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## **A Message for Christians Who Have Bad Days**

***By David Wilkerson***

August 13, 1998 The Christian life is not a life of clear sailing. Every believer is going to have bad days, no matter how holy he may be. In fact, I believe the more godly a person is, the more trying and excruciating his bad days will be.

Fortunately, most Christians know Jesus isn't just a "good times only" savior. He's with us not only when things are going well, but during our bad days also. When hard times hit us, he doesn't disappear, saying, "I'll be back when you've got it all worked out." No he's faithful and caring through every kind of season. And he's touched by every feeling we endure during our hard times.

The apostle Paul addresses this when he writes, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Imagine it! The treasure Paul refers to is the knowledge and presence of Jesus Christ. And we hold this precious treasure in our bodies!

Yet the Greek word Paul uses for "earthen" is "frail clay" meaning, "weak, easily broken, easily tempted." He's saying, "Yes, we hold Jesus' presence in our very bodies. But our bodies are weak, easily tempted and easily broken!"

The fact is, we all suffer what the Bible calls "infirmities." For many Christians, a common infirmity of life is a frail constitution or poor health. Paul spoke of Timothy's frequent illnesses, calling them "often infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23). The Greek word "infirmity" here means "sickly, without strength, feeble of body or mind."

Yet there are other kinds of infirmities besides physical ones, and they're just as difficult to handle. In my opinion, infirmities of the mind are probably the most widespread. I'm not talking about mental illness, but rather those unexplainable times when your feelings betray you and play tricks on your mind. Let me explain.

It's possible to go to bed feeling contented, on top of the world, and yet wake up the next day with a heavy cloud of gloom hanging over your head. All day long you feel totally bound by your downcast state of mind. You don't know where it came from but the cloud of gloom just keeps hanging over you, and it won't go away.

Guilt, fear and anxiety are all infirmities of the mind. Such things might haunt you because of your past, or because of some sin that still clings to your life. And these infirmities cannot but help affect your feelings.

Now, you may say you don't live by your feelings but in a very real sense you do. For instance, you might not be able to shake off some harsh words someone spoke to you a few days before. Or, you may constantly battle feelings of rejection or unworthiness. Without question, these feelings have a direct effect on the way you live.

For some people, Mothers Day or Fathers Day is one of the hardest days of the year. Perhaps their parents didn't offer much love, or were alcoholics, or simply weren't around. Many people can't remember a good day with their mother or father at all. And so Christmas and Thanksgiving become the most difficult times of the year for them.

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Ironically, my bad days come most often while I'm searching God's word. When I'm alone with the Lord and my Bible, I can be overwhelmed with feelings of ignorance. I sense there's a whole ocean of truth before me, but I can't possibly comprehend it because there's so much of it.

I get even more frustrated when I read the great writings of preachers who lived 300 years ago. I end up crying out, "Oh, Lord I'm like a baby in my understanding compared to these spiritual giants! They lived in a supposedly unenlightened age and yet as young men they wrote about matters I have yet to grasp in my sixties. Why is it so hard for me to get it?"

The only answer I receive is what I hear in Paul's words: "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). All power rests in God including the power to comprehend truth and maintain a godly life. This great treasure is contained in earthen vessels so that all glory may be to him!

**It Is Not Unspiritual to Experience Bad Days!** If your bad day involves a demonic attack on your faith, you may be tempted to think you're being unspiritual just for undergoing it. Yet nothing could be further from the truth.

Several weeks ago, a godly young man called me in tears. He blurted out, "I've just had the worst day of my life and I don't know what to do! A strange feeling came over me today, and I can't shake it. Brother Dave, I don't know if there is a God!"

The young man had no idea where his feelings of doubt came from. And he was shocked and hurt by the terrible thoughts that entered his mind. He confessed, "I can't feel God's presence. And now I can't help doubting whether he exists at all. What am I going to do? I don't want to harbor these awful thoughts!"

I told him, "Don't be afraid or discouraged. Believe me, this is an old trick of the devil. He loves to play it especially on young believers who are precious to God. Right now he's injecting these thoughts into your mind to try to strike at your faith. He wants to confuse you!"

