



When you hit bottom...

by Mauricio Antunes

Crisis: A Time to Grow

Everything has a good side and a bad side. Owning a car means having a comfortable way to get around (good) and some extra costs (bad). Not having a car means fewer expenses, but more time and energy are required to go from one place to another. Being the leader of a company brings honor, but also great responsibility. An employee has less responsibility, but lacks the power to make things happen. Name anything—we can always find two sides, two different perspectives for it.

That does not mean that the good and bad sides are always well-balanced. One is usually stronger than the other, and that helps us to make decisions and focus our energy and efforts. Our perceptions of which side is strongest may vary, depending on our values, knowledge, emotions, awareness of the environment, and more.

Like everything else, crises have their good and bad sides. Most often, the bad side is painfully obvious, and the good side is hard to find. When we face a crisis, we may fear the worst and even panic; we might complain, saying that it is not fair; or we might fight to learn from the situation and overcome it.

Paulo Araújo, a Brazilian author and motivational speaker, shared a poem about obstacles and crises. It goes something like this:

Stones.

An inattentive person trips over them.

A brute uses them as a projectile.

An entrepreneur uses them to build...

Children jump over them.

Drummond wrote poems about them.

With a stone, David killed Goliath.

*And Michelangelo brought forth from stone
the most beautiful sculpture.*

In all these cases, the difference

Was not in the stone,

But in the person.

There is no obstacle,

No stone in your path

That you cannot benefit from and grow.

Learn how to deal with the stones in your life!

It is common to hear—especially from those who are not experiencing our headaches—that a crisis is a time to search for opportunities to grow. But it is not easy to feel that way while you have bills to pay, a market to serve, a board to report to, and so many other responsibilities, which always multiply in difficult times. Proverbs 24:10 says, “If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!”

A friend of mine, a psychologist, told me that a crisis is diving into a pool—when you do not know how to swim. Maybe there is no one around who can toss a life preserver your way. You keep going down and down. You see the bottom of the pool coming towards you. If you do not panic, when you get to the deepest place, you can push with your feet against the floor and get out of the water to breathe again. From this, you will learn a lesson for the rest of your life. You will avoid diving into a pool before learning how to swim. But, if for some reason you do fall into another pool, you will remember that you cannot panic to find your way out.

When I am in the deepest part of a crisis, I am that much closer to the floor, where I can push to get out of that situation. Ever since my good friend told me this story, when I face a crisis I begin to look for opportunities.

One of my favorite verses is 1 Corinthians 10:13, which says: “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” If you understand that a temptation is a crisis, you will prove that God will not let you face any crisis beyond what you can bear. Maybe he will send you a life preserver—or remind you to push when you are at the bottom of the pool.

I hope that next time you experience a crisis, you will approach it with a new perspective. My prayer is that you will overcome the crisis, improve the operation of the company in the long term, and grow in Christ and in His service. ❖