

**Articles and Sermons :: The winter of the soul by Madame Guyon****The winter of the soul by Madame Guyon, on: 2007/1/8 10:59**

This analogy of Madame Guyon's has really blessed my soul; especially in the times when it seems like all my beautiful leaves have been stripped away and ugly self is all that is left for man to look upon.

So, for those who might be experiencing 'winter' right now, I share this for you to be encouraged.

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The Blessedness of Winter  
By Madame Jeanne Guyon

I see the season of winter as an excellent example of the transforming work of the Lord in a Christian's life. When winter comes, the vegetable world, it seems to me, reflects the image of the purifying which God does in order to remove imperfections from the life of one of his children.

As cold comes on the wings of a winter storm, the trees gradually begin to lose their leaves. The green is so changed into a funeral brown; soon the leaves fall away and die. Behold the tree's appearance now! It looks stripped and desolate. Behold the loss of summer's beautiful garment. What happens as you look upon that poor tree? You see a revelation.

Under all the beautiful leaves there had been all sorts of irregularities and defects. The defects had been invisible because of the beautiful leaves. Now those defects are startlingly revealed! The tree is no longer beautiful in its surface appearance. But has the tree actually changed? Not at all. Every thing is exactly as it was before. Everything is as it has always been! It is just that the leaves are no longer there to hide what is real. The beauty of the outward life of the leaves had only hidden what had always been present.

The same is true of you. The same is true of all believers. We can each look so beautiful...until life disappears! Then, no matter who, the Christian is revealed as full of defects. As the Lord works on you to produce purification, you will appear stripped of all your virtues! But, in the tree, there is life inside; and, as the tree, you are not actually becoming worse, you are simply seeing yourself for what you really are! Know that somewhere deep within the tree of winter there is still the life that produced last spring's beautiful leaves.

No, the believer's inmost being has not been deprived of its essential virtue. He has lost no advantages. He has only lost something human, a *sense of his own personal goodness*, and he has discovered, instead, his utter wretchedness. He has lost the ease of following the Lord. That ease was born more of ignorance of self than anything else.

As with the tree, so with you.

The Christian, now spoiled and naked, appears in his own eyes to be a denuded thing; and those around him see his defects *for the first time*: defects which were previously veiled, concealed by outward graces.

Sometimes such revelation is so devastating to the pride of a Christian he simply never recovers, and decides to be a Christian on some other level; or gives up following the Lord entirely.

Throughout the long cold winter, the tree certainly appears as the very deadest of all trees in the forest. The tree knows no reality. Here is *total* destruction, it seems. But the truth lies somewhere else.

That tree is actually undergoing and submitting to a process which *preserves* its life and *strengthens* the tree! After all, what does winter do to a tree? It contracts the tree's exterior. The life deep within is no longer uselessly expended! Its life, rather, is concentrated within the deepest part of the trunk and in the hidden portions of the root. The life is forced deeper and deeper into the inmost part of the tree.

Winter preserves the tree, no matter how dead the tree may appear. Yes, its leaves have fallen away and its true, deformed, state has been exposed; yet the tree has never been more alive than at that time! During the winter, the source and principle of life is more firmly established *than at any other season*.

In all other seasons, the tree employs the whole force of its life in adorning and beautifying itself. But it does so at the *expense* of expending its life, taking its very vitality from the roots and the deepest part of the trunk. There must be winter. Winter is necessary for the tree if it is to live, survive and flourish.

Virtue has a way of sinking deep within the Christian, while totally *disappearing* from the surface, leaving the outward and natural defects in *very* conspicuous view! If we have eyes to see, then we see that this is beautiful.

Grace operates in your life exactly the same way. God will take away the leaves. *Something* will cause them to fall. The outward virtue will collapse. He does this that He may strengthen the *principle* of the virtue. The source of virtue must be built up. Something deep within the soul is still functioning. Somewhere within the spirit the functions that are the highest (in God's estimation) have never rested. What is going on is exceedingly hidden. It is humble.

