

peaceful
on
purpose

The Power to Remain Calm, Strong,
and Confident in Every Season

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CHAPTER ONE

All Is Well

It's easy to go through life worried about the future, frustrated because a dream is taking so long to come to pass, upset because somebody did you wrong. But instead of complaining about the difficulty, instead of being upset because your plans didn't work out, instead of losing your peace and living frustrated, you need to remember this simple phrase: *All is well*. God is still on the throne. He's directing your steps. He wouldn't have allowed it unless He had a purpose. When you're tempted to get discouraged, keep reminding yourself that all is well. "I lost my biggest client, but I'm not stressed. I know something better is coming. All is well." "I was cheated in a business deal, but that's okay. God is my vindicator, so all is well." "I prayed for my loved one, but they didn't make it. I'm not bitter, because I know they're in Heaven rejoicing and free from pain. All is well." When you have this "all is well" attitude, there's a rest, a peace of mind. It takes the pressure off. You don't live on a roller coaster. You know all is well on the

mountaintop, and all is well in the valley. All is well when business is great, and all is well when it's slow. You have a made-up mind. You know God is bigger than anything you're facing. As long as you're in faith, all the forces of darkness cannot stop you.

This is what the three Hebrew teenagers did in the book of Daniel. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego wouldn't bow down to the king's golden idol. When they were about to be thrown into the fiery furnace, they could have complained, "God, it's not fair. We serve You, and look what happens." Instead they said to the king, "We're not going to bow down. We know that our God will deliver us, but even if He doesn't, we're still not going to bow." They were saying, "All is well if it goes our way, and all is well if it doesn't go our way. All is well if our prayers

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get answered, and all is well if they don't get answered." The king had them thrown into the blazing furnace, and it should have killed them instantly. But when the king looked into the furnace, he said, "Didn't we throw three bound men into the fire? I see four men walking

around, unbound and unharmed, and one looks like the Son of God." When you have this "all is well" attitude, the Creator of the universe will make things happen that you could never make happen.

As with these teenagers, you may be in a situation where

you don't see a way out. You could be worried, discouraged, and frustrated. You need to start declaring, "All is well." "My marriage is struggling, but I'm not living upset. All is well." "I'm dealing with this addiction, and I'm not where I thought I'd be in life, but I'm not discouraged. God is still working on me, and I'm not a finished product. All is well." "I never thought I'd be facing this sickness, or this bankruptcy, or this divorce, but can I tell you that all is well? I'm not worried. I'm not upset. I know God is in complete control."

Maybe you're still single, and you thought you would have met your spouse by now. Let me encourage you that all is well. God has the right person already lined up. They're in your future. It's not too late. Get in agreement with God. Don't go around thinking it's never going to happen. Have the attitude, *all is well*. Your child may have made some poor choices. Worrying is not going to help, and losing sleep is not going to change it. All through the day let *all is well* be in your thoughts. You'll hear that voice say, "What if he doesn't change?" Answer back, "All is well." "What if it doesn't work out?" "All is well." "What if he gets in more trouble?" "All is well."

Replace the thoughts of worry with *all is well*. The medical report may not have been good. It would be easy to let these negative words play over and over: *You're not going to make it. Learn to live with it.* No, turn off that recording and put on this new recording: *All is well. The number of my days, He will fulfill. Nothing can snatch me out of God's hands.* You may be in a legal battle. You don't like it, and it isn't fair, but you say, "All is well. The enemy will fall into the trap they set for me."

When you meditate on that, you're saying, "God, I trust You. You're bigger than this obstacle. You can turn any situation around."

It's Just a Weed

What's interesting is that the Hebrew teenagers were doing the right thing when the wrong thing happened to them. Being in God's perfect will doesn't mean you won't have difficulties. You can't reach your destiny without opposition, unfair situations, and people doing you wrong. When things come against you, it's easy to think, *All is not well. Look at these difficulties.* But the truth is, the enemy wouldn't be fighting you unless he knew that God has something amazing in front of you. In tough times you can say "all is well," knowing that the opposition is a sign that something great is coming. The Scripture says, "Don't think it strange when you face fiery trials." Don't

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get bent out of shape because life throws you a curve and you had an unexpected difficulty. Sometimes when you face challenges, it's not because you're doing something wrong, but because you're doing something right.

