

Are You Winterized? Julia Bettencourt

"...in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philipians 4:11-13

Growing up in Ohio, I learned the meaning of cold and winter. Of course I didn't truly understand it until I grew up and moved to a warmer climate. Now if I go back to Ohio in the winter, I can barely stand the cold. When I was little my whole world was Ohio and I actually thought it was normal to wear several layers of clothing and be bundled up so much you couldn't move, dig out driveways of snow, scrape ice off your car, and do all the other things that go along with snow, ice, and winter.

In our spiritual lives, we all have "winters" too and we have to winterize for them in order to face them. When winter comes it is a time of bleak and dark dreary days. We must face the fact that winter can be hard and trials are hard. Just like the season of winter, our spiritual "winters" can leave us discouraged, lonely, and depressed.

There are some things that can make the cold of our winter very intense. We need to winterize and guard against them.

1. The Cold Air Culprit of the World.

When we are going through trials and hardships, we sometimes tend to let our guard down and it's so easy for worldly influences to take over in our lives. It seeps through the cracks around the doors and windows just like the winter air. It may be the influence of worldly friends, worldly music, worldly thinking. It all can work overtime on us as we face trials in our lives.

We've got to dig out the caulk and weatherstripping and block those cracks and holes. Using God's Word is the best way to do this. If we have it in our hearts, it can help stop the winter air of the world from seeping into our lives.

**"Thy word have I hid in mine heart,
that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:11**

2. The Icicles of Cold Attitudes.

During the winter it is easy to develop a bad attitude. It doesn't take much at all for some of us. In comes the dreary days, the cold and chill, and drip...drip...we have formed those icicle attitudes. We become cranky and out of sorts with our family and anyone who we come in contact with. We also tend to complain more about anyone and anything.

When we are in the midst of a trial we sometimes automatically go into icicle attitude mode. We don't have any fellowship with anyone to help encourage us through our trial because who wants to be around us?

We have to remember that no one else can fix our bad attitudes. Only we can do that. It's not easy either to adjust your attitude during a "winter" because the weight of that ice is bearing down on us. I've found that the simplest way to start working on adjusting a bad attitude is to take a step back and just remember who God is and who we are not.

"Be still, and know that I am God:" Psalm 46:10

3. The Blizzards of Circumstances.

Winter can bring so many things along with it. Blizzards being one of the worst as the effects it leaves is so devastating. Circumstances in our lives can also be devastating. Bills mount up. Family members get sick or even die. Relationships get sour, and many other circumstances weigh down on us until we think we can't go on because we can't see what's down the road. I think that during these times we need to remember that God sees the outcome. He's our Potter and we are the clay.

**"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me,
I shall come forth as gold." Job 23:10**

4. The Jack Frost of Depression.

Better bundle up because if you are going through a trial, then depression is going to come nipping at your heels sooner or later. Just like the dark and bleak days of winter have a depressing effect on us, trials seem to frost our lives with depression. The problem is that when we are in the midst of a "winter", it is so easy to just let it nip away at us. I think depression is one of the worst things of a "winter" because I've had my problem with it and it still seems like it is always there looming and wanting to nip...nip away. (You can read my "[Even the Sparrows](#)" if you haven't already). There's no easy way out of depression but keeping our lives in tune with God can help guard against it. Regular personal devotions and a time with God each day can go a long way in dealing with it.

**"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud:
and he shall hear my voice." Psalm 55:17**

Prepare Your Winter Emergency Kit.

When you live where you have severe cold you know that there are things needed in order to prepare to endure the winter. As Christians, when our "winters" and trials come into our lives we must learn to prepare for them as well.

Here are a few basic things we should have on hand.

"Spiritual Winter Emergency Kit"

1. Non Perishable Food--Scripture

Have some things on hand to sustain you through. Memorized Scriptures can help more than anything. Just a phrase of Scripture to grasp in the dead of our "winter" can be a great comfort to us.

2. Extra Blankets and Warm Clothing--Fellowship

During a "winter" some people forget about attending church and fellowshiping with other Christians. How much more it is needed when trials come into our lives. Having fellowship with other believers strengthens us. We need their love, support, and prayers. It becomes a real warmth to us.

3. Drinking Water--Christ the Living Water

Bottled water in a winter emergency is a must. We need it to survive just like we need the Living Water. We need Christ and His Word to live. Relying on Him will keep us from a parched existence. Drink in His love, His promises, His blessings, and His strength. Looking to Him in the face of our trials and circumstances will help see us through our "winter".

4. Emergency Candles or Flashlights--God's Guidance

The electricity may go out because of the weight of snow and ice on the power lines so we always need a light source to have on hand. God's guidance is our light source. We can't get through our daily lives, let alone our "winters" without following God's direction and leading. Staying sensitive to God's leading will keep us going in the right direction and will help us to see a little more clearly.

We will all have "winters" in our lives, but choosing how we deal and prepare for them can make all the difference in the world. So, are you winterized?