

The Calm before the Storm

Ever since I was a little girl, I have loved to watch the birdies. I loved it when our yard became filled with the cardinals, snow birds, sparrows, and other feathered friends. You could almost predict the weather or my cats' whereabouts from their frenzies.

Today, it seems that we have a whole lot in common with the birds. Many of us feel a sense of unrest in our spirits. There are so many weird things going on in our world that we have to be very intentional about maintaining our sense of peace and focus. We cannot allow ourselves to succumb to fear, but we must prepare.

Over the past few months, I have been telling my clients that they must prepare spiritually, emotionally, and physically. What they did last year to prepare is not enough to get them through. Preparation must occur regularly and with greater intensity. There are more stressful situations in our midst daily. Since the stress is higher, the remedy must increase in proportion to the stresses. We must condition and prepare just as an athlete prepares for the opponent.

I have never been one to understand sports, but motherhood has expanded my horizons. My son talked me into enrolling him in martial arts when he began middle school.

He was excited to begin and the first few classes were relatively easy. Every year he has been expected to accomplish more. He has had to work out many times a week. Last week's workout did not excuse him from this week's workout. He has had to put greater effort into his workouts each year.

Honestly, as a mom I only expected this to be a short-lived experience. Little did I know that he would continue this into adulthood. I have no clue how God will use this in his life. I do know that I've learned by watching him prepare for his fights. Preparation takes discipline, alertness, commitment, and consistency.

Most of us won't be fighting in any MMA fights anytime soon, but that does not mean we won't be facing battles. We may be battling illnesses, economic challenges, family problems, or even mental health or spiritual concerns. Maybe our battle is just surviving the day-to-day challenges of life. Regardless of the battle or storm, preparation and discipline are paramount. We must be prepared spiritually, physically, and mentally.

Our spiritual, mental, and physical health is inter-woven. We must take a proactive approach to maintaining each of these components so that we can be healthy. This is definitely not a time to become complacent if we expect to win.

Many of our heroes can attest to the value of their faith in especially difficult times. No matter what they were going through they knew that God's truth does not change. Their disciplines of prayer and scripture reading over the years paid off. I encourage you to grab a hold these truths too.

I also encourage you to spend time with your family, especially your spouse. You should intentionally surround yourself with other positive people too. You'll actually find that their words are energizing and life breathing in the midst of so much turmoil. Life was not meant to be lived in isolation. We are called to strengthen one another. I'm sure that I would reach burn out if I did not have so many family members and friends encouraging me. Like cars, we must be refueled.

Over the years, I'm finally learning that we must schedule rest and peaceful endeavors into life too. They are not a waste of time as I once thought. It is important to schedule time for a walk in the fresh air and sunshine. Even taking time to smell the roses, read the comics, and hold a kitten can have therapeutic benefits. Most importantly, we must remember that God has promised to "never leave us or forsake us."