Jesus told a parable about this in Matthew 13. A farmer went out and sowed wheat in his field. It was good seed. He was doing the right thing. But at night while he slept, an enemy

snuck in and sowed weeds in his soil. When the seeds sprouted and began to grow, the weeds sprung up among the wheat. His workers asked, “Where did the weeds come from? You didn’t sow these seeds.” Anytime you’re doing the right thing, you’re honoring God, being productive, and helping others, don’t be surprised if you find weeds among your wheat. As with this man, it doesn’t mean you’re doing anything wrong. You think, *I’ve been loyal to this company for twenty years. Why did they treat me badly? I’ve raised my children right, so why are they veering off course?* Those are simply weeds that the enemy has sowed into your field to try to discourage you, distract you, and get you off course. The good news is, those weeds cannot keep you from your destiny. If that trouble was going to stop God’s plan for your life, He would never have permitted it. I’ve learned that the weeds always spring up right before the harvest. When your business slows down, or a child starts acting up, or you have trouble in a relationship, don’t panic. You are close to your breakthrough. Your harvest is about to come. That’s why those weeds are springing up.

Instead of falling apart and thinking, *I can’t believe this is happening*, your attitude should be, *It’s just another weed. No big deal. I didn’t sow it. I don’t have to reap it. God said He would take care of it.* If for some reason you are to get laid off from your job, don’t panic. It’s just a weed springing up. If you stay in faith, God will give you a better job. If you get a negative medical report, don’t get discouraged and ask, “God, why me?” No, look at that sickness as a weed. It’s not permanent; it’s temporary. It can’t keep you from your destiny. You’re a child of the Most High God. Maybe a friend did you wrong and

walked out of your relationship. The next time you see him or her, under your breath just say, “Hello, weed.” You don’t need them in order to become who God created you to be.

The parable ends with the workers asking the farmer, “Should we pull up the weeds?” He says, “No, just wait until it’s time to harvest the wheat. At the right time they’ll be destroyed.” That’s what God is saying to us. When weeds suddenly pop up in your life—the unexpected challenges, the sickness, the problem at work—you don’t have to fight those battles. Don’t spend all your time trying to pull up the weeds. You can’t fix everything in your own strength. If you’re constantly trying

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to straighten someone out, to fix a bad situation, or to resolve a problem, you’re going to be frustrated. The Scripture says, “Those who have believed enter into the rest of God.” At some point you have to say, “God, I’m trusting You to take care of my weeds. I didn’t sow them,

and I know I don’t have to reap them.” You keep honoring God, being your best, and God will move the wrong people out of the way, He’ll restore what’s been stolen, and He’ll straighten out the situation at work. The battle is not yours; the battle is the Lord’s. Be still and know that He is God.

You shouldn’t be constantly uptight, worried, rebuking, resisting, and trying to fix things. It takes a mature person to say, “Everything is not perfect. I have some struggles and some

situations I wish were different, but can I tell you that all is well? I'm at peace. I'm not upset. I know at the right time God will remove the weeds. Until then I'm going to relax and enjoy my life."

First the Weed, Then the Harvest

Too often we get frustrated by difficulties, but you have to realize you can't have a harvest without a few weeds. David would never have ascended to the throne without that big weed named Goliath. Joseph would never have been second-in-command of Egypt without being betrayed by his own brothers and falsely accused of a crime. We would never have had the former Compaq Center without a three-and-a-half-year lawsuit. There are weeds in all our lives. You're not always going to understand where it came from or why it happened. Don't get discouraged. Just keep moving forward, knowing that all is well and God promises He'll take care of your weeds.

I know a young couple who had been saving money for over ten years to buy their first home. At one point everything came together. They found the house they wanted. They were so excited, but on the day they were to sign the contract, the wife was at the Realtor's office and about to finalize the details when she got a call from her husband saying he had just lost his job. He had worked for this company for six years, always done his best, and had a great attitude, but his supervisor didn't like him and had treated him unfairly for many years. What

was that? A weed. Their wheat was about to come up, but first the weed popped up. They could have gotten discouraged and thought, *Just our luck. Right when it was about to happen.* No, they had this attitude: *All is well. God is in control. This is not a surprise to Him.* Rather than sit at home discouraged, when

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the husband wasn't out interviewing for a new job, he would come to Lakewood and volunteer. Week after week, it didn't look as though anything was happening on the job front. But when you see the weeds popping up—the unexpected challenges, the wrong thing happening when you were doing the right thing—you can be sure your harvest is getting closer.

Five months later, this man got a call from his former company. He hadn't spoken to them since he was let go. An executive from the corporate headquarters informed him that they had fired his old supervisor and put in place a new management team. They wanted this young man to come back, and they not only offered him his old position but restored all his seniority, all his retirement benefits, and all his health benefits. And when the couple went back to check on the house they had wanted, it was still available, just as though it had been put on hold for them. Today he's not only excelling in his career, but they live in their dream house, and they're blessed and happy as can be.

This Is What Faith Is All About

In 2 Kings 4, Elisha prophesied to an older woman that she would have a child. She had been barren her whole life. A year later, she had a baby boy and was so excited. When the boy was about ten years old, he was out in the field playing one day when his head began to hurt. They carried him back to his home, and he died in his mother's arms. You can imagine how distraught and heartbroken she was. After waiting all those years, now her only son was gone. She determined immediately to go to Elisha for help, and when her husband asked if something was wrong, she only replied, "All is well." She said nothing about their son.

