

The Family Friend



A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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Things to Remember When the Going Gets Tough

1. **You are not alone.** Even though you may feel very much alone, you are not. And even though you may feel like you are the first and only person to go through such hardships, you are not. Many others around you have endured similar experiences and may know more about how you're feeling than you could imagine. And even though it may feel like God has abandoned you, be assured that God knows what you're going through, cares about you, and continues to love you in the midst of your circumstances. Remember that you are not alone, and then remember the next item on our list.
2. **Talking to others about it can be helpful.** First and foremost, talk to God about it. The Psalms remind us that we can talk to God about anything and everything—what we're going through, how we feel, what we want in the midst of hardships. Read through the Psalms and notice how David and other writers talked with God about whatever they felt

and whatever they were experiencing: sin, fear, anger, thanksgiving, joy, awe, hardships, injustices—on and on the list goes, both good and bad. God understands our human responses to life because He Himself became human and lived life like we do, suffering many of the things that we suffer. Indeed, the Hebrew writer reminds us that Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because he was tempted in every respect like we are (Heb. 4:15). But also remember to talk to others—not just God—about what you're experiencing. God made us to be in relationship with others, both to give help and to receive help from one another. Not everyone, of course, is equally understanding about how we might feel in our various circumstances, so you may need to be cautious in choosing someone to talk to, but chances are that you can find someone who has been through similar hardships who can listen, and understand.

3. **God can use this for your good if you let Him.** One of the beautiful promises we have as Christians is that God can use whatever happens in our lives for good

(Rom. 8:28ff). Of course, as many have pointed out, this does not mean that everything that happens to us is good; it's not. There are many hurtful, terrible things that happen to us in life. But what God has promised is that He can turn anything that happens to us into something good if we work with Him and let Him. Bible characters like Ruth and Joseph are wonderful examples of how God can do this, as are numerous other biblical characters. Indeed, God uses many things in life, even hardships, to shape us into His character and image. Take time to read and think about James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:1-5.

4. **You are far more than what you do or achieve.** Often, in the face of hardships, trials, and disappointments, we focus on things we have failed at and write ourselves off as failures. There's rarely a better time to remember that each of us is far more than what we do or achieve. Unfortunately our culture and society tend to value people because of their achievements and to place a premium on what one does. Our real value and worth, however, comes not from what we

ATTITUDE: Key to Positive Family Relationships

have done but from who we are: people created in the image of God who carry His qualities in our very being.

5. **This too shall pass.** Perhaps you have heard this phrase before; it's been around for a long time, and it captures a real truth of life. Seldom do things continue just as they are forever. Even bad times and hardships change. Sometimes the situation passes; and sometimes just the particular effect we are feeling passes while the situation remains the same. Either way, something changes and with that change comes relief, new possibilities, and opportunities, even blessings. Yes, we often have to wait until later in life to look back to see how things have changed and to find the blessings in what we once experienced as hardship. But one thing life teaches us all is that "this too shall pass" in one way or another. Usually our job is simply to be faithful in the midst of the hardship, learning to wait while God changes what needs to be changed. And now, some other things: Perhaps the things listed above have made you think of some other things that would be helpful to remember when going through tough times. Take a moment or two and write them down as a way of helping you remember them. May God's peace be with you as you do your best to be faithful even in the face of life's hardships.

—James C. Savage
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A lady woke one morning, looked in the mirror, and noticed that she had only three hairs on her head. "Well," she said, "I think I'll braid my hair today." So she did, and she had a wonderful day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and noticed she only had two hairs. "Hmmm," she said, "I think I'll part my hair in the middle today." She did just that and had a great day.

The next day she awakened to discover that she had only one hair remaining. She responded, "Well, I think I'll wear my hair in a ponytail today." So she did and she had another fantastic day.

Looking in the mirror the next morning revealed that she had no hair at all; she was completely bald. "Yea," she exclaimed. "I don't have to fix my hair today."

Attitude may not be everything, but it certainly is a very important part of our lives. It effects us in at least two significant ways.

First, our attitudes affect how we interpret the events of our lives. Negative attitudes filter out the good things that happen in our daily lives. They blind us to the blessings and successes of our everyday experiences.

Bad attitudes shape how we hear other people, making it impossible for them to compliment us. These kind of attitudes drain the joy out of our lives in general and our relationships in particular.

Secondly, our attitudes affect the people we meet every day.

Moods are very contagious. Mom's mood at the breakfast table will affect the children at school that day.

Smiles bring smiles, while criticism produces criticism. A good attitude is a great blessing in the lives of our family and our co-workers. Is it time for an attitude check? We need to *expect the best* of each day we live; *focus on the best* in each situation we face; *remember the best* from each day we live; and *share the best* of our lives with those around us.

—Don Loftis
Old Hickory Church of Christ

What is Love?



- ◆ "Love is a journey not a destination."
Source Unknown
- ◆ "Love is happiness given back and forth."
Source Unknown
- ◆ "Love is in your heart not to stay, but to be shared."
Source Unknown

—via Heart, Mind, and Soul
Christian Counseling Center