

Ambassadors Fellowship, Inc (AFI) African American Missionary Devotional

Missionary Brian Johnson

The Blessings in Lack of Support

Scripture Readings: Psalm 37:25, Hebrews 13: 5 &6, Lam 3:22-23



It's a hard day when a missionary can't pray! Missionary Brian Johnson and his wife Ruth along with the Liberians they lived with had been two days without food. As he kneeled to pray the hunger pains in his stomach were so bad he couldn't concentrate on prayer. Although he didn't believe in or normally ask for money, he decided to make a desperate call. He had 20 cents left. It would take 10 cents each way for the bus ride from the town they lived in, to the city where he would go to access the telecommunications

office to make a phone call. He called his mother in the US to tell her of the urgent need for support money for food. She promised to try and send something as soon as possible. As Brian waited for the bus back home he recalled it would take 7-14 days before he would get the money. The stomach pains were so bad, he couldn't sit down, so he paced back and forth. As he did he cried out to God, "David said, "I've never seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread." He continued pacing then prayed again, "but You Lord said, You would never leave me or forsake me." A few more paces and then this last prayer, "Lord, please give us food to eat."

When Brian arrived home and walked in the house, he couldn't believe his eyes. Every surface of their place was covered in food- the desk, the bed, and the floor! From sacks of rice to dry goods and fresh food, even non-essentials like tea were there! His wife asked, "what would you like me to fix for you?" He asked, "where did this all come from?" She replied, "when you left I then heard a knock on the door and different people brought this food." At the moment he saw the food the hunger pains disappeared, and he told his wife, "I'll only have tea." Brian was now able to pray, he went on his knees to cry out to the Lord in thanksgiving and gratitude. At the end of his faith, before he had even made the phone call, God had already sent the provision. Brian reports this was not a one-time experience but a regular way of living by faith and trusting God. Brian lived like Jesus told his disciples too in Matthew 10:9 & 10, eating as often as food was offered to him as he visited people and shared the gospel.

However, witnessing miracles of God's provision wasn't the only blessing for Brian in living a life by faith. He also lived not only with the Liberian people he served but also like them—as they had to trust God for their survival daily. As a result, he was considered part of the

family and part of the tribe. During the civil war, the Liberians he had lived with and had all things in common with cared and protected him. After the war he became the head (Secretary General) of the Evangelical Association of Liberia—a position typically reserved for a national but then again to the people Brian was one of them. This position enabled him to lead from the inside on reconciliation and unity.

Brian went on from his work in Liberia to spend much of his ministry focused on reconciliation and unity throughout Africa. He served in other nations as a war trauma counselor, worked in ethnic reconciliation and relief assistance. Brian feels that just like there are blessings and miracles that are sometimes hiding behind hunger pains and lack of support, so also there are blessings for African Americans in the bitterness of racism and poverty. Those experiences make African Americans more suited to be mediators than any other Christians in the world.

What situations of pain or difficulty are you running from? Can you imagine that on the other side of these trials you could be counting them as blessings? When was the last time you were satisfied in God above food?

For More Information:

Thomas Watkins, “Brian Johnson,” *African American Experience in World Mission: A Call Beyond Community*, ed. Vaughn Walston and Robert Stevens, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009), pp. 151-153.