This woman saddled one of their donkeys and took off full speed toward Elisha's house in the mountains. Elisha saw her coming from a great distance, in such a big rush. He told his assistant, Gehazi, to run out to meet her on the road and see if anything was wrong. Gehazi met her on the path and said, "Elisha is wondering why you're coming unexpectedly and in such a hurry. Is everything okay with you? Is everything okay with your husband? Is everything okay with your son?" She answered back, "All is well." She kept going full steam until she reached Elisha.

"Well, Joel, I don't want to lie. If it's not well, I'm not going to say that it is well." But this is what faith is all about. The Scripture says, "... and calls things that are not as though they already were." When the situation doesn't look good, when you don't see how you can accomplish your dreams, when your

child is running with the wrong crowd, every voice says, "It's not going to work out. It's too late. Just accept it." That's when you have to dig your heels in and say as this woman did, "All is well." That's not just being optimistic; you are prophesying your future. You are speaking faith into your destiny. Don't

Don't use your words to describe the situation; use your words to change the situation.

use your words to describe the situation; use your words to change the situation. It's easy to talk about the problem and how it's not going to work out. "I just believe in telling it like it is. My back's been hurting for twelve years. I'll never get better. I've had this addiction since high school, and it's never going to change. The people I work with get on my nerves and always will." That's prophesying defeat. Do as this lady did and, in the midst of the difficulty, when you don't see any sign of it changing, dare to say, "All is well." You lost a loved one, and you should be depressed, but no, "All is well. God is still in control." You didn't get the promotion, and your friend says, "You deserved that promotion. That's not right." Don't join in and say, "You're so right. I can't stand my boss." No, "All is well. I know something better is coming." The medical report wasn't good. "Yes, but God is good, and all is well." You've been in a dry place, haven't seen any good breaks. "Yes, but I'm not worried. The abundance of rain is coming. All is well."

When the woman got to Elisha's house, she told him that her son had died. Elisha went with her and prayed for the boy, who came back to life. But I don't believe it would have happened if she would have sat around in self-pity and

discouragement, thinking it was not fair. It happened because she dared to believe that “all is well” before she saw any sign of it. You may have a situation today that is not well. It may not be well in your finances, your health, or your relationships. In the natural, it’s never going to change. You can choose to accept it, to get discouraged and complain about it, or you can choose to do as this woman did. In spite of what it looks like, in spite of what your mind tells you, and in spite of the negative reports, you can dare to say, “All is well.”

Take Away the Enemy’s Power

This is what the apostle Paul and Silas did in Acts 16. They hadn’t done anything wrong, but they were put in prison and had just been beaten with rods. At midnight they were singing praises to God. They were saying, “All is well. We’re not upset, we’re not distraught, because we know God is still on the throne.” Suddenly there was a great earthquake, the prison doors flew open, and their chains came loose. All was well.

Job went through a season of great trouble. He lost his health, his business, and his children. Everything went wrong, but he didn’t get bitter. He said, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” He was saying, “Whether it goes my way or doesn’t go my way, all is well.” If you’re only going to be happy if everything happens your way,

If you’re only going to be happy if everything happens your way, you’re setting yourself up for disappointment.

you're setting yourself up for disappointment. A mature attitude is, *All is well when my prayers get answered, and all is well when they don't. All is well when people are good to me, and all is well when they aren't. All is well when my dreams are coming to pass, and all is well when they're not.* You're not moved by your circumstances. That takes away the power from the enemy. If you don't have to have your way, he can't control you. You're saying, "God, my life is in Your hands. You know what's best for me."

Daniel was thrown into a den of hungry lions because he continued to pray to God rather than to the Persian king. His attitude was, *If I get eaten by lions, I'll go home to be with the Lord today. All is well. If not, I'm happy to stay here and finish my course. All is well.* The next morning the guards came in. I can imagine that Daniel was asleep over in the corner of the den. He was at rest. He wasn't worried. He knew that the enemy doesn't determine our destiny; God does. When you have an "all is well" attitude, you're not moved by the weeds. You're not upset over a disappointment. You don't lose your peace because somebody did you wrong. You don't live sour because a prayer didn't get answered your way. You know God is still on the throne, and He will get you to where you're supposed to be.

