had superior rehab facilities in a week - the closest one to our home. Exactly what we had prayed for!

All told, It took about two months to get me into a rehab facility. Initially, they told me that I had lost 80% of my functionality on my left side and about 20% on my right, so rehab was a given. At first, even sitting up was impossible. I couldn't support myself. The competition for rehab beds is fierce, so finding a rehabilitation facility took some time. We had prayed for a facility that was close. I presented several complicating issues: the trachea, diabetes, dialysis, and my bed sore wound. Various facilities were considered: Richmond, Washington, and even Connecticut. Finally our prayers were answered, and Virginia Baptist Hospital took me. It was the closest facility to our house! Lisa, Sara and Andrew were excellent.

## **REAL FOOD!**

Courtney, a speech therapist at Virginia Baptist Hospital, listened to me patiently re: the food issue and changed my diet. Canned green beans never tasted so heavenly. However

the trachea remained. I continued to improve, and the physical therapy was most profitable.

## HEARTLAND

After about a month at Virginia Baptist, I was transferred to Heartland, a senior citizens rehab facility. Lindsay and Evelyn, my physical and occupational therapists at Heartland were instrumental in continuing my progress.

## THE TRACHEA COMES OUT

The night that I got to Heartland was when the trachea came out. They took it to out to clean it - no more than 5 minutes tops, and the small hole in my neck started to close a lot faster than usual. They couldn't re-insert it. I was thrilled. They had me to go to the emergency room so they could check me out. They brought me into bay #2 and it just so happened that a respiratory tech happened to be there. I told him what had transpired. He examined me and told me that I didn't need a trachea. "What do you need a trachea for?" he exclaimed. I responded "that's what I've been saying for weeks!" He said "I can't make that call - the doctor must make that call". An hour later a doctor appeared. She examined me and told me that she and the other doctors would decide if it needed to be re-inserted. When I informed her that I would not consent to having it re-inserted, the blood drained from her face. She just couldn't believe it.

Later, a Physicians Assistant entered the room and another round of "attempted persuasion" took place. I repeated my objection in that she could "talk to that wall" all night long. The trachea was finally out for good.

## **HOME!**

After another month of rehabilitation at Heartland I was sent home on July 24 - 6 months to the day after I was admitted to Lynchburg General Hospital. I was still in a wheelchair.

My first home health care nurse spoke candidly with me and told me how dire my circumstances were. I told her I would be normal.

I was still quite weak and required significant care. Home health care nurses would come by and help care for me. I could feed myself but little else. Kathy took time off from work to care for me.

Once home, I continued healing. To say I was determined would be an understatement. In a matter of days, I was in a walker and out of the wheelchair. I was walking a few weeks later.

## **ERIN PASSES**

It was in early August that we found out that Erin, our oldest daughter, had been diagnosed with Covid. Due to quarantine restrictions no one - not even her husband - was allowed to see her. The Garza family did everything possible and fought for Erin valiantly under impossible circumstances. For us, we had no choice but to stay home and wait. Her condition continued to get worse. We watched helplessly as she passed away at 35.

Years earlier Erin had been hospitalized. Her condition at the time left her lungs severely scarred, although we did not know it at the time. That condition left her ill-prepared for the devastation that Covid-19 would bring.

Ultimately, Alex called us and talked with us about hospice. We all agreed it was the best thing, and Erin passed into eternity on September 10, 2021. We miss her terribly.

## **DIALYSIS**

A few weeks after I had been originally admitted for Covid on Christmas Eve 2020. Tests indicated that my potassium level of was quite high, and I was put on a regular course of dialysis. The treatments would continue at a local dialysis facility for well over a year beyond my eventual release to go home.

Dialysis can also be performed at home via one of two different procedures. We had elected to try peritoneal dialysis, whereby a catheter is inserted in your groin, The outpatient procedure was performed without incident, but the surgeon saw something he didn't like, and sent a tissue sample off for testing.

## **MRSA**

The sample tested positive for MRSA, better known as the "flesh-eating disease". Medical advances have made substantial inroads towards addressing the problem of MRSA. I was given a course of powerful medication over the next few weeks, and the infection cleared up. Ultimately, it was determined that peritoneal dialysis was not an appropriate course of action for me. I would continue going to dialysis at a local facility.

When I originally started to go to dialysis they told me this would be my life now 3 days a week at dialysis; 3 1/2 hours for each session. I told them I would be healed; that I was determined that I would be normal. I would beat this.



