



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

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Subject: Faith/Doubt/Trials

CHALLENGED FAITH: WALK IN OBEDIENCE

Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. Psalm 119:67

Have you ever cried out, "Lord, I just can't handle this!"? Maybe you have never said those words audibly, but you have felt that way in your heart. Eventually it happens to everyone. I have suggested some guidelines that can help you when you feel like crying out, "Lord, I can't handle this." Guideline #1: Strengthen your faith by going to the Word of God, which cannot fail. Guideline #2: When your faith is challenged, refuse to relinquish what you know to be true. Guideline #3: When your faith is challenged, turn to the Lord, but do not turn on the Lord.

There are two other guidelines which can help. Let me give them to you: **Guideline #4: When your faith is challenged, walk in simple obedience, taking one step at a time.** An aspect of the fourth guideline is to let someone else help you when you feel that you cannot handle it. It is hard admitting that things have gotten you down, but you have to do that. In almost every church or fellowship there are missing bodies who hurt, and hurt deeply. These people did not have the courage to say, "I need help!"

Have you ever noticed the number of times in the New Testament that the word, "one another" is used? We are told to "pray one for another," "bear one another's burdens," "encourage one another," and certainly to "love one another." There are well more than 40 others. It is so much easier to criticize each other for our apparent weakness than to lift up each other.

When you are down spiritually, listen to the testimony of others who have been where you are, and realize that God plays no favorites. Just as He met them, He will meet you as you let Him.

Then a word about the last guideline. **Guideline #5: When your faith is challenged, kneel and look up into the face of Jesus.** Certainly you do not understand why some things happen: why your mate walked out, why your business collapsed, why your best friend deserted you. But what you do *not* understand is not as troublesome as what you *do* understand. You do understand that God wants you to forgive, right? You do understand that God wants you to trust Him and to keep your eyes on Him, right? You do understand that God wants you to be faithful to your wife or husband as to Himself as well.

It is so easy to let what you do not understand keep you from doing what you clearly do understand. Our faith is usually challenged by hindrances which become stumbling blocks or stepping stones.

In the city of Copenhagen is a museum where you will find many of Bertel Thorvaldsen's beautiful works of art. There is one in particular which I like, depicting Jesus with arms outstretched as He says, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." On a certain occasion a great art critic came to see the work, and standing at a distance he viewed the image with disdain.

He turned to walk away as a little boy said, "Mister, let me show you how to see Jesus," and he took him by the sleeve and tugged at him to follow. At the foot of the cross the lad knelt and motioned for the critic to do the same. Kneeling reluctantly with the boy, he looked up into the face of Jesus and saw the full beauty of Thorvaldsen's work. When your faith is challenged, kneel and look up into His face. It is the only way to cope.

Resource reading: Philippians 4:1-9