I read the story of a man by the name of Horatio Spafford. He was a wealthy businessman who lived in the 1800s. One night his wife and four daughters were on a ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean when their vessel collided with another ship, and all four of his daughters lost their lives. His wife sent him a telegram with the terrible news. A few weeks later, Spafford

was traveling across the Atlantic to be reunited with his grieving wife. At one point the captain of the ship notified him that they were passing the exact location where his daughters lost their lives. That night he took out a pen and wrote these words: “When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, You have taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.” No matter what comes our way in life, we need to be able to say with him, “It is well with my soul. Life may have thrown me some curves, but it is well with my soul. All my dreams haven’t come to pass yet, but it is well with my soul. I went through a divorce, but I’m not bitter, for it is well with my soul. I lost a loved one, and I may not understand it, but it is well with my soul.”

Speak Faith to the What-Ifs

Over twenty years ago, my father went to be with the Lord. I received a call from my mother at 2:09 in the morning saying, “Joel, come over. Daddy’s had a heart attack.” He died the next day. It felt as though everything was out of control. I lost my best friend. We didn’t know what was going to happen to the church. Would people keep coming? Who would be the pastor? There were all these variables. In the midst of that storm, with the winds blowing and the waves raging, our family could have worried and been depressed, but we had to do what I’m asking you to do. By faith we said, “All is well. God, You’re still in control.”

Sometimes you have to announce that “All is well,” not just so you can hear it, not just so God can hear it, but so the enemy

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can hear it. He’s expecting you to fall apart, get depressed, and give up on your dreams. But when you look that adversity in the eye and you’re not moved by it, when you still have a smile on your face, when you still have a report of victory, when you’re still being good to

people, you give the enemy a nervous breakdown. He hit you with his best shot, but his best was not enough. He doesn’t have the final say; God has the final say. He has not brought you this far to leave you. He’s shown you His goodness, His favor, and His mercy in the past, and He’ll do it again in the future.

Now you have to do your part and speak faith into your destiny. If you don’t talk positively to yourself, negative thoughts will try to talk you out of it. The what-ifs will bombard your mind. “What if it doesn’t work out? What if the people don’t come? What if your health doesn’t improve? What if you never meet the right person? What if you don’t have the finances? What if you don’t make it?” No, declare by faith, “All is well. I may not see a way, but I know that God has a way. This may be a surprise to me, but it’s not a surprise to God.”

After my father died, I kept meditating on “all is well” for week after week, month after month. Today our family doesn’t have to say it by faith alone. Today we can say that it is a fact.

Lakewood is strong. The future is bright. Our best days are still in front of us. All is well.

How you respond in the difficult times will determine whether or not you make it into the fullness of your destiny. If our family would have given in to self-pity, gotten discouraged, and said, “God, why didn’t our prayers get answered?” we wouldn’t be where we are today. There will be obstacles on the way to your Promised Land. We all have weeds in our

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field—things that don’t make sense, things we don’t like, losses, disappointments, unfair situations. Don’t get sour, don’t complain, and don’t lose your passion. Do as Daniel did, do as the mother did with Elisha, do as the young couple did with the job and the house—have the attitude that all is well. That’s showing God you trust Him. That’s what allows Him to give you beauty for ashes and to take what was meant for harm and use it to your advantage.

The Promise Is Yours

You may be in a situation where you could easily be worried, upset, and give up on your dreams. You don’t see how it can turn around. The prophet Isaiah says, “Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them.” You are the righteous. God is

saying this to you: “It shall be well with you.” Not maybe, not I hope so, not if you get lucky—no, God promises it shall be well. Maybe you lost a loved one, and you don’t think you can go on. It’s not the end; it’s a new beginning. It shall be well with you. If the job situation didn’t work out, or you lost a client, let it go. God has something better. It shall be well with you. When you’re struggling in your finances, and you don’t see how you’re going to make it, God has it all figured out. He is the Lord your provider. He clothes the lilies of the field. He feeds the birds of the air, and it shall be well with you. If the medical report wasn’t good, God has another report. It says, “You will live and not die. The number of your days, He will fulfill. Nothing can snatch you out of His hands. It shall be well with you.” Maybe you’ve been single for a long time, and you wonder if you’ll ever meet the right person. Stay in faith. God has already lined it up, and it shall be well with you.

Now you have to do your part. Let this simple phrase play in your spirit all through the day: *All is well*. When you’re tempted to worry, to get upset, to be discouraged, just smile and say, “No, thanks. I’m at peace. All is well.” God has promised that all things—not some things, but all things—are going to work out for your good. That means even the weeds are going to work to your advantage. You may have some weeds in your life right now, situations you don’t understand. Be encouraged. That’s a sign you are close to your harvest. You’re about to see a breakthrough, a healing, a restoration, a promotion. You may be saying it by faith today, but as the mother did with Elisha, one day you will say “All is well” as a fact. “All is well in my health, and I received a good medical report.” “All is well in

my career, and my dreams are coming to pass.” “All is well in my marriage, and we’re happy as can be.” “All is well with my children, and they are fulfilling their destinies.” You will see the faithfulness of God, dreams will come to pass, and His promises will be fulfilled.