

FINDING THE STRENGTH TO GO ON

July 26th, 2009

You are going to face tragedies in this life

Lamentations 3:47-48 (NLT) "We have suffered terror and pitfalls, ruin and destruction. Streams of tears flow from my eyes because of the destruction of my people!"

Lamentations 2:11 (NLT) "I have cried until the tears no longer come. My heart is broken, my spirit poured out, as I see what has happened to my people."

How To Find The Strength To Go On

1. Focus your attention on God

Lamentations 3:28-29 (TM) "When life is heavy and hard to take, go off by yourself. Enter the silence. Bow in prayer. Don't ask questions. Wait for hope to appear."

The #1 reason we don't hear God speak to us is we're too busy

Ask God, "Is there anything You want to say to me right now?"

Matthew 6:6 (TM) "[Jesus said] Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense His grace."

Tragedies have a way of refocusing our attention on what really matters

Tragedies also have a way of slowing us down

2. Ask God to remove your Fears

Fear can paralyze you

Lamentations 3:55-57 (GN) "From the bottom of the pit, I cried out to You, O Lord. And when I begged You to listen to my cry, You heard. And You answered me and told me not to be afraid."

3 Antidotes to Fear

1. Truth

John 8:32 (GN) "[Jesus said] You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Most fears are based on ignorance or false information

You must replace fear with truth in your life

2. Love

1 John 4:18 (NIV) "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear,..."

3. Faith

Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God,..."

Faith gives you the courage to do what you need to do in spite of how you feel.

The source of truth, love, and faith is found in a relationship with God
Psalm 34:4 (NLT) "I prayed to the Lord, and He answered me, freeing me from all my fears."

3. Believe God will restore you

Lamentations 5:21 (NLT) "Restore us, O Lord, & bring us back to You again! Give us back the joys we once had!"

God specializes in new beginnings
Psalm 27:13 (NAS) "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I'd see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Three things NOT to do when a tragedy hits:

1. Don't repress your grief
2. Don't resign from life
3. Don't retreat into Resentment

Two things to DO whenever you face a tragedy:

1. Accept what cannot be changed
2. Focus on what's left, not what's lost

You don't get over a tragedy instantly - it takes time to heal
Lamentations 3:25-26 (TEV) "The Lord is good to everyone who trusts in Him. So it is best for us to wait in patience - to wait for Him to save us."

4. Remember what never changes

Three things that NEVER change:

1. God is still in control
Lamentations 5:17 & 19 (TEV) "We are sick at our very hearts and can hardly see through our tears...But you, O Lord, are king forever and will rule to the end of time."
2. God still loves me, and He's never going to stop loving me
Lamentations 2:19-23 (TM) "I'll never forget the trouble, the utter lostness, the taste of ashes, the poison I've swallowed. I remember it all...the feeling of hitting the bottom. But there's one other thing I remember, and remembering it, I keep a grip on hope: God's loyal love couldn't have run out, His merciful love couldn't have dried up. They're created new every morning. How great is Your faithfulness!"
3. God is all you need
Lamentations 3:24 (CEV) "Deep in my heart I say, 'The Lord is all I need, I can depend on Him!'"