

A Time To Laugh And A Time To Cry

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

Romans 12:12 (NIV)

When parents begin to raise their first child they soon learn that an infant’s only means of verbal communication is to cry. The child cries to be changed, cries when it is hungry, cries when it is startled and so on. Gradually the little child learns to say single words, then puts two or three words together until it begins to speak in sentences.

One of my special pleasures enjoyed when my children first learned to speak, was to help them learn words of several syllables such as, “delicious” and other words one might not suspect in the vocabulary of a small child first learning to talk. With patience I could help them not only say the word but to use it properly in conversation.

It was so funny to hear big words coming from small children. They quickly learned that such words entertained adults and tried to learn more big words to make people laugh.

So some words are called age appropriate and some are not.

Our text for today is in the middle of a series of things Paul strings together to describe Christian behavior. The many

things mentioned in Romans 12:6-21 are wonderful objectives for all of us in the Christian life. However, some take time to acquire and to keep practicing in times of trouble.

This trinity of habits to learn in our verse can really strengthen us for the daily battle of life.

All Christians with even a few years of experience in learning the Christian faith are well aware of the great hope we have ahead of us in heaven.

However, when we think of leaving this world for heaven, it does not tend to make many Christians joyful. In fact, some believers get downright anxious about going to experience our great hope. They seek to avoid heaven like they would avoid an infectious disease.

Our Creator has given us some information on the eternal state, and it was given to us to excite joy and anticipation in our hearts. Talk about heaven in the Bible is in the context of desire and longing. Paul the apostle describes his great passion to leave this world and get to heaven and the presence of Jesus.

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go

on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.”
Philippians 1:21-24 (NIV)

This was Paul’s reason for joy, this incredibly beautiful expectation of seeing Jesus. Nothing on earth could give joy or delight like this event promised to all believers. May you find similar joy in the hope we all have as Christians. May you feel the excitement and joy that is proper to the expectation we all have of being forever with the Lord.

This will give you joy, stability and resolve to carry on with the present challenges, knowing that the future is as bright as the promises of God. Our short term weeping will soon give way to eternal rejoicing.

“...weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.” Psalm 30:5 (NIV)

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