

Easy Living in Hard Times

“Easy Living in Hard Times”

Not “Hard Living in Hard Times” or “Easy Living in Easy Times”

Mt 11:28-30 (NLT)

Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

In Christ, there is an exchange of our heavy burden with his light yoke.

We give him our weariness, harassment, disappointments, suffering, losses and our sinful independence. He gives us rest as we trust in Him during the good times and the hard times.

Trying Harder only deepens weariness.

We are called to be

- Broken like Peter... “He went out and wept bitterly.” Mt 26:75
- Weak like Paul... “When I am weak, then I am strong” 2Cor 12:10
- Dependent like the branch to the Vine... “Apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:1-11

The Three Questions: Who is God? Who am I? How am I living?

Who is God? Santa Claus, a giant vending machine in the sky

Who am I? A good girl/boy, deserving of good things

How am I living? When “Equation living” meets hard times I become disappointed in God, disappointed with my life. My response may be to work harder to win God’s approval or to reject the entire God-thing.

Who is God? Angry, punitive, a giant Fly-Swatter in the sky waiting to squash me like a bug

Who am I? Fearful, always looking over my shoulder

How am I living? I live my life expecting punishment for my mistakes. I have little true joy or peace.

Who is God? Loving and Kind. Jesus loves me, this I know.

Who am I? Unlovable because of my past, undeserving of kindness or compassion

How am I living? I know cognitively of God’s Love but do not dwell within God’s Love.

Who is God? Far away and uninvolved in my life

Who am I? Alone to be and to choose as I will

How am I living? I live a “whatever” life.

Who is God? Sovereign, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe

Who am I? A control freak.

How am I living? I assume that God has given me carte blanche rule over my life, my choices and my interactions with others. Because God is God and I am not God, I may try to ignore Him for a time, but I will eventually engage in a war of the wills – God’s will versus my will.

Who is God? Merciful. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.” Ps 103:12

Who am I? Forgiven, washed whiter than snow even though I am “the worst of sinners.”

How am I living? I no longer live under the shame of my sin. And, the mercy I have received is the mercy I extend.

Practicing “Easy Living” = Practicing the Presence of God—Father, Son, Spirit

“Remember, I am with you always!” Mt 28:20

- **Examen:** Attentive self-awareness. Intentional God-awareness
 - Ps 42: Why are you downcast, . . .
- **Breath Prayer:** inhale and exhale a thousand times a day. “Jesus”
- **Gratitude:** Thank you for this “hard time,” for this hard moment.
 - For my becoming
 - For your glory
- **Worship** the Trinity:
 - You are God
 - Jesus is Lord
 - The Spirit of Christ is in me and through me
- **Community:**
 - Don’t go it alone.
 - Heb 10:23-25 (NLT) Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.