



#16

Theme: "Hard Times"

Scripture: James 1:2-4 HCSB

"Consider it great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing."

**A Thought:** If you watch cable news 24/7 you will find yourself in the midst of total despair and equally a loss of hope. On the other hand, perhaps I am blaming the messenger and not the message. The message in the forefront is the lingering high unemployment throughout our country and specifically for many of our Christian brothers. The folks walking the marble halls of Congress yak and yak about the problem to no avail. Meanwhile media pundits post banner headlines "Recession and Depression" with a sense of urgency. Reality is such....to the unemployed it is a depression and not a recession. Hard times to be sure. Note that God will not let you down. Psalm 46:1 (NIV) is explicit on this...."God is our refuge and strength, and ever-present help in trouble." As a Christian it is easy to claim scriptures but difficult to live out the reality. Listen to the words of Bill Bright the founder of Campus Crusade...."The Lord Jesus by His Holy Spirit is with me and the knowledge of His presence dispels the darkness and allays my fears." The promises of God are unconditional. Unlike the political posturing of every two, four and or six years.

Now....what are your thoughts? Write them down.

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**Talk to yourself:**

- Are you seeking guidance from our Lord?
- Do you seek fellowship with Christian brothers?
- Are you touching base with brothers who need assistance?
- I will make it my duty to pray for those in need.

**Scriptures to read:**

- James 1:2-8; Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6-7; Proverbs 12:25;
- 1 Peter 5:7; Luke 12:22-34; Psalm 27:4-5

**Quote:** Vincent Peale, Minister and Author

“Do not buildup obstacles in your imagination. Difficulties must be studied and dealt with, but they must not be magnified by fear.”

**Bottom Line:** It is difficult for me to walk in someone’s shoes who is currently experiencing the woes of the economy. I do know through past experiences that God has been there for me. Now I must admit I had my doubts, my fears and with no hope near I lost sight of God. I did not attend church, I did not fellowship with fellow Christian brothers and sisters and I did not pray. Fear, doubts and anger are elements that will grab you by the throat and with time ease your spiritual walk into a vacuum. God was not going to let me go so easily. He always brought someone including my spouse into my life. A phone call, a pat on the back, a warm welcome, prayer and men’s Bible fellowship were and are the ingredients that kept me in good stead. Men we must do likewise....God expects no less.

**NOW.....THAT’S THE BOTTOM LINE.**

Spiritual Dabbler,  
Your bro, Ray