

# POSSESS YOUR SOULS



*Peter McArthur*

## THE GOD OF SEASONS

**“In your patience possess your souls”** (Luke 21:19)

A more accurate translation could read: “In your cheerful and hopeful constancy you shall win and acquire your souls.”

Vines Bible dictionary says this: “To gain mastery over your souls instead of giving way to adverse circumstances.”

In other words, seasons are given to test us on lessons we should have already learned!

In fact we could say that the real test is not the Test itself, but our response to it. Because the Father is always BEYOND TIME we should be able to rest and relax in trusting Him. However the truth is most of us struggle in the dry times. Yet the Father has surrounded us “in time” right from the beginning of Creation.

Note this text.

**"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day." (Gen. 1:1-5)**

The Word says that the Father has APPOINTED "times and seasons" for us (Gen. 1:14)

The point is that **Time – Festivals – Appointments – Cyclic experiences – Seasons** is how the Father deals with us.

He stands OUTSIDE of time, He orders it, controls it, and then "incarnates" it, working WITHIN time. The Father "fleshes" time out. There is this principle we can focus on: The longer we take to learn a lesson from Him, the longer we delay our maturing – and moving into fullness of ministry. Someone said: "Sometimes God reveals Himself – at other times He hides Himself."

When the Father reveals Himself, He is blessing us. When he hides Himself He is building us. Hiddenness is about preparation. Note the examples of David, Moses and Jesus. Thinking like this should free us from regarding "dry" spiritual times as bad. But this is how we usually think isn't it?

We often fail to understand the Father's SEASONS and the various APPOINTMENTS He has for us. It would be helpful to realise that we are on a journey. This is why it's important to confess. (Here the word "confess" means to agree with God about).

**"All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own." (Hebrews 11:13-14)**

Note also what Isaiah says about this principle.

**"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." (Isa. 55:8-11)**

The Father uses time/cycles/seasons to test our understanding, but we usually just see this as a "desert" experience. Many of us feel as though we're in a time (appointment) of being purges, waiting a re-filling. Hopefully we would see this as a positive thing and a negative one.

When we do it together, corporately, we are likely then to agree that indeed "God is at work in us." But when it happens to us individually suddenly we feel all alone, deserted by God, and it becomes a negative thing. We are then prone to think that God is hiding from us.

I recall reading a story about the initiation rites of one North American Indian tribe. When the time for a young boy to become a warrior, he would be taken into the deep woods, where he was told he would have to remain alone all night, without weapons, and without anyone to be with him.

As the dark night went on all sorts of fears began to encompass him. He knew if he gave in and fled the forest, he would fail. But if he remained alone all night until the breaking of dawn, he would pass. The young man fought his inner fears and stayed on through the night. As day broke, he saw a figure dimly in the woods not too far from him. As he peered closer he was astonished to see it was his father. He had stood on watch for his son all through the night, out of sight, but there nevertheless.

Such wilderness tests ("dry times") are for us a TEST not to be endured like the young warrior, but for us to REST in. When we have learnt to rest in the test then we shall advance in our maturity with the Father.

Such occasions seem to come in waves or patterns or cycles. I find that they usually follow a revelation of some kind. Notice how Moses and the Israelites receive a revelation from the Lord and then are put to the test. Or Jesus, when after the revelation and confirmation of His messiahship, He is tested in the desert. (Luk. 4:1)

It seems to me that revivals have this same pattern. After a revival has hit there will often follow a "quiet" time when the move seems to slacken. Some people then claim it's the fault of the revival leader. But not necessarily. It may often be the Father testing what we should have learnt through a revival outpouring.

There are definite times when so-called desert experiences are GOOD. The soul basically hates the desert, but by and large the spirit thrives on it. It may well be that there is a place of Promise and Blessing just ahead for the Body of Christ. If this be the case, then please don't rebel during the wilderness period.

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