



Have you ever been totally out of control? Or better yet, has your life seemed so full of twists and turns, with people coming and going and events happening so quickly, you don't know if you're coming or going? Frightening isn't it, particularly, if it includes pain and anguish, death and tragedy, a broken heart or perhaps a broken spirit?

If the truth be told, it kind of makes you wonder about life's purpose. You can become a cynic or a skeptic of all things and people. At its worst, your life seems to leave you in quagmires of discontent due to situations, you might not always want to admit, that you created for yourself, by making the wrong choices. I am not passing judgment on you in any way. I am declaring publicly that at my worst, I had to realize that I managed my way into that peculiar situation because of wrong decision making.

They say free will is supposed to have something to do with what happens to us in life because of the decisions we make or, some that we avoid or, even some that we refuse to make. That's why I am finding the subject of change in the bible so fascinating. "In paths that they have not known, I will guide them." This verse in Isaiah 42:16, it clearly indicates that when you attempt change or change is forced upon you, divine help might be required. Whenever, or at least a lot of times in the bible, when someone begins to accept Jesus Christ, change is inevitable, attack is certain, fear is prevalent and faith is challenged. I mean walking by faith and not by sight is unnatural in the natural world. This kind of change in your spiritual life has bearing on everything in your supernatural existence. I'm just saying it also has repercussions in your physical life. Joshua 1:9 lets us know that from the moment we begin to expand our awareness and our consciousness of God, we need to take Him everywhere we go, or risk losing ourselves to our own devices much like the Israelites in the desert. "Be not dismayed for the Lord thy God is with you wherever you go."

The easiest way to succumb to your own devices is to fall prey to all of the temptations that will

## Spiritually Speaking... with James Washington

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be hurled at you every day. If you want to feel out of control, just live in a society that is framed in 30 second sound bites, YouTube and Facebook trends, while constantly hearing about those who acquire instant wealth and the constant quest for more. If you don't have a spiritual fallback position, it's relatively easy, if not expected, to define yourself by how much you have, what you can buy and what pleasures you can exploit. You might be able to say you don't or haven't done that. But I cannot. Under those circumstances, life can make you feel inadequate and anxious. More is never enough.

Given one's spiritual awareness however, things can be different. "My presence shall go with you and give you rest." Exodus 33:14. The understanding of eternal existence, of intimate relationship, spiritual truth and God's reality puts perspective on life's absurdities and contradictions. A focus on God actually brings clarity to the soul and subsequently order to all the chaos we see. Peace and rest become powerful realities in the hearts of those who know and seek the truth. Purpose is simplified and life becomes so much easier to navigate. For me in this context, free will merely acts as confirmation of the obvious, "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world." 1 John 5:4.

May God bless and keep you always.