

# *Sowing In A Time Of Famine*

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***And there was a famine in the land, other than the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines. And the Lord appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I will tell you. Dwell temporarily in this land, and I will be with you and will favor you with blessings; for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and will give to your posterity all these lands (kingdoms); and by your Offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, or by Him bless themselves, For Abraham listened to and obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commands, My statutes, and My laws." So Isaac stayed in Gerar.***

Genesis 26:1-6;12-14 Amplified Bible

The word "famine" found in the above passage of scripture comes from a Hebrew word meaning dearth or extensive hunger; it also means scarcity or lack. Famines in our lives can take many forms - spiritual, physical, financial or even emotional "dearth". Do you feel like there is a famine going on in your life? Many people would say the United States is in a financial famine. But I would suggest that there are many people facing famines on several fronts.

The good news is that God's Word gives us a principal for victory in the middle of a famine. Consider the story of Isaac in Genesis 26. Isaac was living in a place called Gerar when famine struck the region. His first inclination was to flee the area and go down to Egypt, hoping things would be better there. To the natural mind, that approach to the problem he was facing "makes sense" and most people would do the same. But God spoke to Isaac and told him to handle the situation in a manner that was completely unconventional and "illogical" to man's way of thinking.

Here was God's prescription for victory:

1) **DO NOT GO DOWN TO EGYPT!** (Genesis 26:2) In scripture, "Egypt" is symbolic of the world, the world system, or the devil's way of doing things as opposed to God's way. This command from the Lord applied to your life situation means that you should not run to the world or the world system for answers or to look for an escape. If you do, you will only reap MORE TROUBLE.

2) **SOJOURN IN THIS LAND!** (Genesis 26:3) Simply translated this means STAY PUT! It is human nature to want to look for greener pastures when the circumstances we are in get uncomfortable. But God's plan for your victory requires your cooperation and obedience to the Lord. God wants you to remain steadfast in your situation (not run away) and apply God's Word to your famine. For example, if your marriage is facing a famine of love, don't run away from it as the world would suggest to you. Instead apply God's Word to your marriage. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 instructs us on how to love. Applied to any loveless situation, it will turn things around because as 1 Corinthians 13:8 promises, *LOVE NEVER FAILS.*

3) **SOW SEED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FAMINE!** (Genesis 26:12) Natural human wisdom would instruct a farmer not to waste his seed during a drought because the dry conditions will never produce a harvest. Yet God's ways are higher than man's ways (Isaiah 55:9) and that is exactly what God instructed Isaac to do - sow seed in a year of famine. Isaac took action by faith, trusting in God's Word to him, even though that word was contrary to logic. He sowed his precious seed during drought conditions and expected a harvest. Genesis 26:12 reveals what happened: ***"Then Isaac sowed seed in that land and received in the same year a hundred times as much as he had planted, and the Lord favored him with blessings."*** (*Amplified Bible*)

Your circumstances may appear hopeless to the natural eye and the thought of pouring out time, love, energy or money may seem like a waste to those around you. But understand that God delights to bring forth a hundred-fold harvest in the middle of a famine for those who dare to believe His Word.

When difficult times come, you will find that the tendency of most people is to withdraw or withhold. If their marriage is unpleasant, they will withdraw from their spouse and withhold love. If finances are strained, they will withhold giving offerings or stop paying their tithes. If they feel depressed, they will withhold encouragement from others and start sowing seeds of discouragement to everyone around them. That is not God's way of doing things. Ecclesiastes 11:4 makes this observation about human nature: ***"He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap."*** You cannot let your circumstances dictate your actions, you must allow God's Word to guide you. That is the only way to have victory in the midst of a famine.

If you are facing difficulty or disappointment in a relationship, don't withdraw, sow more love - even if you don't feel like you are receiving the same in return. Love changes people's hearts. If you are facing uncertainties in the future and are tempted to be fearful and anxious, sow seeds of faith

by reciting the promises of God and drawing from the faith experiences of others. God is not a respecter of persons - meaning that it is not just "special people" who receive God's help - He will respond to your faith just like He did to Isaac during his famine. If you are struggling with depression, then you need to sow seeds of joy, because the scripture declares the joy of the Lord is your strength. God's Word instructs us to **"rejoice with those who rejoice"** which means to rejoice with other people over their blessings and that will bring joy into your life. If you are under financial pressure and need to see increase in your business or personal finances, you need to obey Jesus' words found in Luke 6:38: **"Give and it will be given unto you..."**

God loves to prove Himself faithful to His Word through the lives of His people. He demonstrated to the Philistines in Isaac's day (who represent those who do not know God) that the person who listens to and obeys the voice of God will be blessed. Genesis 26:12-14 tells us: **"...the LORD blessed him (Isaac), and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy... and the Philistines envied him."** God wants to demonstrate to the world through your life that very same principle. Though at times God's ways may seem contrary to your own logic, you can be assured that God's Word ALWAYS works and will bring a harvest - even in a time of famine.

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