Only 2% of people come off dialysis. Kidneys rarely heal. Yet, on December 16, 2022 I was informed that I would join the 2% of people who inexplicably (“miraculously?”) recover from kidney disease.

## “MINI COVID”

In June of 2022, I was diagnosed with Omicron - (“mini-covid” as an associate of mine calls it.) I tested positive at my doctors office, and put on a 10 day quarantine. I was put on paxlovid and healed over the next few days.

## EPILOGUE

God works in miraculous and mysterious ways. God gave me opportunities to witness and to plant seeds in ways I would have never otherwise gotten. There were opportunities to counsel hurting people and I took great satisfaction in those. God used me in mighty ways that I never would have anticipated. Our marriage is stronger than ever as we walked through this crisis together. We both grew during this time. We learned that God will put us in very difficult positions to test us. My situation gave me influence I otherwise never would have had, We find that our faith is stronger than ever.

I have neuropathy - typical for diabetics. The nephrologist tells me my kidneys are weak. He believes that I will have to go back on dialysis - but I have made up my mind to never go back. God alone determines when He wants me to come home. My lungs are slowly healing. But God will heal me of my infirmities as He sees fit. My wound took almost a year to be healed.

I chose to see my time in the hospitals as a time for solitude and contemplation. I chose to “get busy livin”. I chose to live

day by day and keep active as best I could and leave the rest to Jesus.

## **ANOTHER MIRACLE**

I pointed out earlier that there was more than one miracle. Before I was slated to go to Virginia Baptist Hospital - I still had the dreaded trachea in - there was a respiratory tech who was examining me. She was about to leave when she stopped and said "I've been doing this for 31 years. There is always voice deterioration with a trachea to one degree or another. Always. I've never seen an exception. Until now. Your voice is so powerful that it has stayed the same." Later, I was to find out that there is a nerve in the neck that is typically injured as part of the trachea insertion. If you were to inspect my neck closely, you can see where the trachea was inserted. You would note that it is slightly off-center - thus the insertion of the trachea missed my nerve! God had maintained my voice!

People have asked how we kept a positive attitude during these times. God certainly upheld us. The prayers of the thousands who prayed for us were so deeply appreciated and we felt them. We find that our faith is more resolute than ever.

My healing journey continues. I still have health issues such as neuropathy in my feet. My lungs have some serious scarring; even the lightest strenuous activities gives me problem breathing.

Years ago I was reading Luke 2. I was reading where Jesus tells Mary that it was time for Him to be about His Father's business. The Holy Spirit revealed to me that being saved was not enough. You could still be saved, but The Lord is looking for a 100% commitment to Him. I decided then and there I would commit my life 100% to Jesus. There would no turning

back. I would pursue Jesus with all that I had to give. I certainly would not be perfect. But I would press on fully intent on serving Him to the fullest. It was this commitment to Jesus that God used to get me thru this trial. To God be the honor, the glory and the praise!

Scripture tells us as much:

*“You are not your own; you were bought at a price.”*  
(1 Cor 6:19-20)

*“You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. ...But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.”* (Rom 6:18-22)

*“...and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”*  
(Mark 10:44)

I firmly believe that my decision to be 100% in for Jesus is why I'm alive today. To absolutely without any qualifications turn my life over to Jesus. James tells us that if you have a divided heart you should expect nothing. 99% in for Jesus is 100% divided! I don't regret a single instant of what he allowed in my life. Because I gave myself over to Him a fully unqualified 100%!

Knowing that I will meeting Jesus at some point makes me like a giddy kid looking forward to Christmas. Paul said he wanted to go there but the work here wasn't finished.

*“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet*

*what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.*

## WHY?

The reason why God had allowed the overall process? We were chatting with a nurse the day I was scheduled to leave Lynchburg General. She said “You know, there had been so much Covid-19 and so much death, we needed *something*. And you were *such* a breath of fresh air. You see, we needed you just as much as you needed us.” You see, I found I could make them laugh. Later on, the Holy Spirit clued me in that I needed to walk the entire “Covid-19 road” to have influence with the staff. It all had been done so that I could connect emotionally and support the nurses and medical personnel. It was all allowed that I might have influence for Jesus!