What is happening is pure love.

What is going on in the inmost part is absolute abandonment and contempt of self. The inward man is making progress. The soul is venturing forth into the interior. True, it seems that the operations of God are concentrated on the external parts of the believer, and even a moment's glance reveals that the exterior things are not pleasant to look upon. Yet, in truth, *no new defects* in the soul have been developed! Only the uncovering of old faults has come about! And, as they are exposed, they are better healed.

If you dare the spiritual pilgrimage, you need to remember in times of calamity, and in times of what appear to be dry spells, and in that time which men will call *a spiritual winter*: life is there.

If winter comes...

**Re: The winter of the soul by Madame Guyon - posted by Here4Him (), on: 2007/1/8 11:23**

Thank you sister. I know a bit about the winter season- i have been going through it, but i think im nearly approaching spring! The Lord Bless you.

George

**Re: The winter of the soul by Madame Guyon - posted by myfirstLove (), on: 2007/1/8 11:24**

yeah, i have this book. this woman of God is so right on! great encouragement. thanks!

i love how she teaches on the interior. she sees the importance of strengthening the inward man for the glorification of God. many christians do not understand this inward cleansing that must take place in order to be brought to full life in Him. madame guyon definitely knows what it means to be led by the Spirit and not the law.

thank again.

**Re: winter of the soul - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2007/1/8 15:56**

Joy,

thank you so much for posting this! It was just what I was needing to read at this time in my life. I have been in this season for almost two years, but more intensely this past 6 months. I was wondering what was happening to me. Here I was with my own website, helping other people on their spiritual journey and then all of a sudden I was knocked so flat that I thought I had no knowledge of anything worth repeating to anyone.

I wondered why all these ugly things were coming out and I didn't want anyone to see them, (since I thought and wanted everyone else to see that I was a 'good' christian, a 'deeper' christian)

I am so humbled to learn that we have never 'arrived' and that when we think we have gotten 'somewhere' in our christian walk- that is when the Lord will reveal how utterly destitute we still are. It was all a facade, our own works, our own doing, our own wanting to be 'good', our own 'being Jesus' to others. But the only thing that is real and solid is Him and He will only be the one to get any glory. I have discovered that we cannot even 'be Jesus' to anyone unless it is Him

doing the work, by His grace. We cannot in any way try to be like Jesus, as much as we want to try. We cannot be 'more of Him' and less of ourselves by any of our own doing, our own trying. What a lesson this has been and I am still learning.

It is humbling to have your faults and ugliness exposed to the very people who you wanted to appear to be 'like Jesus', who you didn't want to look ugly to. To be exposed for all that you really are, for all that you didn't even know was there is painful, humiliating, but necessary.

For those who pray "make me more like You and less of myself"- beware. He does take that seriously.

Through it all, I am still sure that **God is good!**

In His love, Chanin

**Re: Trusting Him, on: 2007/1/8 18:24**

Thanks Chanin I thought I was going thru this alone. The LORD has told me that I was not trusting Him but trusting in mine own ability. I feel so void and empty, and darkness is on the face the deep. Oh God, come and say, "Let there be light". Such despair and loneliness....but I know that He is faithful and will bring me out of this winter. Praise God.

Thanks for sharing.

**Re: Chanin (and Compliments), on: 2007/1/8 20:53**

Dear sister,

Thank you for sharing. God's ways may be mysterious and beyond our comprehension but His faithfulness never changes! I have found such comfort in Madame Guyon's writings...especially during those dark times. This one book, *The Spiritual Adventure* (from which I have been sharing) is so full. It's a short book, but so powerful. Perhaps the Lord will bring a copy across your path.

Here are some more things from it...I think I could just keep transcribing more and more things from this book, so I advise everyone to get their own copy. :-D

As brother George (Here4Him) said, spring comes after winter...

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Darkness and God's Presence

John of the Cross speaks of several purgings that the spiritual pilgrim passes through on his way to the depths of God. He calls the first state the *night of the senses*. He calls the very last stage the night of the Spirit. It is in this last state that your God communicates Himself to the soul of the believer in a way that is far more perfect than He does in any other stage through which the soul will pass.

