

Coping With The Valleys

Life is comprised of ups and downs. Everyone experiences both hills and valleys — even Christians! The valleys come in many forms: frustrations, disappointments, rejection, failure, desertion, persecutions, etc. How does one cope? Before I answer that, just remember that God's greatest people experienced valleys: Elijah (1 Kings 19:4, 9-10), David (Psalm 35:1-4, 15-26), Jesus (John 6:67; Luke 22:44); and, Paul (2 Timothy 4:16). Maybe discouragements are Satan's most effective weapon against good men.

What are some causes of valleys? Illness, death of loved ones, loss of wealth, anxiety for the future, brethren and friend's shortcomings, mistreatment by others, blighted hopes and dreams, handicaps, depression, etc. How can a Christian cope with valleys? Here are several ways:

1. Do something for someone else. Find your life in losing it.
2. Remember the promises of God, e.g., no temptation beyond your ability to bear; He will never forsake us; He is able to deliver; we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.
3. Remember that there are blessings in burdens and sufferings: chastisements, evangelism, lessons learned, etc.
4. Use your burden as a bridge to success and make good of the bad situation.
5. Walk away from the world for rest and meditation, e.g., Jesus before choosing His disciples went to a mountain to pray and He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane alone (Luke 6:12; Matthew 26:36).
6. Talk to yourself positively. The woman with the flow of blood said, "If only I touch the hem of His garment, I will be healed" (Matthew 9:20).
7. Refuse to admit self-pity. We have to crucify ourselves with Christ (Galatians 2:20; 5:24).
8. Remember that you are valuable to God if no one else thinks so (1 Corinthians 12:22-25).
9. Pray always (Philippians 4:4-8).
10. Count your blessings and it may surprise you what the Lord has done. In comparison, how can I complain?
11. Remember the faithful of old (Hebrews 12:1-4).
12. Blame Satan. Do not falsely accuse God.
13. Praise God vocally, e.g. Paul and Silas in prison singing hymns (Acts 16:25; cp. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
14. Go to God's book and let Him speak to you. He's the source of all comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-7).
15. Associate with saints a lot. Attend all the assemblies; get together as much as possible socially, and confide in them.
16. Be optimistic. Love believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:7).
17. Remember that all valleys are temporary. This too shall pass. A hill may be around the corner (Psalm 30:5).

18. Remember that depression is contagious so don't spread it!
19. Remember that God is with us in all valleys (Psalm 23:1-6).

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