



Timely Praise

SOME THINGS ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE are harder to accept and put into practice than others. And somewhere near the top of the list has to be our response to hard times. The counsel of Scripture can at times seem beyond the ability of mere flesh. Many turn expectantly to the epistle penned by James, but their reading grinds to a halt at only its second verse.

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials...

Joy?! Joy over *trials*? Not joy that the trial is finally over, but joy that the trial has occurred? C'mon. Be serious.

But that is what it says, and the writer goes on to give the reason for this joy.

...knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4

The truth is, this response is indeed beyond the ability of mere flesh. Absent the Holy Spirit, flesh is incapable of responding in this way. In fact, even *with* the indwelling Spirit, that same flesh throws up obstacles to a righteous response to hard times and trials.

It profits us little to grit our teeth and strive toward this discipline, for our soil-bound nature rebels against it and the flesh does not understand it. We do not learn this behavior from ourselves, but from Christ.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

We learn joy in the midst of trials by bowing not under the burden, but by bowing before the one who suffered the *ultimate* trial on our behalf. We learn to have His attitude by worshipping and praising Jesus who suffered and died for us.

Centuries before the Son of God was incarnated, King David's immediate response to deep, personal tragedy demonstrated that he was, indeed, "a man after [God's] own heart."

Then the Lord struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was *very* sick. David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground. The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them. Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died.

...so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed *himself*, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the Lord and worshipped.

from 2 Samuel 12:15-20

What do we do when tempted to despair?

Worship the Lord.

What do we do when life gets hard?

Praise His name.

What do we do when we cannot find the joy?

Praise Him.

When it seems you're all alone,

Praise His name.

When you feel you can't go on,

Just raise your hands and say,
"Greater is He that is within me,"

And you can praise the hurt away—

If you'll just praise His name.

Jeff and Sheri Easter

