

LOVING LIFE

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Are you having a bad day? Do you hate your life?

Carol Burnett is a Hollywood Icon who pioneered the art of sketch comedy. In a recent interview with FOX411, she was asked the following question: “You have endured many heartbreaks in your life. How have you stayed strong?” Carol Burnett replied, “ When I lost my daughter Carrie I really didn’t want to get out of bed. She and I had been writing a play and it wasn’t finished yet. It was going to be directed by Hal Prince, and my husband said you have to do it for Carrie. I always feel her presence with me. It’s been 14 years. You never get over it, but you learn to cope. The nurse stopped me in the hall and said I have to talk to you about your daughter. The nurse said, ‘She’s always so cheerful and smiling, and I asked her how can she be smiling?’ Carrie told the nurse, *‘I’m going to decide to love my life today.’* So I do that.”

Despite the hardships, sorrows, and disappointments of life, it is important to maintain Carrie’s attitude and decide to love life today just as her mother, Carol Burnett, decided to do. The inspired apostle Peter wrote, “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it” (1 Pet. 3:10-11). If we are going to see good days, we must decide to love life. Peter is citing a statement found in Psalm 34:12-16 from the Greek Septuagint. David had it tough, but he learned how to love life and see good days in difficult times. It is profitable for us to look back at the context of Psalm 34 because it describes what God means by good days. They are not necessarily days that are free from problems. How do I know that?

The psalmist wrote about fears. “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears” (Ps. 34:4). He wrote about troubles. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles” (Ps. 34:6). “The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles” (Ps. 34:17). He wrote about afflictions. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all” (Ps. 34:19). He even wrote of a broken heart. “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Ps. 34:18). A good day for the believer in Christ who loves life is not one in which he is pampered and sheltered, but one in which he experiences God’s help and blessing because of life’s problems and trials. It is a day in which he magnifies the Lord. “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together” (Ps. 34:1-3). It is a day in which he experiences answers to prayer. “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Ps. 34:4-7). A good day is a day in which he tastes the goodness of God. “O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Ps. 34:8). A good day is a day in which he senses the nearness of God. “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Ps. 34:18). The next time you think you are having a bad day, and you hate life, read Psalm 34 and you may discover you are really having a good day to the glory

of God.

To see good days in spite of present circumstances, we should love life. Tough times can cause a believer to give up on life. What may appear to be bad days to the world can be good days for a Christian, but he must deliberately decide to love life. This is an act of the will. It is an attitude of faith that looks for the best in each situation. It is the opposite of the pessimistic attitude which young Solomon had. "Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity. Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun" (Ecc. 2:17-20). While David lived in difficult times, his son Solomon lived in easy times. And while David had good days in difficult times, Solomon had bad days in good times. He had wealth, knowledge, fame and power and he hated life. He was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth and yet he hated life. Many people today are like Solomon. They hate life. They are filled gloom and despair. You can drive by these liquor establishments, and they are full of people at this time of year who are filled with disappointment and sorrow and are trying to find joy out of the mouth of a bottle. But friends, it does not come out of the mouth of a bottle. Why not know real joy? Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10). Jesus did not come that we might escape or endure life. He came that we might enjoy life. He came that we might see good days. This kind of life has little to do with possessions, status, or fame, but it has a lot to do with character, faith, and a desire to honor the Lord. We can decide to endure life and make it a burden, escape life as though we were running from a battle, or enjoy life because we know that God is in control. Peter was urging his readers to take a positive approach to life and by faith, to make the most of every situation. If you really love life, you will wish to have a life that is really worth living. David would say in Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." To cultivate a heart that loves life and that delights in the Lord is the first step toward a life that overflows with the blessing of the Lord. To see good days, we must decide to love life just like Carrie did.