



BY LEN EVANS



6 Truths to Remember During Hard Times

The great theologian The Dread Pirate Roberts said, “Life is pain, Highness. Anyone who says differently is selling something.” We’ve all gone through difficult times, and unexpected difficulties still await us. In fact, you might be facing difficult things right now. The key is accepting that pain is part of life for everyone and to be as prepared as possible before it happens, so it’s easier to persevere through it.

1. Be honest with everyone; only share with a few.

Don’t tell everyone your story. This can be difficult, especially if the struggle involves the church in which you currently work. Sometimes our emotions can be read on our faces, and when people ask what’s wrong, we can just say, “It’s a hard time right now. Thanks for asking. Pray for me!” Not sharing the whole story—or any part of the story—with everyone is not being dishonest; it’s being wise. It’s totally OK for you to invite others to pray. Good friends will understand and not press for details.

2. Remind yourself of God’s promises.

Serving as a hospice chaplain, I often told people that my job was to whisper God’s truths back to them during the difficult moments. When you go through a crisis, your heart and your head disconnect so you can deal with the overwhelming emotions. Sometimes, the pain makes us emotional zombies. During these times, we have to cling to God’s promises, especially the ones that are about His character, his declarations for us and not our circumstances. Choose to believe God when He says, “I never will leave you or forsake you,” rather than your doubts. Accept what God has done for us, realizing the thoughts that don’t agree with His actions, and that we are wrong and God is right.

Whether it’s Psalm 23 or some other passage, God’s Word must be our constant source of comfort in hard times. Make a list of four to six passages that are your core Scripture verses. Memorize them (if you haven’t already). Write them down, and put them in your wallet, purse, doorframe, dashboard, phone wallpaper, computer screen or anywhere that your eyes will be focused.

3. Recall when God has been faithful in the past.

It’s not merely the abstract or biblical truth that gives us hope. Remembering our Ebenezers carries us through hard times, too. These are the times from our personal stories when we’ve

experienced God’s faithfulness, and we cannot deny them.

We tend to focus on the bad rather than the good. Force yourself to remember the good that God already has done for you. When we do that, we more likely can appropriate the fact that the God who has been faithful before in our own lives will be faithful again.

4. Be wise about how you respond to the struggle.

Whether a loved one is diagnosed with cancer, or we experience prolonged financial stress, a spouse who is ready to leave, or something else...we have to choose healthy ways to respond. Think about it this way, our response to hard times or tragedies either can begin resolution or start a fire. Set your eyes on resolution and healing. It’s difficult, but it can be done. As Chuck Swindoll has said, “I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me, and 90 percent how I react to it.”

5. Seek a specialist.

Those of us in ministry commonly overestimate our ability to overcome hardships, and we underestimate our need for help. It’s more important that we value our health and future health more than we value our reputations. This wise counselor can affirm you, let you know that what you’re going through is normal, and create a plan for health with you. You don’t have to handle it alone, and it’s better to seek professional help. Waiting could mean waiting until it’s too late.

6. Let others minister to you.

Community is one of our greatest needs, yet research shows that ministers/pastors do not have healthy friendships with many people. Change that now. Ministerial alliances or networks are great. However, if you are in one but don’t really know anyone, it doesn’t do you any good. As your mother told you, “You have to be a friend to have a friend.” Allow lifelong friends to serve you by caring for you and listening to you.

Ultimately, we have to put all of our faith in Jesus and His desire to carry us through difficult times. Remember His words, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). [YWJ](#)

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