

A Firm Foundation

Solid truths for a shifting world

July 4th, 2022 Ralph Hardy, James 1:2-4



A typical response to something bad or unwanted happening may be *“I’ve got a bad feeling about this.”*

But the Bible tells us:

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:6-7

KEY VERSE:

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”
James 1:2-4 NLT

“I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is....”
Romans 12:1-2

With God’s help, instead of “having a bad feeling...”, we can “have a good feeling God is going to grow me through this!”

The 4 steps to apply James’ instructions:

1. Awareness - Acknowledge there’s something bad/nasty/unwanted that has given us a bad feeling
“...when troubles of any kind come your way” James 1:2a
2. Immediate response: React with a thought/prayer something like, “OK, God, what do you want me to see here?”
“...consider it an opportunity ...” James 1:2b

3. Explore God’s leading - explore where God is leading through prayer, God’s Word, Christian counsel how God wants you to respond, but always start with trust, patience and expectation
“...For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.” James 1:3
4. Go & grow - Go where God leads you and grow as God gives you opportunity to stretch your faith
“So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” James 1:4

David’s challenge at Ziklag

⁹ David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Valley, where some stayed behind. ¹⁰ Two hundred of them were too exhausted to cross the valley, but David and the other four hundred continued the pursuit.

¹¹ They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. ¹² ...

¹³ David asked him, “Who do you belong to? Where do you come from?” He said, “I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago. ¹⁴ We raided the Negev of the Kerethites, some territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag.”

¹⁵ David asked him, “Can you lead me down to this raiding party?”

¹⁶ He answered, “Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them.”

1 Samuel 30:1-6,9-16

Inviting God into our emotions and thoughts requires:

- Intentionality
- Recognition of our need

“Jesus never sought to lure anyone to him by the offer of an easy way; he sought to challenge men and women, to waken the boldness and moral courage in their souls, by the offer of a way than which none could be higher and harder.” William Barclay

The next time something unwanted happens to us, may our response be “I’ve got a good feeling God is going to grow me through this!” Amen!