

Equipped to keep going when your life falls apart (part 2)

How are things in your life right now? Perhaps you're enjoying good experiences and everything is going really well. That's great! But maybe things are not going so well for you and, as a result of horrible things that have happened, your world has fallen apart. In part one we looked at choices we can make in response to our problems. These were choosing to believe the character of God; choosing to respond to Him in praise; and choosing to wait for Him to act. Are there any other choices we can make? Here are some more suggestions...

In the face of difficult circumstances, we can **choose to share our problems with a trusted friend**. For example, *"If you fall, your friend can help you up"*.¹ Don't underestimate the comfort that a good friend can bring to you. None of us has to walk through troubled times on our own. Your friend might be close at hand or on the other side of the world. With telephone and email access, we can connect with friends who live hundreds, or even thousands, of miles away. A great advantage of email over face-to-face conversations is that it forces you to write down your problem. Sometimes this can help clarify the issues in your own mind.

With friends who are nearby, it's a good idea to do fun things together and not spend all your time talking about your difficulties. This will remind you that there is life outside your current situation which you can be part of. Through time, you might want to form or develop a particular interest or hobby, with or without a friend, which will help you to focus on something other than your problems. You'll be amazed at how this can bring a sense of normality to your life.

Another thing you can choose to do is to **build structure into your day**. When your world falls apart, it's a very natural response to let things slide. Some people neglect their appearance, or turn to the wrong kind of food for comfort. Others feel they don't have the energy to get out of bed in the morning and have no desire to face a new day dominated by the same old problems. While it's not a good idea to be too tough on ourselves at times like this, we need to recognize that maintaining some sort of routine each day helps to bring perspective to what's going on around us.

The Old Testament prophet, Habakkuk, offers yet another choice in the way we respond to difficulties - **rejoice in the LORD**. He draws attention to the worst case scenario and then goes on to say in the next verse, *"yet I will rejoice in the LORD! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation."*² Notice Habakkuk says that he *will* rejoice and he *will* be joyful. He doesn't say that he *feels* like rejoicing or being joyful. By a set of his will, he determines how he is going to respond. He recognizes that he has a choice. He could focus on a disastrous outcome and be thoroughly miserable, or he could choose to rejoice and be joyful. What an encouragement to know that we can choose our response to bad circumstances in our lives! But Habakkuk doesn't leave it there. He makes it clear that his rejoicing will be *"in the LORD"* and he will be joyful *"in the God of (his) salvation"*. Making the decision to be joyful in the face of adversity is not enough, but when we get into the habit of focusing on God by celebrating His character and believing the many promises found in His word, then we are able to rejoice in Him.

A day is coming when your world will never again fall apart. On that day *"there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain"*.³ Yes, Lord, bring it on!

¹ Ecclesiastes 4:10 (CEV)

² Habakkuk 3:17 (NLT)

³ Revelation 21:4 (NLT)