



Ramah's Voice

a ministry of Ramah International, Inc.

TLC for Me!

by Sydna A. Massé

Why are you so important?

Do you realize that the Lord set you apart from before the world was made for the task He has called you to do today? Every experience and encounter will be used on this journey to His wonderful home. God never wastes an ounce of our pain. Remember that this ministry has nothing to do with you but with God working through you! God is the only one who can help these individuals and He can use His Holy Spirit to reach their hearts through your simple obedience. As a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, you must take "tender, loving care" of yourself!

The Power of Weakness

We know that God can send attacks our way to strengthen our faith and keep us humble and dependent on Him. Paul's thoughts about the "thorns" of ministry life in I Corinthians 12:7-10 outline his philosophy in dealing with these hardships.

"To keep me from being conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Those who work in the pro-life movement often witness "surpassingly great revelations." Every child saved is a testimony to God's power working through us. Each woman who finds healing through our programs warms our hearts at God's incredible love and mercy. Yet there is a threat to witnessing these surpassingly great revelations — we can become conceited and take ownership of God's victories! To prevent this, God can send thorns to make us weak

so His power can be made perfect in us. These thorns can come in the following avenues:

- Weaknesses
- Insults
- Hardships
- Persecutions
- Difficulties

Some thorns are easier to handle than others. Weaknesses can be our normal human errors. Sometimes we say the wrong thing or make blatant mistakes. Regardless of the circumstance, please understand that you are human! When you make a blunder, apologize to all applicable parties and learn to forgive yourself. The repentance that you offer can make the difference in the other person's heart.

Insults and persecutions are always difficult to handle, especially when they come from other Christians. While working at Focus on the Family I was appalled to receive calls from those who attacked the work of pregnancy care centers. Their point was that we shouldn't be helping these sinful women because we are only encouraging crisis pregnancies. Their words broke my heart because I was one of those women! With gentle and patient Godly education, I was able to encourage a few to a more caring perspective.

Another time a woman who had experienced a miscarriage called in a radio program where I was sharing and said, "How dare she compare her grief to those who miscarried! After all, she MURDERED her children." The hair on my neck crawled as I realized this woman had just confirmed to post-abortive listeners the belief that Christians would stone them if they knew the truth. These are the hardest times to be gentle and sincere and respond in a Godly manner. Humility is instilled all over again with these judgmental attacks.

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Persecutions that come from the pro-abortion arena can also be very traumatic. One director called me to relay their center was being picketed by opposing forces. She was distraught and seeking encouragement and advice. I suggested she offer them coffee, refreshments and welcome them as if they were potential clients. It was difficult, but she was able to serve them. Insults and threats were yelled to her but she remained calm in the power of the Holy Spirit. The picketers had only one goal – to rattle her! When they saw they weren't succeeding, they left.

Hardships and difficulties can come in small ways. Maybe your new car turns out to be a lemon or your old car dies. For others, they have seen their children experience crisis pregnancy situations or demonstrate rebellious attitudes. It could be that your water heater breaks down on the same day as your fund-raising event and you need a shower! Finances can be another hardship but the Lord owns the cattle on a thousand hills and it's a blessing to see Him providing again and again.

The bottom line of Paul's message in this verse is to expect the "thorns" and praise the Lord in spite of all these trials. The Lord inhabits our praises and His work can be strengthened when we praise Him in difficult circumstances. Satan becomes frustrated when his unending trials result in our praises to the Lord. Take Paul's advice and boast about your weaknesses! It's a sure way to keep you humble and that is God's goal in allowing thorns to penetrate our lives.

Establishing Boundaries

Webster's Dictionary defines a boundary as something that indicates a "limit." The hardest aspect of ministry life is to keep limits. It's easy to become a workaholic when you are leading individuals to the Lord and helping to save lives. Every pastor struggles with maintaining limits so that he can still function as the head of his family. Women fall into an entirely different category of ministry life because they have many daily duties to perform at home in addition to the work God has placed on their hearts.

Proverbs 31: 10-31 is the perfect picture of a noble woman who basically does it all! Clearly, God gave us this picture so we would know what to expect. This woman was not only a wife and mother, but also someone who did extensive ministry. Verse 20 states that, "*she opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the need.*" Later, in verse 25-25, it describes that, "*she speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.*" We expect to have a busy life but in order to survive we must rest and replenish our strength from time to time.

Spousal Support

Whenever I agreed to lead a post-abortion group, I had my husband's permission. Not only was I away from home an additional night each week, group members could contact me during the week. Emotionally I would be invested in ministry for ten weeks. In recognizing his boundaries, I found that he had provided me with limits as well. Working full-time and running a bible study could be overwhelming. My heart wanted to help as many people as possible! This is how ministry workaholics are born and dysfunction results.

Develop your own limits before the plunge into new ministry efforts and talk them over with your spouse and family to see if they agree and can support you. If they cannot support you, then it's time to consider alternative avenues of ministry that do not require extensive family commitment.

Accountability with Other Ministry Leaders

One night I came home and shared with my husband a particularly horrifying story that I had heard from a wounded caller. He replied, "I really didn't need to hear that tonight!" I realized that I was "dumping" my horror on him and he couldn't be part of the solution! He had worked all day caring for three children and was completely exhausted. I had penetrated his limits. God told it me to find a fellow ministry leader to share the burden of these stories. That led me to a new level of accountability.

