

County-Wide Chaplaincy

Thanks you!

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A Noble Character—Who Can Find

Noble- Possessing excellent qualities
Character- An attribute, quality, or property

“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”
(Romans 5:3-5 NLT)

It's been a year now since our world “shut-down” due the COVID-19 pandemic. I don't know about you, but I certainly would never have dreamed that this ordeal would continue as long as it has.

To be honest, the challenges, losses, isolation, and disappointments have been a bit much (did I say, “a bit”?). In a giant understatement, this past year has not been great. I believe it is safe to say that the number and variety of trials we have faced as individuals may have brought out the worst in us (or at least, in me). It has been a trial— a real source of vexation and annoyance.

As often as I have struggled to dig deeper, rise above, or “pull myself up by my bootstraps” (as my Dad used to put it), continually coming up short has been my experience. I'm treading hard to keep my head above the water.

Running through my mind are an abundance of “helpful” allegories and metaphors that historically I've reached to for help in reminding myself of the value potential through trials, such as gold being refined, soil being tilled, clay being shaped, and trees being pruned, to name a few. These all speak of difficulty serving a purpose. I strive to remind myself to esteem and even appreciate the usefulness of a trial. Although I'm not able to control much of my external situation, I can make use of what comes my way with a correct perspective or bearing.

As a kid, I would freeze up under pressure when it came to taking BIG tests. My goal was to study hard and do my best, but the posture of my teacher was to discover what I knew well, but also what I had yet to learn.

COVID-19 has provided a test through which I've discovered what I don't have down—what's really lacking in my character. A deliberate self-introspection can be beneficial, and taking it a step further, confessing my deficiencies to God—Who knows me, loves me, and is not the least bit surprised—is a step in the right direction. God uses trials to teach me what I lack...it's the stuff growth is made of. It's essential to building character and attests to the involvement of a Creator God who cares and knows and loves and is present. He provides hope through the

shaping, tilling, pruning, and refining. He is a “hands-on” Teacher, and having Him by our side at work in and through our lives results in the greatest joy any trial is designed to provide.

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” (James 1:2-4 NLT)

I encourage you to not miss the opportunity to grow!

By the way, rising above the storms of life into the joy of the Lord’s presence can only be done by the grace and power of God, sought through prayer. “Pulling yourself up by the bootstraps” does not work.

Janet LaPore

Some of our chaplaincy team:



Ken Turney



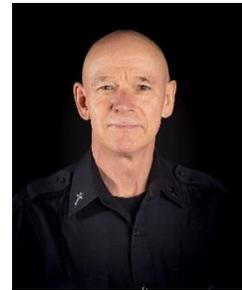
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