I recalled what Paul and Silas endured:

*“...Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.” (Acts 16:25)*

In a similar way, I was able to minister to the staff at UVA dialysis in that I could make them laugh. I bought them lunch one day; flowers on a couple of other occasions. Several of the staff still follow my story. Emily - one of the techs - and her husband treated Kathy and I to dinner one night. She told me the day I left that she would miss me enormously; “It sure has been nice to have someone who understands us.” Reportedly, several of the patients who I used to pray over have asked “what ever happened to the preacher?”

## CONCLUSION

As you ponder this testimonial, I pray you come away with a new understanding of Jesus' kingdom and how it works.

### - PETER WARNS US NOT TO BE SURPRISED BY TRIALS:

*"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you"* (1 Peter 4:12)

### - ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM:

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

### - YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN, YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE!

*"You are not your own; you were bought at a price."* (1 Cor 6:19-20)

*"...and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all."* (Mark 10:44)

*"You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. ...But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life."* (Rom 6:18-22)

*"...that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with*

*the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” (Ephesians 4:22-24)*

*“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”(Galatians 2:20)*

*“And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”(Luke 9:23-24)*

*“So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” (Luke 14:33)*

*“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (Rom 6:8)*

## **- LEARN THE SECRET OF BEING CONTENT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE:**

*“...But godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1 Tim 6:6)*

*“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” (Phil 4:11-13)*

*”Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful”*  
(Col 3:15)

**- IN ALL THINGS, WE ARE TO SEEK PEACE AND BE THANKFUL:**

*“...they must seek peace and pursue it.”* (1 Peter 3:11)

*”Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful”*  
(Col 3:15)

*“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”*  
(Phil 4:11-13)

*“...But godliness with contentment is great gain.”* (1 Tim 6:6)

**- FIX YOUR EYES UPON JESUS:**

*“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”* (2 Cor 4:17-18)

**USING YOUR SITUATION TO INFLUENCE OTHERS:**

**- AGAIN, WE MIGHT RECALL FROM ACTS GOD WAS USING PAUL AND SILAS IN HORRIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Despite being in shackles in total darkness, they were praying and praising God, They were using their situation to be the light in the darkness! Let's repeat the scripture:

*"...Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them." (Acts 16:25)*

## **WE MUST UNDERSTAND OUR PURPOSE:**

**THE DEFINITION OF SUCCESS IN THE KINGDOM IS THE DAY-TO-DAY INTIMATE PERSONAL WALK WITH JESUS REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES**

*"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh....Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

(Gal 5:16 & 25)

**YOUR CALLING IS TO PURSUE AND FOLLOW THE PATH HE HAS SET ASIDE FOR YOU. YOUR CALL - WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN PLACED TO INFLUENCE OTHERS**

*"This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls." (Jer 6:16)*

*"...run with perseverance the race marked out for us." (Heb 12:1)*

*"He will instruct them in the ways they should choose" (Ps 25:12 1990 NIV)*

**YOUR LEGACY: WERE PEOPLE INFLUENCED BY YOU?**

This could include evangelizing but not necessarily



**THE MISSION IS TO INFLUENCE OTHERS FOR JESUS AND THE KINGDOM.**

**WE BEAR FRUIT FOR THE KINGDOM BY INFLUENCING PEOPLE FOR THE KINGDOM**

*“You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven”*

(Matt 5:14 & 16)

*“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.” (Phil 1:21-26)*

**WE INFLUENCE VIS OUR VARIOUS OIKOS**

**OUR SPHERES OF INFLUENCE:**

**FAMILY**

**SOCIAL**

**WORK**

**YOU INFLUENCE VIA:**

**CHARACTER**

**PERSONALITY**

**REPUTATION**

**DEMEANOR UNDER DURESS**

**YOU ARE A LIVING WITNESS TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE**

**“IF NECESSARY USE WORDS”**

**GO WHERE YOU HAVE INFLUENCE!**

*“If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.”(Matt 10:14)*

## **JAMES TELLS US WE MUST BE 100% “IN” FOR JESUS.**

*‘...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. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do’*

*(James 1:6-8)*

99% “in” is 100% divided & conflicted! Turn over your life 100% to Jesus. There are several passages that support the notion that we need to turn our lives over fully and completely to Jesus:

*“...that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” (Ephesians 4:22-24)*

*“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”(Galatians 2:20)*

*“And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”(Luke 9:23-24)*

*“So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” (Luke 14:33)*

*“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (Rom 6:8)*

## **GOD IS FAITHFUL TO MEET YOUR NEEDS**

*“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt 6:25-34)*