

When Under Pressure...Don't Give Up!

James 1:2-4 (The Message)

Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

Have you ever watched an old-fashioned pressure cooker? At first, as it heats up, it seems like the pot is handling the increase in pressure without too much trouble. But as the pressure continues to build up inside that pot, the valve on the lid begins to cause the small weighted “rocker” to jiggle. The jiggling of the rocker is demonstrating that the contents are under great pressure and unless more steam is released, it could potentially explode. If the pot is removed prematurely from the heat, the pressure reduces, but the contents are left uncooked and inedible.

We are living in a season when the whole world is under pressure. People under pressure will often do ANYTHING to relieve the pressure they are experiencing. If there is pressure at home, some will seek to relieve it by running away, or divorcing their spouse. Pressure at work often tempts people to quit their jobs. Those who face pressure from being unemployed may find themselves seeking temporary relief by drinking alcohol, taking drugs, watching TV, sleeping abnormal hours, or overeating. Financial pressure will often tempt people to relieve the pressure by borrowing money at astronomical rates of interest or by declaring bankruptcy. People in ministry face many pressures and may try to relieve that pressure by closing down the ministry or resigning from their churches.

The truth is that INTENSE PRESSURE TEMPTS PEOPLE TO GIVE UP!

But God does not want YOU to give up when you find yourself under pressure. Remember the lesson of the pressure cooker – “If the pot is removed prematurely from the heat, the pressure reduces, but the contents are left uncooked and inedible.” God uses the trials we go through to produce a maturity and fruitfulness in His people if they will trust Him in the process and lean on Him for the grace to not give up prematurely. Consider the J.B. Phillips translation of James 1:2-4

When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that

endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence.

God's intent for all of us is that we "bear much fruit" according to John 15:8,16. And the fruit of your life is to bless other people and to glorify God in the process. When you go through a trial and trust in God for the outcome, and then see His victory in the end without having given up along the way - your life becomes "mature fruit" that others can taste and receive encouragement from.

DON'T GIVE UP when you are under pressure. Seek God to give you the grace you need to stay "in the heat" until the completed work is done in your life and you have a testimony to share with others.

James 1:2-4 J.B. Phillips Translation

When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence.

1. We are living in a season when the whole world is under pressure - some more than others!
2. People under pressure will often do ANYTHING to relieve the pressure.
 - 1) Pressure at home- run away- divorce spouse
 - 2) Pressure at work – quit their job
 - 3) Pressure due to lack of work – drink, do drugs, watch TV, sleep abnormal hours, overeat

- 4) Financial pressure – close business - declare bankruptcy
- 5) Pressure in the ministry – resign church/close down the ministry
- 6) Overwhelmed with pressure – commit suicide

ALL of these are ways that people GIVE UP

Tell your neighbor DON'T GIVE UP!

How do you AVOID GIVING UP when you are under pressure?

(new slide in powerpoint)

The Bible tells us Perseverance is the KEY

Perseverance: in the NT Greek it is the word hü-po-mo-nā'

- Cheerful or hopeful endurance
 - Patient continuance or waiting
 - From a root word that means –
to stay under /undergo/bear trials
 - In NT use - the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings
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Paul is one of the most outstanding examples:

Acts 27: 18-26 amp

¹⁸As we were being dangerously tossed about by the violence of the storm, the next day they began to throw the freight overboard;

¹⁹And the third day they threw out with their own hands the ship's equipment (the tackle and the furniture).

²⁰And when neither sun nor stars were visible for many days and no small tempest kept raging about us, all hope of our being saved was finally abandoned.

²¹Then as they had eaten nothing for a long time, Paul came forward into their midst and said, Men, you should have listened to me, and should not have put to sea from Crete and brought on this disaster and harm and misery and loss.

²²But [even] now I beg you to be in good spirits and take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you but only of the ship.

²³For this [very] night there stood by my side an angel of the God to Whom I belong and Whom I serve and worship,

²⁴And he said, Do not be frightened, Paul! It is necessary for you to stand before Caesar; and behold, God has given you all those who are sailing with you.

²⁵So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith (complete confidence) in God that it will be exactly as it was told me;

²⁶But we shall have to be stranded on some island.

Don't Give Up!

John Akhwari represented Tanzania and ran the Marathon in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico. During the early part of the race, John stumbled, fell and injured his knee and ankle. Runners raced passed him as he lay on the ground. By 7 p.m. an Ethiopian runner had won the gold medal. Hours later....With only a few thousand fans left in the stadium, John Akhwari limped through the gate. He wore a bloody bandage. When asked why he did not just give up after being injured - He explained to reporters: "My country did not send me 7,000 miles to begin a race; they sent me to finish the race." The high altitude of Mexico City took its toll on the athletes and nearly 20 runners did not finish that marathon including the gold medalist from the previous 2 Olympics who also sustained knee and ankle injuries.

John teaches us to get up again: "Even if good people fall seven times, they will get back up" (Proverbs 24:16). He teaches us to keep going: "Let us run with determination the race that lies before us" (Hebrews 12:1).