

HARDSHIP & SUFFERING
(with or without God)

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Key Men's Invitational ◇ *Wichita Falls, Texas* ◇ *February 22, 2008*



NAVIGATING THE WHITE WATER RAPIDS OF LIFE VICTORIOUSLY!

Matthew 8:23-27 – A furious storm engulfs the boat while Jesus sleeps.

A truth that defines every man at any given moment in time:

- 1) You are either in a storm right now
- 2) You have just come out of a storm
- 3) You are about to enter a storm.

Romans 8:37 – “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (NIV)

✧ **My value and my life are no accidents.**

1. Psalm 139:15, 16 – All our days are ordained for us before one of them comes to be.
2. John 9:1-3 – “. . . He was born blind so the power of God could be seen in him.”

✧ **God wants my attention on Him. My perspective of Him will determine my reaction to hardships and sufferings.**

Hosea 6:6 – “I want you to be merciful; I don't want your sacrifices. I want you to know God; that's more important than burnt offerings.” (NLT)

✧ **I will be going through hard times ahead and I can be ready.**

Isaiah 43:1-11

✧ **I came to believe my steps are ordered by God himself. So what I've been through has purpose for His eternal glory and will condition me for what is ahead.**

Psalm 37:23 – “The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives.” (NLT)

Isaiah 41:20 – “Everyone will see this miracle and understand that it is the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, who did it.” (NLT)

✧ **Should we receive only pleasant things?**

Job 2:10 – “But Job replied, “You talk like a godless woman. Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?” So in all this, Job said nothing wrong.” (NLT)

✧ **A good man doesn't escape all trouble.**

Psalm 34:18 – “The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those who are crushed in spirit.” (NLT)

✧ **The Lord will work out His plans for my life.**

Psalm 138:7,8 – Though I am surrounded by troubles, God will preserve me. His power will save me.

✧ **The Lord refines me in the furnace of affliction.**

Isaiah 48:10 – Refined in the furnace of suffering.

✧ **Welcome hard times as friends, not intruders.**

James 1:2-4 – Whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy.

✧ **Don't let suffering embitter you to the only One who can deliver you.**

Job 36:13 – For the godless are full of resentment.

✧ **The Holy Spirit prays for us and all things work together for good so we might become like His Son.**

Romans 8:26, 29 – The Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. God chose us to become like his Son.

Psalm 138:8 –The LORD will work out his plans for my life.

Psalm 138:3 – “When I pray, you answer me; you encourage me by giving me the strength I need.” (NLT)

Psalm 75:6,8 – God decides who will rise and who will fall.

Psalm 55:22 – “Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.” (NLT)

Psalm 56:9 – On the very day I call to you for help, my enemies will retreat. This I know: God is on my side. (NLT)

I Peter 5:7 – Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you. (NLT)

Psalm 68:19 – Praise the Lord; praise God our savior! For each day he carries us in his arms. (NLT)

THE RACE

by D.H. Groberg

“Quit! Give up! You’re beaten!”
They did shout and plead.
“There’s just too much against you now.
This time you can’t succeed!”

And as I start to hang my head
In front of failure’s face.
My downward fall is broken by
The memory of a race.

And hope refills my weakened will
As I recall that scene;
For just the thought of that short race
Rejuvenates my being.

A children’s race – young boys, young men
How I remember well.
Excitement, sure! But also fear;
It wasn’t hard to tell.

They all lined up so full of hope;
Each thought to win that race.
Or tie for first, or if not that,
At least take second place.

And fathers watched from off the side,
Each cheering for his son.
And each boy hoped to show his dad
That he would be the one.

The whistle blew and off they went!
Young hearts and hopes afire.
To win and be the hero there
Was each young boy's desire.

And one boy in particular
Whose dad was in the crowd,
Was running near the lead and thought,
"My dad will be so proud!"

But as they sped down the field
Across a shallow dip,
The little boy who thought to win
Lost his step and slipped.

Trying hard to catch himself
His hands flew out to brace,
And mid the laughter of the crowd
He fell flat on his face.

So down he fell and with him hope
He couldn't win it now –
Embarrassed, sad, he only wished
To disappear somehow.

But as he fell his dad stood up
And showed his anxious face,
Which to the boy so clearly said:
"Get up and win the race."

He quickly rose, no damage done
Behind a bit, that's all –
And ran with all his mind and might
To make up for his fall.

So anxious to restore himself
To catch up and to win –
His mind went faster than his legs;
He slipped and fell again!

He wished then he had quit before
With only one disgrace.
"I'm hopeless as a runner now;
I shouldn't try to race."

But in the laughing crowd he searched
And found his father's face.
That steady look which said again:
"Get up and win the race!"