Little did this young man know, I'd been through a similar experience years before with my own son, Gary. As a teenager, Gary came home from school one day and went straight to his room without saying a word to anyone. I knew something was wrong so I knocked on his door and asked if we could talk.

"I don't want to hurt you, Dad," Gary said and then he broke down in tears. "I'm having awful thoughts. I'm not sure there's a God anymore!"

Those words broke my heart because I knew Gary had been called by God to preach his word. I wish I'd had the spiritual insight then that I have now about this problem. But all I could tell Gary at the time was: "Son, just trust Jesus the best you can. Ride it out, and don't give up. He'll see you through the storm in your mind."

God did see Gary through his trial. And today my son pastors a church in Denver, after nearly two decades of pioneering innercity churches and overseas ministries.

Now I was able to tell this young man the same thing I'd told Gary: "Just ride it out. Your heavenly father knows exactly what you're going through and he'll see you through it all. Remember, God has promised never to leave you. Just keep turning to him, by faith alone!"

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If you're undergoing this kind of trial, you must understand: You are not being unspiritual while enduring such attacks. You're still the child of your heavenly father, and he won't let you fight alone. He'll send the Holy Ghost to chase away all your doubts! So, don't try to argue with the devil. You can't prove anything to him. Instead, when the next attack comes, run to your heavenly father. Then stand still, with patience and hope!

I once received a letter from a Pentecostal pastor's wife whose husband had died a few years before. She wrote that he had been a powerful preacher, a devoted shepherd to his flock and a loving, caring father. But he had a serious problem: He was bound by a spirit of adultery.

This man had to resign from four different churches because of his many affairs with women. After each resignation, he would go straight for a few years but then his addiction would resurface, and he would start the pattern of adultery all over again.

Fortunately, his wife was a student of God's word and a prayer warrior who remained close to the Lord through it all. Her friends told her she should leave her husband, saying it was foolish to stay with a man who continually abused her that way. But, she wrote, "I know God hates divorce. So I just decided to hold onto the Lord."

Every time her husband cheated on her, she cried a river of tears, aching terribly. But she always felt the Lord telling her to stay with him, forgive him and try to help him. So she faithfully took all her pain to the Lord and each time he gave her the strength to go on.

Beloved, this dear woman didn't just have bad days she had bad years! She wrote that she remembers only a few brief periods of happiness in all the years of her marriage. But she knew God had promised to bless and honor her in the end.

And so he has. Today, her children are in love with the Lord and are married to godly Christians. And, amazingly, all of those adult children have good memories of their father, in spite of his many tragic failures.

Moreover, this dear woman is blessed, revered and honored in her church. In fact, she is often invited to speak to young married women. She always advises them not to abandon their husbands at the slightest problem. Instead, she tells them, "Jesus has been all-sufficient for me, through every storm. He has blessed me beyond anything I could hope for!"

Then she wrote something in her letter that struck me powerfully: "There were awful, trying days when I felt like giving in to my emotions. I can't tell you how many times I wanted to quit. I thought, 'My husband preaches with fire and moves the hearts of everyone in this church. But he's an adulterer!'"

"I was haunted by the thought that all my efforts were in vain. But I knew I had a promise from God. And when I prayed, I reminded him of his promise to me and he always gave me strength to go on. Now I'm glad I didn't give up. I can say that God has shown me his goodness!"

Even the Sainly Paul Had Bad Days. Paul was hit with a bad day while traveling in Macedonia. "When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Corinthians 7:5). This godly man confessed that his inner man was plagued not just by one fear, but by many fears!

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Indeed, Paul was no superhuman. He was subject to the same human emotions we all face. At one point, all the believers in Asia turned against him; people he'd given his lifeblood for. He wrote, "...the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (12:15).

Yes, Paul had awful days. But he never gave in to his feelings and the temptations that accompanied them. He testified in his worst time: "...I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation" (7:4). Then he added: "...God...comforteth those that are cast down..." (verse 6).