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This “accountability” friend helped me in several ways:

- She shared the load of the horrific confessions
- She could pray for me
- Her advice was anointed and blessed
- She provided encouragement.
- She could tell me when I was wrong or right
- She was my friend

In return, I would do the same for her. I didn’t bear the burden alone and was able to relieve my husband of supporting that load in addition to everything else.

Two Types of Fear

Fear is a common element in ministry life. Jesus talked about two kinds of fear in Matthew 10:28 – “*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*”

Winston Churchill once said, “We have nothing to fear but fear itself!” When I find myself afraid, it’s normally Satan trying to diminish my faith. I worry about simple things and then catch myself and repent to the Lord for not being more trusting of His divine covering over my life. The next time you feel fearful, take every thought captive and praise the Lord for the situation and His ability to increase your faith!

On the other hand, there is peace in fearing the Lord. When I left Focus to start Ramah International, I was operating under the “Fear of God” principle. God confirmed His leading numerous times but I was **afraid** to leave a stable paycheck and health benefits. So I asked the Lord for yet another sign. I heard the Holy Spirit’s response instantly — “thou shalt not test the Lord, thy God. You know what He wants you to do!” That message was God’s final confirmation and we made the leap into total dependence on Him. Be sure to take time to hear the Lord in His leading of your next step in ministry and to follow Him!

Don’t Lose Heart!

Paul’s writings in 2 Corinthians offer a picture of what a normal Christian ministry life will offer:

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 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. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Paul experienced discouragements and knew it was easy to “lose heart” and quit. Losing heart can be the result of many variables. Sometimes we are just overwhelmed with the task at hand. The workload is overwhelming and abortions happen daily. Other times we are overwhelmed with numerous attacks that leave us simply exhausted.

It’s on these “wasting away” days that we need to take time out to search for the renewal. Being renewed day by day comes with reading the Lord’s word and being in fellowship with other believers. The next time you feel like you are wasting away, call a ministry friend who can understand and encourage you. If there isn’t anyone available, give me a call! And give yourself permission to take time off once in a while!

Home Life Organization:

Women in ministry normally still have to care for their home fronts. It is a rare husband who can maintain normal household duties on an on-going basis so that his wife can conduct extensive ministry work. Here are some ideas for freeing up more time for your family and ministry:

- Establish a menu and grocery list so you shop only once a week
- Plan 20 minutes of exercise every other day to increase your stamina during the week
- Stick to bedtime schedules and work to sleep 7-8 hours a night
- Pick one day for laundry to save you from washing and folding throughout the week
- Remember to rest on the Sabbath
- Wake up before everyone else for 15 minutes of quiet time with the Lord
- Allow your house to be dirty at times! It’s good for you to not live in a crystal cathedral!
- When you are cleaning, take time to pray and allow the Holy Spirit to give you new direction. It’s incredible when you hear from God when doing mindless chores!
- If a client should call and interrupt your family time, ask her if this is an emergency. If it isn’t, ask if you can call her back at a more suitable time when you can provide them your undivided attention. This allows your family to understand that you respect their boundaries too!





The Word of Their Testimonies ...

“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” Rev: 12: 10A-11 (NKJV)

This passage originally helped me to obey the Lord in publicly sharing about my abortion in Christian circles. At first I said, “NO!” to God and ended up feeling like Jonah going away from Nineveh. The fear of God – and the potential of ending up in a whale – finally led me to obey His calling. Each sharing gave me relief and God allowed me to see His message penetrate even the toughest exteriors. The result was general understanding, empathy, and sometimes respect from most audiences! While judgment existed, it was minimal because God was evident all over my testimony.

Once I’ve shared I delight in listening as others relay their own testimonies. Encouraging folks to share means getting to the root of their pain. Survivors rarely go to the edge in revealing their deeply held testimony unless you share first. Sharing is more difficult when it involves topics such as incest, homosexuality, rape or satanic ritual abuse. Releasing these confessions can be the first step towards healing.

All of us have a story to share. Understand your major role is to speak, actively listen, pray and allow the Lord to speak through you in His work of redemption. Guard your heart lest it become overburdened by the horror of their experiences. Find an accountability person who can help you process the stories in a Godly manner. Always know that this ministry has nothing to do with you but with God working through you!

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Ramah's Resource Corner:

Helping You Raise Funds for Your Work!

Pro-Life Communications is a pro-life telephone company that can help you raise funds every time you pick up the phone. Donors can sign up for this plan and receive many benefits while your organization benefits by 20-30% of the net profits! Not only are there no monthly fees or minimum usage, inter-state service is just 7.9 cents per minute. The plan offers a complimentary toll-free number (inbound cost of 7.9 cents per minute) that will allow the wounded a new access to your organization.

Contact Joe Dalton at 877-878-LIFE or visit their web site at: www.prolifecomm.com. Tell them Ramah sent you and start raising funds today!

From the Word of God:

My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness
And Your salvation all the day,
For I do not know *their* limits.
I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;
I will make mention of Your righteousness,
of Yours only.
O God, You have taught me from my youth;
And to this *day* I declare Your wondrous works.

Psalms 71: 15-17