

# Be Strong and Do the Work

By Jennifer Brown

*“But now be strong...Be strong, all you people of the land, and work. For I am with you,” declares the LORD Almighty. From Haggai 2:4*

“If it is God’s plan it will all work out.”

“If you run into trouble, you will know it is not what God has planned for you.”

You’ll notice that of the three quotes above, only one of them has a scripture address to go along with it. Yet how often do we say the bottom two quotes?

I think one of Satan’s greatest accomplishments today is the way he has convinced us that life is supposed to be easy. We believe that life, marriage, parenting, work and relationships are supposed to be easy and then when they’re not, we think something is wrong...with us, our spouse, our children, our job, or our family.

The lie of Satan that life is supposed to be easy flies in the face of the truth Jesus told us, “In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world.” Trouble and hardships are not an indication that something is wrong, they are simply part of life in this world. When they come, instead of throwing our hands up in defeat and retreating, or instead of battling our family, friends, coworkers and neighbors, we are to take heart and be steadfast and firm in Christ because He has overcome the world and its troubles.

The presence or absence of opposition is not an indicator of God’s will for us.

God’s will was that David would be king, but David spent years running from Saul, even after he was anointed by God. God’s will was that the Israelites would rebuild the temple after they returned from exile, but they faced two decades of opposition in their building. God’s will was that Paul would spread the gospel, but he was stoned, imprisoned, shipwrecked and beaten in his efforts to do so.

How are you letting opposition derail you from God’s plans because you thought something was supposed to be easy?

The place I see this lie creating the most damage today is in marriage. Marriage is not easy. It is one of the greatest challenges we will undertake. But the lie of the enemy tells us that it will be easy and that if our marriage is not easy, then something must be wrong - either with us, our spouse, or the marriage itself. And because we don’t recognize the true enemy of our marriage, we make either our spouse or our marriage itself the enemy and the object of our battles.

Marriage is not supposed to be easy. Difficulties in a marriage are not a reason to divorce.

Before I go on, I want to speak to those of you who are divorced. Please know there is no judgment or condemnation for you here. Divorce has run rampant in my family and more than once I have witnessed first-hand the great pain and heart-ache that leads to and is left after a divorce. My point is not to increase your pain, but to save others from the pain that you know.

Also, if you are in an abusive situation, you need to remove yourself and your children from the abuser immediately. Call this hotline for assistance and information, 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or visit [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org). If you are not sure if you are being abused, call or visit the website for more information.

I recently shared this view of difficulties not being a reason to divorce and was asked, “So you think it is better for two people to remain married and make everyone miserable instead of going their own way?” No, I don’t. I think it is better for two people to remain married and change their ways and stop making each other miserable instead of going their own way.

No marriage is easy, so if you are married, I want to ask you to consider, “Who have you made the enemy because of the difficulties in your marriage?”

Your spouse is not the enemy. Your marriage is not the enemy. If you are going to fight, fight *for* your marriage and *for* your spouse, not against them. Fight the real enemy, Satan. Pray for your marriage and your spouse every day. Ask God to take your focus off the problems in your marriage and help you focus instead on how you can be part of the solution.

When marriages go bad, they start a downward spiral. Determine to put the brakes on your downward spiral and do what it takes to reverse it to an upward spiral. Be kind to your spouse. Be respectful. Don’t point out their faults. Choose to serve them in love, regardless of if they notice it or not. Speak words of encouragement. Apologize and mean it. Stop dredging up the past. Move forward. Turn to Christ to meet your needs.

Because you are in the world, it will not be easy. When life gets difficult, don’t give up. Instead, take heart and be strong and do the work because the Lord has overcome the world and He will be with you.

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