

Rock Solid

4 Strategies for Times of Uncertainty

Little did I know that a TRIP of a lifetime would include a RIDE of a lifetime!

Our busload of 40 had just finished exploring the rose-red city of Petra, a phenomenon tucked away in a valley running from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. Long story short, Petra is a place where nature and man have conspired together to create a civilization carved out of sandstone that stands unmatched in the architectural annals of human history. In other words, it is a destination that simply sits in the category of you've-got-to-see-it-to-believe it. It's a place where photos only offer a tease of its magnificence.

As you enter the city through a narrow and winding gorge, the Siq, you are flanked by soaring cliffs that reach high into the Jordanian skies. At the end the gorge, you are stunned and breathless as you catch your first glimpse of Al-Khazneh—The Treasury.

After you have soaked in this city sculpted into the giant red mountains (and taken a ton of photos), you have the option of a horseback ride back to the bus. And in spite of the slapdash 'saddles', and perhaps more importantly in spite of better judgment, a few of us mounted up for the ride.

Long story short, somewhere along the way back things went south—in a hurry. I was snapping some photos of my fellow horsemen when all of a sudden my horse got spooked (for us non-equestrian types that's a technical term for 'went crazy'!) and took off in full gallop. For the next several minutes, I had no idea how this ride was going to end. And in that moment, two things crossed my mind. First, this was NOT in the travel brochure! And second, falling off the horse was NOT a good option! So I hung on. To this day I still don't know why or how the agitated horse decided to stop.

My 'ride of a lifetime' is a fitting picture of the realities of leadership! There are simply times when things are UNCERTAIN—when you have no idea how things will turn out. And when these times become your times, 'hanging on' is sometimes the best you can hope for.

So let's probe into this a little. In times of uncertainty, as a leader, what do you hang onto? Allow me to offer out a few thoughts.

- **God is always at work.** In moments when you cannot "see" Him at work, in an act of faith, you choose to believe that He IS at work—unseen, but on duty. You step aside from the fray to review the record Book that through the centuries has faithfully echoed the truths that His judgments are unsearchable and His ways are

unfathomable (Romans 11).

- **Seek wisdom.** The more uncertain the times the greater the need to provide yourself with the surround-sound of those who can speak insight, truth, and hope into your life and leadership. Finding your seat in the middle of a circle of wise people will serve as the security check against making decisions that are shortsighted or ill-conceived.
- **Call out.** During times of uncertainty, I find myself heading to my most treasured place of solitude—the foothills of the Angeles National Forest. As I call out my prayers to God against the backdrop and grandeur of this setting, I am reminded of how big my God is and how proportionately small my challenges are. Life and leadership are right-sized.
- **Keep alert.** When faced with the unknowns of leadership, stay alert to multiple storylines. While God is working out His master plan in the macro, He is also at work in the micro. He uses life's uncertainties as part of His schoolhouse to shape me as a leader. I learn things about God (and myself) that simply aren't available when times are steady—things that then become part of my storyline of faith that God will leverage in my circles of influence for years to come.

When all is said and done, the leader who stands strong is the one who chooses to allow the truths of certainty to stand down the times of uncertainty.