

Lord, Help Me Make It Through The Holidays

There's something about the advent of a New Year that refreshes and inspires me on my Christian journey. As I reflect over the past year and consider the wise God-given choices made, as well as the not-so-wise choices that were made, I find it so comforting to start the New Year with a clean slate - as white as snow. Knowing that as I have confessed my sins of the past year that God has been faithful to forgive me - He does a "mistake-erase" and remembers them no more, and that is very freeing!

I also remember a time several years ago when the holidays weren't quite as happy and satisfying for me. I had heard others talk about how depressing the holidays could be, especially for single moms who found themselves alone. I could never relate to depression until this particular Christmas when I actually experienced those feelings firsthand. I was feeling really "down". I had been praying (for what seemed to me like a very long time) for God to bless me with a mate, not just any mate - but the very best mate for me. I was feeling lonely and wondering if God had forgotten about me and my sons. It seemed to me that my prayers were ineffective and were hovering just about ceiling height and not going much higher.

Well, I was able to get through the Christmas holiday with my faculties pretty much intact, but by the time New Year's Day arrived, I found myself sitting in my bedroom crying out to God. It was quite the Pity Party. I remember saying over and over, "How long, God? Have you forgotten me, God? How long before you answer my prayer? How long must I go on like this?" I guess you could say I was pretty distressed. It was from the depth of my distress that I opened the scriptures and my eyes immediately fell upon Psalm 13. Wow! The very words I had just uttered were reflected back to me from the pages of scripture! How awesome was that?! I was taken back at first, wondering if I was really seeing them clearly as my tears blurred my vision. Yes! There it was, the exact words echoed from a brother who was also feeling impatient and needing relief from his despair. As I expressed my heartfelt feelings to God, I found strength as I was surrounded by His presence. Knowing that He cared enough to show me this very scripture filled me with hope. As I renewed my trust in God, He gave me the peace I so badly needed and with that a new perspective. It was then that I was reminded, once again, that God's timing (not my own) is worth waiting for...

Truly, there IS one who understands our despair. On that dark New Year's Day, Jesus renewed my faith in His unfailing love.

What about you? Are you feeling lonely as the New Year approaches? Maybe you're feeling overwhelmed by your circumstances and mounting pressures are about to overtake you. May you be encouraged to not give up on God; to not give in to despair! God is with us and He WILL walk us through our darkest hours.

He has promised:

"...weeping lasts for a night, but joy cometh in the morning". Psalm 30:5

Heavenly Father, I claim this promise for the lonely and depressed. Put your loving arms around them, draw near to them. Elevate them as you walk with them, hold their hand and even carry them through this difficult time. Give them a new perspective, renewed hope, and a new will. I praise you for your unfailing love and faithfulness to us. In Jesus Name, Amen

Sherry Westland 12/07