

Good Words for Hard Times

Scripture: James 5:7-11

The world paints two pictures of how we are to think of life. In our advertisements it presents a life of bliss that comes from buying that next great thing. In our philosophical rhetoric the world presents a life of warfare in which you are either a guilty oppressor or a suffering victim. I want to know, are those really our only choices: live in bliss or horrendous warfare? It's no wonder so many live discouraged and defeated lives. God offers a different view of the ups and downs of life that leads us to truly understand life and His work in it.

I. The first view we should embrace to understand and find joy through hard times is the attitude of the _____ . Patience is the key to a _____ heart.

- ✓ Use a _____ view of life to reinforce your heart's ability to discover joy in the midst of what is happening in your life.

Psalms 27:12-14 12 Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, For false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence. 13 I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. 14 Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.

II. The second view we should embrace to understand and endure hard times is we are in this _____ . We must resist how pain can cause us to see each other as _____ .

1 Peter 4:7-13 7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. 8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God... 12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

- ✓ When the hard times come, keep reaching out to fellow Christians whether you are the one who _____ comfort or the one _____ comfort.

III. The fourth view we should embrace to understand and find joy through hard times is to see our _____ to past believers. We can be like the prophets of the past - they were faithful and yet they too suffered in glorious _____ !

- ✓ Connect your struggles with the saints who have come before and let their faithfulness _____ yours.

Remember this - Seeing life as a joy-filled _____ will prepare us well to discover the depth of God's mercy in our lives.

Our challenge: Resist the hopeless view of struggles that _____ you instead of _____ you.

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"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" 333

"Because He Lives" 407

"Heart of Worship"

* Pastoral Prayer & Children's Sermon *

"As The Deer"