



“Spiritual Survival Tactics”
Romans 12:12
Romans 12: Devoted to Service

Introduction: A disaster is any serious problem which exceeds our ability to cope, using our own resources and requiring us to call for help from others.

Personal disasters like...

- a crisis in our health (life-threatening illnesses, medical emergencies)
- a crisis in our personal relationship (conflict in marriage and family, and friendships)
- a crisis of faith (filled with doubt, discouragement, division, even persecution)
- Joy-Stealing Hopelessness • Strength-Depleting Tribulation • Resource-Consuming Needs

Our Text: Romans 12:12 “...rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer...”

2 Corinthians 12:10 “Therefore I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in distresses, in persecutions, in difficulties, in behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you except something common to mankind; and God is faithful, so He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

My personal paraphrase: “No human disaster has overtaken you that others have not faced. And God is faithful, so He will not allow you to face anything beyond your capability but in every situation will provide a way of escape so that you will make it through.

Personal Disaster #1: Joy-Stealing Hopelessness

Succumbing to feelings of HELPLESSNESS in any situation leads to feelings of HOPELESSNESS!

cf. 1 Timothy 1:9 re; those who were “shipwrecked in regard to their faith.”

Three kinds of people who face life’s personal challenges:

1. (The VNPs) Very Needy People...who admit they need HOPE and will gratefully receive it.
2. (The VHPs) Very Helpful People...who readily distribute HOPE to others.
3. (The VDPs) Very Draining People...who refuse HOPE even when HOPE is readily available.

Survival Tactic #1: Rejoicing in Hope (Romans 12:12)

Biblical hope is the eager expectation that God will do what He promised in the future and then it is living as if it will happen today.

G.O.D.I.S.N.O.W.H.E.R.E.

Choice #1: 1. GOD IS NOWHERE

Choice #2: GOD IS NOW HERE

Romans 15:13 “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing (i.e. in trusting, in relying on Him), so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit...”

How do we learn to rejoice in hope in the midst of personal disaster?

1. Read about people who handled life well in the past.

Romans 15:4 “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

2. Be around those who rejoice in hope today.

Rejoicing in hope is a personal disaster survival tool for dealing with our joy-stealing hopelessness.

Personal Disaster #2: Strength-Depleting Tribulation

“...persevering in tribulation...” (Greek: thlipsis = squeezed, under extreme pressure, hemmed in, crust under rocks)

Survival Tactic #2: Persevering in Tribulation (Romans 12:12)

persevering = Greek: hupomeno (verb); hupomone (noun) = steadfastness and endurance

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 “...we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed...”

Persevering in tribulation is a personal disaster survival tool for dealing with our strength-depleting problems.

How do we learn to persevere in tribulation?

1. We learn to persevere in tribulation from others.

Hebrews 12:1-2 “Therefore, since we also have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let’s rid ourselves of every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let’s run with endurance (i.e. hupomone perseverance) the race that is set before us, looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

2. We learn to persevere in tribulation in the midst of our own trials.

Romans 5:3-4 “...we also celebrate in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope...”

Personal Disaster #3: Resource-Consuming Needs.

In the midst of crisis some panic, some do nothing, and some are prepared.

Survival Tactic #3: Being Devoted to Prayer (Romans 12:12)

The Bible is filled with personal disaster prayers

(e.g. "Help me...Save me...Rescue me...Deliver me..." "Give us this day our daily bread." S.O.S. = SAVE OUR SOULS!

The shortest distance between a problem and a solution is the distance between your knees and the floor!"

Philippian 4:19 "...my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Romans 12:12 "...rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer..."

"devoted" = Greek: *proskartereo*) = speaks of persistent and constant prayer.

Colossians 4:1 "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving."

Devotion to prayer is a personal disaster survival tool for dealing with our resource-consuming needs.

How do we become more devoted to prayer?

- 1. Be around people those who are constant in prayer.**
- 2. Pack your life with prayer reminders** P.U.S.H. = Pray Until Something Happens!

Conclusion:

Spiritual Survival Rule of Three (Based on Romans 12:12)

1. Rejoicing in hope to deal with joy-stealing hopelessness.
2. Persevering in tribulation to deal with strength-depleting tribulation.
3. Being devoted to prayer to deal with resource-consuming needs.

Romans 8:35-39 "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or trouble, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Just as it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We were regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Discussion Questions and Action Items:

1. In what situations would you be prone to lose hope or give up easily?
2. Name a person in your life who rejoiced in hope and persevered in tribulation.
3. Name someone who is a true example to you of being devoted to prayer. _____
4. Would you say you have an emotional or spiritual "disaster survival plan" that you could easily teach others?
5. What did you get most out of this message?