

23: The Secret to Navigating Difficult Times

Pastor Dennis Rouse

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Psalm 23:1-6 NKJ

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalm 23:4 NIV

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Types of Valleys:

- The Valley of Calamity (Joshua 7:26 TLB)
- The Valley of Weeping (Psalm 84:6 TLB)
- The Valley of Trouble (Hosea 2:15 NCV)
- The Valley of Deep Darkness (Psalm 23:4 NIV)

Things to Know About Difficult Times:

1. Difficult times are INEVITABLE.

John 16:33 NLT

"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

1 Peter 4:12-13 NLT

Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his

suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.

2. Difficult times are UNPREDICTABLE.

3. Difficult times are IMPARTIAL.

Matthew 5:45 CEV

Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And he sends rain for the ones who do right and for the ones who do wrong.

4. Difficult times are TEMPORARY.

1 Peter 1:6 NLT

So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while.

2 Corinthians 4:17 NLT

For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

5. Difficult times are PURPOSEFUL.

1 Peter 1:7 NLT

These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

1 Peter 5:10 NKJ

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

How to Navigate Difficult Times:

1. REFUSE TO BE DISCOURAGED.

1 Samuel 30:3-6 NKJ

So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

2. FOCUS ON THE PROMISE INSTEAD OF THE PROBLEM.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NKJ

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Romans 8:28 NKJ

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

3. SPEAK THE WORD IN SPIE OF YOUR THOUGHTS.

Hebrews 10:23 NKJ

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Isaiah 43:2 NLT

When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.

Proverbs 18:21 NKJ

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 18:21 MSG

Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit—you choose.