Are you going through a bad day, a bad week, a long season of despondency? Are you cast down, discouraged, with thoughts of quitting? If this describes you, then how do you think God reacts to your trial? Does he rebuke you or chasten you? No, never! Paul states, "The Lord is never closer to you, never more ready to help you, than when you're down and hurting."

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation..." (1:34). The Greek word for "comforteth" here means "to call close." What an amazing thing! When we experience bad days, our heavenly father takes advantage of them to draw us close to himself!

Although Bad Days Are Inevitable, They Should Become Fewer and Less Disturbing to Us as We Grow in Our Knowledge of Who We Are in Christ As we continue in our walk with the Lord, our bad days should grow less intense. And we should become more aware in our bad times that we have all the resources needed to deal with the enemy.

I believe our bad days are often meant to bring us into maturity and out of childish bondages. Think about it: Most of our bad days are caused by our childish reactions to life situations. And consider the way children react to life: One minute they're laughing, and the next they're screaming. They pout. They're a bundle of fears. They're easily hurt, and they cry a lot. They have short attention spans, and they demand instant gratification.

Yet, in spite of all this, godly parents love and comfort their children through all of life's experiences. No tantrum could ever cause a loving parent to disown or reject his child.

Likewise, as Christians, we sometimes pout or throw fleshly tantrums when we face difficult times. We cry, "Okay, God, if that's the way you're going to treat me if you're going to keep letting bad things happen then why should I even pray to you?"

Yet our heavenly father loves and comforts us through every tantrum through our burdens, our screaming, our childish ups and downs. You see, his great desire is that in the midst of our trials we'll begin to grasp the knowledge of who we are and what we possess as his children. He knows that whenever we're tossed about by the winds and waves of our emotions, we forget we're his children and we begin living far beneath our privileges. Yet his word tells us we're his heirs and joint heirs with our older brother, Jesus!

"Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all" (Galatians 4:1). Paul is talking here about a Roman custom of the day. A child would be adopted by a rich man and then placed with a tutor until he turned eight years old. Then, from age eight to twentyfive, the child would be put under the authority of a guardian. Through all these years, the child remained heir to a fortune yet he had virtually no control or power over his life.

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Paul says such a child illustrates those who are under the law. The law is the tutor that instructs us in God's commands. But a time comes when our schooling ends and we're to take our places as heirs of God's riches through the grace of Christ. Yet, many Christians never lay hold of this knowledge. They still live according to good works and "do's and don'ts", never comprehending their position as sons of God. "...we, when we were children, were in bondage..." (verse 3). They're still serving God as slaves, bound by fear, guilt and despair because they don't understand their adoption!

Paul says to such believers, "You're still childish in your thinking, laboring under the bondage of laws you established for yourself. You don't see that you're now lord over all things, able to partake in everything your father owns. He adopted you, loved you and put you in school to prepare you for something. And the cross was your graduation day!"

Our Heavenly Father Comforts Us on Our Bad Days Yet He Desires Something More for Us In Such Times! Imagine an adopted son whose time has been fulfilled. His training is now complete, and he has inherited lordship over all his father's wealth. Yet this son continues to eke out an existence with the servants, living under the terms of enslavement.

I ask you: Is it right for this young man's father to comfort him in his bondage, assuring him he's loved and that everything will be all right? No! Any father who loves his son would want him to claim his inheritance and leave his poverty. He would urge him to appropriate the riches that are his!

Likewise, God doesn't merely comfort us in our bondage. Rather, he comes to us saying, "Son, daughter, when are you going to take your place at my side? When will you come into my house and lay hold of all the resources that are now rightfully yours?"

"Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Galatians 4:67). "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (3:26).

If Jesus is your Lord and Savior, then you're a child of God. And because you are his child, you are automatically an heir a joint heir with Christ to all the riches of the father!

Of course, our position as heirs has nothing to do with material wealth. To say that Christ died to make us rich in gold or silver is blasphemy. The Bible states, "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). This means God has given Jesus all riches in glory. Therefore, he has every resource needed to bring us out of every bad day we might face!

