



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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Subject: Faith/Doubt

CHALLENGED FAITH: REMEMBER WHAT YOU KNOW

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. Job 23:10

What do you do when your faith is tested? Do you blame God and run the other way? Or do you begin spiritual rehabilitation and look beyond the immediate challenge for strength and help which you do not possess? I suggest that the first thing to do when your faith is challenged is to turn to the pages of God's Word and identify with people who have problems such as you have, and have found an answer. But do not stop there.

The second guideline to strengthen the foundation of your faith is **refuse to relinquish what you know to be true**. In times of distress your head tells you things which your heart may not feel. "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (I Corinthians 10:13). Your head knows that; your heart doesn't.

Remember the words of Isaiah 43 when God said, *when* you walk through the waters they will not overflow you, and *when* you go through the fire it will not burn you. You know down deep inside that God has not made you a special target for His wrath, and that the trial you are facing is not because of your personal failure. When this second guideline comes into play, as C. S. Lewis once put it, you have to tell your emotions where to get off.

In his book *Mere Christianity*, the late C. S. Lewis said that when he was an agnostic there were times when faith looked very reasonable; and since he had become a Christian, there were times when he, indeed, felt like quitting. When your faith is challenged, do not go by feeling, and do not give up on what you know to be true, regardless of what you feel.

My mother suffered a mild stroke and was rushed to the hospital. The very day she was admitted to the hospital she was taken for her first session of physical rehabilitation. They did not wait until she was hopelessly crippled. Rehabilitation started that very day. I could not help thinking how many spiritual cripples could be salvaged if they would only allow spiritual rehabilitation to begin the very day their faith is shaken. But far too often, we are hesitant to let anybody know that the foundation of our faith is being shaken by an earthquake of doubt, and we sustain tremendous damage before we cry out, "Help, I am hurting!"

When your faith is challenged, it is much like a bone that is broken. Certainly it hurts! Of course it is dangerous. But set properly and healed, in time that bone is far stronger than the one which was never injured. Almost everyone at times faces periods of trial and testing. From Elijah to the twelve who walked with Jesus, the pages of Scripture are full of men whose faith was tested.

If you get together with a few trusted individuals, you will find that everyone, without exception, goes through difficult times when they are tempted to throw the baby out with the bath water. Do you know what that means? When you bathe a baby, the water gets dirty, right? But who throws out the baby because the water is dirty! "I won't go to church anymore because there are so many hypocrites!" "God did not answer my prayer and give me the money I wanted." "I prayed and my friend died." Your faith is tested; so when it is, remember Guideline #1: Go to the Word of God, and then Guideline #2: Refuse to relinquish what you know to be true and hold on to the Lord. Yes, as the Apostle Paul wrote, "Let God be true, but every man a liar..." (Romans 3:4, KJV).

Resource reading: Philippians 2