

THE MAKING OF A DISCIPLE

by Paula Leanes

There is little more beautiful than a man trying to find himself. For when he reaches the end of himself and examines what was found, he then realizes his need for God.

And the translation from “born of a woman” to “born of the Spirit” - still very much human, but now with the heart of Christ, God Himself—is such an event even angels are partying in his honor! One more in the Kingdom! One more on the side of Truth!

The search is a threshold. The man will literally walk through himself and take himself apart. “That stays; this goes; this I can live without; and *this*—what was I thinking?; I must keep *this*; I can discard *that* forever...”

This is God, by His Spirit, gently tugging at the heart of man. So the pilgrimage begins, the training for the Army of Right.

Here comes boot camp. All hell breaks loose. He has an enemy he perhaps was not aware of before. Parts of his carnal life die away. Stresses come he had not seen before. His friends just don’t “get” him. Forward he walks, blindsided occasionally by the enemy of God, as trials formerly unknown ensue. But he gets his prayers answered – a babe in Christ is closer to God than we might think sometimes. The Father nurtures him. But he hears two voices: “Give it up – the Bible isn’t true” and “That’s it, child, walk; fear not, only believe.”

Eventually his spiritual senses sharpen, and he is not so ignorant of the devices of the enemy. He begins winning his battles, even coming at the enemy from the offense to prevent attacks.

Here comes the call, clearer than ever. “This is the way, walk ye in it. This is what you are to do for Me.” The burning bush is in front of him, and he recognizes the holy ground.

Wham. Wilderness. Will he make it? “Can I do this?”

Smith Wigglesworth, challenging us to bold faith, said, “I want you to get in a definite place, daring to ask God for something that shall be the means of stimulating your life forever.”

This is it. God Himself dares man to trust Him, to believe Him. Keep going forward or turn back. “God, will you part this sea for me so I can walk across on dry land?” He trusts God. He walks over what was an impossible task to cross. Only by the hand of God, only by faith in Him, he

accomplishes what he dared to believe.

There is a dying world of victims and rebels before him. He has the answers for them. He brings a Kingdom not understood by natural rationale. This is so great of an undertaking, he is overwhelmed. But Jesus said His yoke is easy, His burden is light. This hero in training can always count on his Lord.

Those victims and rebels are his, as he is Christ's. "Greater works shall ye do" chimes in his ear. Greater works than even the Christ, as it is He who resides inside and empowers by His Spirit. He has the weapons to defeat this present evil world.

He goes forward, he goes in...

This, of course, is a wonderful story. What about the weaker man of faith who trusts God little and cannot endure the wilderness?

No one escapes this. Jesus Himself had His "wilderness" moment. Every hero in training gets to his seemingly impassable Red Sea, while the enemy army presses upon him from behind. Again – does he trust God or fold?

When the Israelites, heading towards the promised land at the leading of Moses, cried "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God that we had died in this wilderness!" (Numbers 14:2), God saw their unbelief and that which they cried for came to pass. Those who whined, died. Caving in can have some dire consequences. God takes his individual calling to every saint very seriously.

We are all called to freedom in our life with Christ. The road isn't always easy. But blessings and victories are just around the corner. Going back to Egypt, a former life of slavery, or for the Christian, living again under the law of sin and death, forsaking the law of the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2), seems in moments of difficulty the easiest choice.

So here's the moment of truth, the moment of decision. "I'll press through," says the hero in training. "I can do it. With God, all things are possible." But then he turns his head and sees the army against him. The devil has demons that take on multiple forms in our lives that put pressure on us.

"I can cross," he says. "God needs me in His service. I'm going."

But then the job offer comes, with promise of making more money than he ever thought possible. Houses, cars, friends in high places. The deal sweetens: The beautiful woman appears out of the corner of his eye. She drips with the lust of the world, but how much more appealing she is than a life of servitude to God.

"Perhaps," he says, "I can have all this and serve God too."

The devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Jesus too had a crucial moment to cross. The devil promised Jesus the world, as if it was his very own to give.

Jesus didn't flinch. Each time the devil tempted, Jesus answered him with scripture. In response to worshipping the devil, He said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve..." (Matthew 4:10)

There was nothing that could persuade Jesus against His call. Imagine if Jesus had caved. "All right! I can have the world right now. What's a little putting up with Satan?" What if He chose not to sacrifice His life for the sins of others?

We shudder. This is not Jesus!

We'd all be on our way to hell right now.

In resisting all temptation, Jesus not only crossed that so-called Red Sea, but He made eternal life possible for all of us. He conquered death. He took our sin upon Himself and gave us His righteousness so that we would not see death.

Furthermore, all He gave up on earth, He saw returned to Him. He made it. The *Father in heaven* gave Him the souls of believers for an inheritance. The world *is* His, and His "promised land" is the Kingdom of heaven, which He passes on to all believers to share in.

What we sacrifice for God, we receive back in abundance.

When the devil tempts the hero in training, he should reply according to Matthew 6:33 and seek first the Kingdom and His (Jesus') righteousness. Then all things will be added unto him.

He can have the money, the job, the name and position, the unholy relationships through worldly means. All that is available. But at what price?

Let's say he doesn't make it. This Christianity thing is too much. Too many demands. "I can't go through life sweating and warring all the time."

Then God is under no obligation to further walk with him. A call is meant to be answered. God is really under no obligation to keep anyone on the planet who does not bear fruit for Him. Dead weight in the Body of Christ will hinder the work of the Church.

Oh, this man is still saved and will not spend eternity in hell. But what a life on earth he misses, just because he fears a few difficult moments. What a life he could have if he just hangs in, resists temptation, "denies himself, takes up his cross" and truly follows Christ.

Jesus said, in Mark 10:29,30, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an

hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”

So the man goes in or he doesn't. He crosses or he turns back. If he goes in, he knows what it is to be persecuted, but he knows what it is to be a “flame of fire” according to Hebrews 1:7.

Everyone has a call, a path to walk, very specific and geared to not only help others but give fulfillment to the individual. This is for both men and women. *Everyone*, in some capacity, is called by God.

Are you up for it? There is a dying world of victims and rebels before you.