

Oaks-West Church of Christ

204 Second Street • Burnet, TX 78611 • 512-756-4493

February 16, 2020

See Past the Darkness

by Rickie Jenkins

How can we ever see the brightness of the sun when we have been in the dark so long? People are fragile. It is easy to take a step into the mentally and emotionally dark side of life. It is easy to stay there. It is a fight to come out and be able to see life as valuable and filled with joy.

Discouragement is a real joy killer. The blues or the blahs seem to linger. We get down in the dumps. "I am just in a bad mood." No one is on the mountain top all the time.

Then comes disappointment. It is a little more severe and prolonged. People become disheartened. "...I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise ... Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in

God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me..." (Psalms 42:4-6).

Then comes despair. Despair is more intense and will last even longer. At its deepest level, there is a loss of objectivity and sound reason. The lens through which we see everyone and life, is dark and hopeless.

The causes for these three monsters can be many. There can be things which are circumstantial. Death, disease or disaster can play a huge role. Also, it's disappointing and discouraging when we succumb to temptation... some besetting sin that has become our spiritual Achilles heel... when, in spite of knowing better, we lust ... buy the drink ... follow the crowd ... break a promise ... lie, lie, and lie again ... lose our temper

See Past the Darkness ...

... buy the magazine ... it's then we look in the mirror and wonder how God could ever use us or love us. The cause may be relational. Rejection by a mate. Rebellion of a child. Disappointment in other people. Also, the reason may be emotional. Our thinking gets distorted and we focus on the sour things in life. It could be loneliness due to the loss of a mate. Maybe it is a single person sitting quiet in an apartment. All of these can contribute to our discouragement, disappointment and lead to despair.

What can we do? First, we need to realize we need God. At times like these, we need God more than ever before. We need to experience Him in a way we have never experienced Him before. We need to know and feel His love, His mercy and His grace. We need to know He will not leave us. We need to turn to Him, His word and prayer. We need to be filled with His fullness and immeasurable love. We need Him to dwell in our hearts. We need to taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalms 34:8).

Next, we need to worship. Coming before the throne of God takes our mind off ourselves and turns our mind toward God. It is there we learn He is ruling and there we get a proper perspective of life (Psalms 73:14,16,17). We need to pray to Him and read His word. He begs us to come to Him and have our heavy load lifted. He will make our burden light (Matt. 11:28-30).

Further, we need to change the way we think. It is true, we are what we think. We are so emotionally driven that we think if we don't act the way we feel, we are being hypocritical. There is an adage, "Don't feel your way into acting, act your way into feeling." In other words, if we wait until we feel like changing the way we think, it will never happen. Change the way we think, and we will change the way we feel.

Also, we can make a conscious choice to feel better. Jesus asked the man who had not walked of 38 years, "Do you want to be well?" We must not wallow in the discouragement and disappointment. We can't make a career out of feeling sorry or being in a bad mood. We get to choose whether we want to be happy and content.

Consider doing something for somebody. That will take attention and focus off us. If the world is all about me, that is a miserable place. But, if the world is about serving others and fulfilling a need for them, I don't have time to think about myself.

Finally, everything always goes back to this. We must decide to trust the Lord. Everything in life is about trusting in Him. It is a conscious choice. When I look to Him, I don't have time to feel discouraged, disappointed and fall into despair. He offers hope. His gives us His promises. He comforts (2 Cor. 1:3-4). Trusting in Him becomes a way of life.

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.



Upcoming Ladies' Bible Classes - February 25 at Doris Hammons' home.

Song Practice - February 16, 5:00 p.m.

Our upcoming Gospel Meeting - March 1-4 with Rickie Jenkins

Gospel Meeting - March 7-10 with Kevin O'Banion at Northwest church of Christ in Austin.

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.



Please remember the following individuals in your daily prayers:

June Owens
Jack Wilson
Jerry Richardson
Karen Hallmark
Rich Force
Ron & Sue Stanberry
Silvia Stinnett & her family
Autumn Felps

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

We have many that face challenges on a daily basis and need your prayers as well.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

