

Persevering Faith

Exodus 13:17-14:31

March 28,2010

I. Following Where God Directs. Ex. 13:17-18

NEED TO KNOW WHOM YOU FOLLOW: Eli Black was a brilliant businessman best known for two events in his life: He masterminded the multimillion dollar takeover of the United Fruit conglomerate, and he jumped to his death from the 42nd floor of the Pan Am building in New York City.

In the book *An American Company*, an executive described a business lunch he had with Eli Black. When the waitress brought a plate of cheese and crackers as an appetizer, Black reached out and took them, placed them on the table, blocked them with his arms, and continued talking. The executive hadn't eaten for hours and hinted that he would like a cracker. But Black acted as though he hadn't heard him and went on with the business meeting.

After a while, Black placed a cracker and cheese on the tips of his fingers and continued to talk. Several moments later, Black placed the cracker on the executive's plate and then blocked the rest as before. It was clear that Black was in charge, manipulating others as he pleased.

When you play "follow the leader," check to see who is at the head of the line. Eli Black, for all his power, ended up in suicide. Jesus Christ, in all His humility, ended up the Savior of the world.

Our Daily Bread, February 6, 1994

S. I. McMillen, in his book *None of These Diseases*, tells a story of a young woman who wanted to go to college, but her heart sank when she read the question on the application blank that asked, "Are you a leader?" Being both honest and conscientious, she wrote, "No," and returned the application, expecting the worst. To her surprise, she received this letter from the college:

"Dear Applicant: A study of the application forms reveals that this year our college will have 1,452 new leaders. We are accepting you because we feel it is imperative that they have at least one follower."

Source unknown

II. Standing Firm When Fears Arise. Ex. 14:9-14

An African man, as he was walking on the street he saw a black cat crossing over the road. He thought to himself that he was going to have a bad luck on that day. Worried about seeing a black cat he asked his friend what would be his fate because of the black cat he saw in the morning. His friend replied, "that will depend on whether you are a rat or not." Know who you are in Christ and you will not fear.

Acute stress can provoke changes in the heart that may lead to death, say Drs. Marilyn S. Cebelin of Cleveland and Charles S. Hirsch of Cincinnati. The two doctors recently identified 15 cases in which people died after a physical assault, although the injuries alone would not have been enough to kill them. Eleven of the 15 cases showed a type of heart-cell death called myofibrillar degeneration, similar to a reaction in experimental animals who are helpless to anticipate or avoid danger.

III. Obeying What God Commands. Ex. 14:15-18

Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from Grace. - Thomas a Kempis

One step forward in obedience is worth years of study about it. - Oswald Chambers, quoted in Our Daily Bread, March 4, 1993

Dr. B. J. Miller once said, "It is a great deal easier to do that which God gives us to do, no matter how hard it is, than to face the responsibilities of not doing it." - MBI's Today In The Word, November, 1989, p.11

The cost of obedience is nothing compared with the cost of disobedience. - Anon

IV. Attesting What God Accomplishes. Ex. 14:31

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Refrain:

Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God hath done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
*Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.
[*And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.]

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,
And you will keep singing as the days go by.

When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings—wealth can never buy
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.

So, amid the conflict whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.