

LIVING WITH TROUBLE
Hebrews 12:4-13

“He who knows no hardships will know no hardihood. He who faces no calamity will need no courage. Mysterious though it is, the characteristics in human nature which we love best grow in a soil with a strong mixture of troubles.”

Harry Emerson Fosdick

It's not if you'll face hardship; it's how you'll see it (12:4-13)

Hardships of all sorts should be seen as

- God's training program
- God's mentoring program
- God's focusing program

A primer on hardship: Romans 8:35

What we do about it (12:12-13)

Doing our part – Enduring doesn't mean we sit around waiting for God to do something; we are proactive

- Live in the future; not in the crisis
- Focus on the prize; not on the hardship
- Live in community; not in isolation

Some hard steps

- Start with your soul – tough times happen
- Accept your reality – shift your focus
- Deal with the guilt – holding it will just paralyze you
- Fight for the right – don't sink into complacency
- Seek healing – in God and in community with the body of Christ
- Don't glory in your misery – staying stuck is no tribute
- Focus on the prize – not the hardship
- Build relationships – you are not alone

Getting to know you ...

Is your glass half full or half empty? Has your bent ever gotten you into trouble?

Digging Deeper

1. Read Psalm 119:25-29. What is the condition of the writer in verse 25? (Don't just casually write it, FEEL IT. If you have ever been there, jot a word or two that will remind you of your crisis)

For each verse write a key word or phrase that speaks to the sufferer's state and the corresponding petition

Read the sufferer's actions in vs. 30-32. Why would that help to change his heart from his condition in vs. 25?

None of these actions will change his circumstance. How could he (how could you) find joy in suffering without a change in circumstance?

2. Read Psalm 119:49 and compare it with verse 25 that you read earlier. How has the writer's attitude changed and what has changed it?

Read verses 50-56. Find as many benefits as you can that God's promises, decrees, precepts and laws give to the sufferer.

Think hard. What do you consider to be God's promises, decrees, precepts, and laws? Beyond the specifics, what are the general principles that a person thinks about when he says God's word has given him hope?

When you are successful in working through hardships, struggles, trouble, etc., what are the specifics that God gives you that brings you greatest peace and victory?