So up he jumped to try again
Ten yards behind the last –
“If I’m to gain those yards,” he thought,
“I’ve got to move real fast.”

Exerting everything he had
He gained eight or ten
But trying so hard to catch the lead
He slipped and fell again!

Defeat! He lay there silently
A tear dropped from his eye –
“There’s no sense running any more;
Three strikes I’m out! Why try?”

The will to rise had disappeared
All hope had fled away;
So far behind, so error prone;
A loser all the way.

“I’ve lost, so what’s the use,” he thought.
“I’ll live with my disgrace.”
But then he thought about his dad
Who soon he’d have to face.

“Get up,” an echo sounded low.
“Get up and take your place;
You were not meant for failure here.
Get up and win the race.”

“With borrowed will, get up,” it said,
“You haven’t lost at all,
For winning is no more than this:
To rise each time you fall.”

So up he rose to run once more,
And with a new commit
He resolved that win or lose
At least he wouldn’t quit.

So far behind the others now,
The most he’d ever been –
Still he gave it all he had
And ran as though to win.

Three times he’d fallen, stumbling;
Three times he rose again;
Too far behind to hope to win
He still ran to the end.

They cheered the winning runner
As he crossed the line first place,
Head high, and proud, and happy;
No falling, no disgrace.

But when the fallen youngster
Crossed the line last place,
The crowd gave him the greater cheer
For finishing the race.

And even though he came in last
With head bowed low, unproud,
You would have thought he'd won the
Race to listen to the crowd.

And to his dad he sadly said,
"I didn't do so well."
"To me, you won," his father said.
"You rose each time you fell."

And now when things seem dark and hard
And difficult to face
The memory of that little boy
Helps me in my own race.

For all of life is like that race,
With ups and downs and all.
And all you have to do to win,
Is rise each time you fall.

"Quit! Give up! You're beaten!"
They still shout in my face.
But another voice within me says:
"GET UP AND WIN THE RACE!"

APPLICATION

Think About

- ✧ When faced with a hardship, do you immediately bring it to God or do you first try to handle it yourself?
- ✧ How do you see past the pain of the moment and the deception of the enemy to gain God's perspective on your difficult situation?
- ✧ Do you face suffering by turning to God's Word, prayer and mature believers or do you turn to something else instead?

- * Do you characterize yourself as content in your current difficult circumstance?
(Philippians 4:12)

A Few Tips When Navigating Rough Water

1. After you have read and understand the implications of the following words, share them with the Lord as your prayer.

"FATHER, I GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO DO IN ME ALL THAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO GET ME TO THE POINT THAT YOU CAN DO ALL THAT YOU WANT THROUGH ME."

2. Seek out another man to whom you can be accountable and ask him to help you begin to look at and accept hard times, sorrows and grief from your Father's perspective.
3. Start memorizing portions of God's Word which shed light, give insight and offer promises on the subjects of life.

Remember: Only you can change your perspective. It is one of life's choices.

I wish you victory and want you to know I am available to help any way I can:

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For further reading

WHERE IS GOD WHEN IT HURTS, by Philip Yancy

TURNING MY MOURNING INTO DANCING, by Henri Nouwen

THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE, by Rick Warren

PURPOSE OF SUFFERING AND HARD TIME

This is not exhaustive on the subject, but a good life jacket to help

1. Strengthen believers	Acts 11:19-26
2. Geographically spread the believers	Acts 11:19-26
3. Develops patience, endurance, character, completeness	James 1:2-4
4. Good for us	Rom. 5:3
5. Trust God more	Rom. 5:5, 6
6. Know all is well	Rom. 8:28
7. God's Glory	John 9:1, 2
8. He has plans for my life	Ps. 138:8
9. For my good	Rom. 8:28
10. His Son to be seen in me	Rom. 8:29
11. Comfort to others	II Cor. 1:3, 4
12. Turns us to God	II Cor. 7:9-11
13. Tries our heart to reveal real self	Is. 48:10, Prov. 17:3
14. Purify my faith	I Ptr. 1:6, 7
15. God wants you to suffer	I Ptr. 3:17
16. Test the material I've built my life around	I Cor. 3:13-15
17. Suffer for Christ and receive glory with Him	I Ptr. 4: 12-19
18. Learn only He can help	I Cor. 1:8-10
19. God can do whatever He pleases	Jer. 18:6, Job 2; 10
20. He deals with me personally	Is. 28:23-29
21. He punishes his kids, let God train you	Heb. 12:5-11, Prov. 3:11, 12

**One ship goes East, another West, by the
self same winds that blow. Tis the set of the
sail and not the gale that determines the way they go.
Like the winds of the sea are the ways of time,
as we voyage along thru Life. Tis the set of the soul
that determines the goal and not the Calm or the strife.**