Here is something you cannot be convinced of, and it is something which cannot be explained. It is, nonetheless, the truth.

The greater the purity of a dark night of the spirit, the greater the sublimity of the manifestation of that night. The more terrible absence of the groom, the more complete, the greater the purification.

The measure of His hiding from you seems to match the measure of His revelation.

These ultimate trials (the experience of the night of the spirit) become even more agonizing than others because, in addition to the absence of the groom, the believer's soul is overwhelmed with a deep conviction of his own wretchedness. There is distress in this, and usually-almost always-there is an accompanying persecution from men. (it seems as if it is from devils.)

You cannot come to an idea of this terrible tribulation except by having passed through the actual experience.

The Lord's hiding from the believer's spirit is well termed as a night and a death.

Your Lord is the light and your Lord is the life of your soul. Therefore it seems when the light goes out the soul is in terror. But there is another way for you to consider this thing called the dark night; and that is to realize that when light is intensely bright, it shows objects to be far more horrible and more terrifying than they were when they were in the dark. Look upon the dark night of the spirit as a terrible revealing of the truth of what you are. And as you pass through this inexplicable experience, and when you have lost all hope of ever beholding another dawn, remember that to Him even darkness is light.

Quotes by Madame Guyon:

"The believer perceives nothing but the cross on every side. That cross is nevertheless nothing more than the Beloved Himself in the shape of a cross. Your Lord is never more present to you than in those seasons of bitterness. During those times He dwells in the very midst of your heart."

"All the operations of God in your interior are toward two things: One is to deliver the soul from wickedness and from the malignity of its fallen nature. The second is to restore the interior-the soul itself- to God; to restore it, as fair and pure as can be rendered this side of the fall."

"Leave it to God - The stripping of the soul must be left to God. He will do it to perfection, while the soul will second his stripping and the whole process of death without interposing any obstacle. But to do it of one's self is to spoil all, and make of a divine, a common state. Thus you see some who, from having read or heard that the soul must be stripped of all, set about it themselves, and continue always thus without progress; for as they strip their own selves, God does not clothe them with Himself; for, it must be observed, the Divine purpose in unclothing is only to cloth upon. He impoverishes only to make rich, becoming in secret Himself the substitute for all that He takes away from the soul. This is not the case with those who act in this matter for themselves. They lose, indeed, by their faults the gifts of God; but they do not, for all that, possess God."

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What a comfort it is that *HE* is our Perfector!

"The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands." Psalms 138:8

Ever onward,  
Joy

**Re: The winter of the soul by Madame Guyon - posted by Goldminer (), on: 2007/1/9 0:14**

What an awesome thing to see some other Madam Guyon enthusiasts. I have read everything I have been able to find by her, Her autobiography, Genesis, Job, Jeremiah, Revelation & John. My all time favorite is called "Spiritual Torrents" and more. When I first came across this book in a bookstore I was intrigued to read it by the forward by Gene Edwards. Even though he published it he recommended that nobody read it. He said he only reprinted it because of the many requests for it. He said it was the most morbid book ever written. However if you go to his web site now you will see he has changed his tone about this book. He praises it.

It is certainly different than most any book you will ever read because it is about death to self and is very graphic visually. I love it. If you haven't read it I strongly suggest it. Gene Edwards web site it:

[www.seedsowers.com](http://www.seedsowers.com)

Most all of her other books are available there as well. I would like to recommend another book that transformed my life. It is by a student of hers. It is called "Christian Perfection" by Francis Fenelon. A great read. It may be out of print but you might be able to come by it somewhere, maybe on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) in their used books list.

Thanks again for starting this thread!

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**Re: The winter of the soul by Madame Guyon - posted by kathyclark (), on: 2007/1/9 9:09**

I have heard a lot of people say they don't like to read the book of Job, but after reading her book about Job it became a treasure to me.