

Lifelines

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Topic: Defeating Despair

I Would Have Despaired, Unless... **By Ed Jordan**

We are living in some of the darkest of days that our country has ever experienced. Why? Because evil is running amok, corrupting every good process our country once treasured. Evil is destroying the Congress and Senate, the justice system, free elections, the economy, the security of our nation, our young people's lives and brains, and our identity, both as a nation and as individuals.

Despair is creeping into our discouraged lives. If that weren't bad enough, many people can't afford groceries, not to mention gas prices, and taking a nice relaxing vacation is out of the question. There doesn't seem to be any end in sight. Stress saps even more energy from our lives. So how do we keep from falling into despair? Is it possible?

In Psalm 27:13–14 (NASB95) we read: 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."

David wrote this psalm when he was tempted to fall into despair. He had enemies all around him, was always having false accusations hurled at him. He was tired of it all, and ready to throw in the towel; except that he turned his eyes away from fixating on the despair-causing circumstances, and turned His eyes instead onto God, who could pour out His goodness on David. In these two verses David shared three things to do to prevent you from sliding into despair.

First, in verse 13, David said that we need to believe (have faith) that God is bigger than what is going on around you, and God is the God who disperses true goodness, God-quality goodness, upon those who love Him. Believe that you will yet see the goodness of the Lord during this lifetime. If I didn't have God, and didn't have faith, I would drown in despair. But I do have God, and I trust God's love and ability, even in the midst of life's worst situations, to inject some of His goodness into us, and our circumstances.

Second, in verse 14, we are told to "Wait for the LORD." The word LORD in this verse is the Hebrew name "Yahweh." It is the name God revealed to Moses in Exodus 3 when Moses wanted to know His name. God said: "Yahweh," which is the Hebrew verb for "to be," (I AM, or I Am who I Am). God is the ever-present One, and the God who committed Himself to be our God and provider. The significance of this, when told to wait for the LORD, is that this is the God who keeps His promises, this is the God who once we come to Him is faithfully committed to us.

Related to this, our salvation or deliverance will not come from evil people, or even good people; it will come from God. Only God is totally good, and He will not forsake us. God is sovereign Lord, and can override humans and evil circumstances. Wait for God. One other interesting thing is that the word "wait" has in its root the word intertwine, weave, interlace. Wait then means, "intertwine your life with God," get wrapped up with and in God and His activities. This is key to not falling into despair. God is never overwhelmed, or depressed. He never loses. He always wins. So wait for Him to deal with the despair-causing things.

Third, in vs. 14 he tells us to “Let your heart take courage.” God is holding out courage to us. Open up and let God’s courage flow into you, reach out and receive the courage needed to keep going on through the darkness, trampling upon the despair.

And then we are again told to wait! Desperate people do desperate things, and when they do they fall deeper into despair. God is the only One who must deal with the despair causers, and raise us above despair. Only God knows how to effectively eliminate the sources of despair. We must intertwine our lives with God, and move with Him into the light and into a new perspective on this chaotic life. Pray that God will eliminate the causes of despair, and believe that we will yet see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! The Message translates vs. 14 as: “Stay with God! Take heart. Don’t quit. Stay with God!”

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