Yet, you ask, "Isn't God interested in our physical wellbeing? All my bad days have to do with my bills, my debts, my lack of finances. I constantly worry about my family's living conditions, having enough to live on, making ends meet."

Beloved, your father begins by meeting all your physical needs! His word promises, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). The Greek word for "need" here is from a root word meaning, "to handle all business, all that is lacking or necessary."

Paul is saying, "God is faithful to take care of all your concerns business, financial and otherwise. That covers your employment, your food, your clothes and your home. Yet there are also the riches of his goodness, strength, wisdom and grace, as well as the riches of his full assurance of salvation. And,

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beyond even these, there are his unsearchable riches!"

Note that Paul says, "God shall supply all your need" using the singular. In short, he's saying, "You need only one thing Jesus! All your needs are wrapped up in him. You need only to seek him and he will provide all for you!"

You Must Be Wholly Convinced Your Father in Heaven Has Great Affection for You! Even though you may question God's love for you, he does not condemn you. On the contrary, he feels your pain and despair. And he wants you to know his storehouse is full of everything you need and it's all available to you!

But, he says, "You can't use or enjoy any of it unless you lay hold of it by faith. You must realize who you are my child, my heir and rest in my promise to take care of all your needs and affairs. Show me you trust me by coming into my rest!"

I want to close this message with a letter our ministry received recently. I believe it speaks powerfully to this subject of having bad days:

"Dear Pastor David, a few years ago my husband lost a job that was very important to him. In fact, it was tragic for him. He lost all his self-esteem, as well as his good income, and he has never recovered. Even though he's employed, his present salary is less than half of what he was making.

"Now the responsibility is falling on me to be the primary breadwinner. A few weeks ago, I planned to go to a Christian meeting one Friday evening after work, and I had about forty-five minutes beforehand to lie down and rest. I was looking for something to read when the Lord led me to a box of papers I'd kept.

"I pulled out one of your old sermons: 'A Place Called Wit's End.' As I read this message, God's Spirit ministered to me that that's exactly where I am at my wit's end! Soon I'm going to retire, and my worries keep piling up. We're drowning in financial difficulties, with no end in sight.

"Yet God showed me through your message that I've turned in anger against my husband. I've been depending on him that is, on the flesh. I need to turn to Jesus alone as my hope, as the only one who can provide for me and bring me out of these problems. I know now my husband can never bring me out. Yet as I read your message, I received assurance that God is with me at my wit's end.

"Later that evening I went to the meeting, where one of the speakers is a friend of mine. She spoke of how God brought her out of a financial difficulty that she and her husband had gone through. She didn't hold anything back, including all the embarrassing experiences she faced. God meant for me to hear it all.

"Afterward, I shared with my friend how I'd read your message about being at wit's end, and I told her how God had used it to minister to me. Then, the following week, I received a package from her. Inside was a copy of your message, 'Right Song, Wrong Side.' How awesome! I called my friend to thank her, and she told me she would send other messages.

"I'm not through my trial yet. It's still very hard. Sometimes when I look down the road, I see potential disasters hemming us in like the children of Israel. Yet God has shown me I have doubted his love for me and his faithfulness to provide for me.

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"I've also realized, as you've taught, that I've been good at suppressing my fears and have never dealt a deathblow to my doubts. Now I want to put an end to all that. I want to choose to praise God for loving me and providing for me, even though I haven't seen the provision yet.

"My prayer is that Jesus, the author and perfecter of my faith, will heal my doubt and give me the gift of faith to trust him completely. I pray he'll give me a song to sing on this side of the victory. I so want to pass this test! I want to sing the right song on the right side, as a testimony to God's grace and faithfulness."

Our ministry receives many letters like this one, from people around the country whose faith is growing. They believe as I do that hard times are coming upon this nation but they know the Lord is going to see them through. And they've proven him faithful!

Dear saint, you may have more bad days coming. But you must come to the place where you can say, "Jesus, I cast all my cares upon you now. I'm an heir to the riches of God in Christ Jesus. And I know those riches include full supply of all my physical needs." You can believe God for that!

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