

Living In The Hard Times

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Most of us have hard times in one degree or the other. This is real life and we need to learn to live in it as such. Life consists of happy and sad times. The good, happy and easy is not better or desirable than the sad times.

I. Why the situations are hard for us:

A. Sometimes its because we haven't learned to be content: In Philippians 4:v.11& 12 Paul tells that he learned to be content in all the situations whether it is in plenty or want. We need to consider our contentment level physically, mentally, emotionally and relationally. When God allows hard times, He will use it for good. Therefore we need to accept that from His loving wise hands as His best for us today.

B. Sometimes it's because we are not realistic: There is no life without trouble. Our experiences are not unusual. All of us have encountered problems concerning the family, in raising children relationship problems and health problems. And none of us is unique in our experience. Job 5:7 says that man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. This is said realistically facing life. Ever since sin entered the world things haven't been gone right the way God intended for them to be. Our bodies get sick, emotions are weak and troubled relationships are constantly in turmoil, God did not intend these. Sin has so pervaded our lives that no area is free from its effects. Every area of life is affected by it, so we have to expect it accept and trust God to use it for our good in every single life that's affected by it but not ask god to help using getting rid of that. So to waste time in emotion, to sin in arrogance and pride demanding to know why this has happened is ridiculous. How do you or I react to these situations?

II. Defeating our co-operating with God.

Romans 8:28 says that all things work together for good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. How can God work the things for good if we don't co operate? The way we react to hard things will affect the good He is going to do in our lives. Our attitudes really defeat God as He works out the thing for our good and when we don't co operate with Him in hard times. Attitudes which tend to defeat Him are:

A. Self pity Vs Commitment: Job when he lost all of his possessions and relationships, and as his suffering got intensified responded in self-pity. Self pity and self righteousness in abundance are inaccurate concepts of God. The longer god was silent, more sin was revealed in the life of Job. All of the boastings of Job died when he confronted the living God. Where as we see Paul responding with solid commitment, that knowing God is far more better than these hard ships (Philippians 3:7-12).How much can god teach an arrogant and recalcitrant person when compared to a humble and co-operative learner? Arrogance usually expresses by 'why me?' Rather we need to ask 'why not me?'

B. Lack of trust in Him Vs Trust in Him: Job and his friends went in search to find out answers for the question 'why hard times?' The problem with all of us including Job is that we don't know and can't understand the mind of God and what He is doing. We act in pride and demand to know from God about His action in our lives and question His motives, wisdom, love creatorship and sovereignty and indirectly we misjudge Him that He did not have best in His heart for us. God

carefully brought Job into light and explained him who He was, what He had done and what He is able to do. He established His right as the omnipotent, sovereign creator of the world and has the right to do what seemed best for Him. In Job 43:5, we can see the response of Job when he saw who God is and when he saw himself in the light of the Living God. Trusting in God and relying on His strength, knowing that nothing can touch us without His knowledge is co-operating with Him in true essence. Then God can have freedom to work in our lives as He is a God who does not over rule our will.

C. Inability to accept the things as His best Vs accepting each day as His best for us: When we don't accept the fact that God allows things in our lives to bring about eternal goodness we incapacitate Him. But if we embrace this truth and allow Him to do His will, then the hard times can become the handy work of God in our lives and we can move from defeating God to co-operating with Him. "This is the day that the Lord hath made and we will rejoice and be glad in it"... Psalm 118:24.

III. Third way to live in hard times is to have a godly perspective of life:

A. Godly perspective in our relationship with Him: We need to pray that God would allow anything into life that accomplishes His purposes but not to get rid of the suffering. What we pray should be for the growth of relationship with Him and to know Him more deeply and for character to be produced in our lives.

B. Release of fear: Those who fear, He delivers them from their suffering and affliction. He comes into with them and delivers from the fear of it and speaks to us in the middle of it but He may not take it away. The greatest good we can see when released from fear of pain or death is the presence of the Lord Himself.

C. Godly perspective in our expectations: Family with husband, wife, children and relationships and possessions are our expectations and in course of life we consider them to be rights rather than considering them to be the gifts of God. At some point of time in life it is very painful to give them back to Him as we get so much attached to them. When God gave family and everything to enjoy, He did not mean them to take His place. When God gives more of Himself, we can be able to give back those rights to Him.

D. Seeing things in eternal point of view: In 2nd Corinthians 4:16-18, Paul encourages us to not to lose heart, as these hard ships are light and momentary when compared to the surpassing glory of eternal life with the Lord, which is incomprehensible.

IV. Conclusion:

God created us for relationship with Him. When we sin in self will and turn back on Him, He has to take measures to lovingly strip off the fog from our blinded eyes in order to restore our relationship with Him which is the essence of life.