

The Barnabas Letter

The Dog Days of Summer are upon us! Apart from the Fourth of July, there is nothing to break the monotony of these long, hot summer days. At this time of year many feel as though they know how hot hell must be; it is a miserably hot time of year. But my brethren, consider this, the Judean wilderness is a good bit hotter than it gets in these parts, the deserts of Egypt are very much hotter than here. Yet all of these places are home to monks to this very day, These monks reside in monasteries that are centuries old, most of these places have very few modern conveniences, electricity is in very short supply and sometimes, indoor plumbing is considered a worldly extravagance! What am I getting at here? I am not advocating retiring to a monastery or a convent, unless our Lord calls you there! The point that I am trying to make is that these monks are living in trying circumstances and yet they focus not on their surroundings but on the God who loves them. We too live in very trying circumstances and times; if we focus on the surroundings or times in which we live, we are lost. If however, we focus upon our loving Lord we can overcome any adversity. Our God truly holds us in His loving care and all we need to do is to trust Him to care for us in all our circumstances.

I realize that I have no idea of what kind of trials or troubles you may be experiencing. God does know exactly what your situation is and He is completely capable of using whatever condition you find yourself in to His glory and your good. Of course it is very hard to live out on the edge like this unless you have a way to keep yourself in touch with what or more importantly Who keeps you from falling into the abyss. How do we live in these trying and uncertain times? The world, it seems, is going to hell in the proverbial hand-basket. How do we live in times like these? We need some security.

We live by faith! We trust in the God Who is there, we trust in our Lord Jesus Christ! Remember, our Lord Jesus is no stranger to our human condition. He is after all, fully human and fully divine. Christ Jesus has been where we are at; the difference is that He did not sin. We, on the other hand, are very likely to sin, all we need is the right set of circumstances and away we go! How do we keep ourselves away from the sin that so easily entangles us? Look at the first sentence, we live by faith! Because of Whom we have believed we must keep ourselves out of places that will bring us into temptation. We all know our own failings, we need to avoid those things which cause us to sin, and we need to repent when we blow it because un-repentant sin will get in the way of our walk with the Lord. It seems that our best defense against our own fallen proclivities is a vibrant prayer life. The more time we spend in prayer the more we will learn of our Lord and the more we learn of Him the less we will sin against Him. We do everything we can to avoid hurting our loved ones, as we come ever closer to our Lord in prayer, we will love Him that much more and this in turn will help us to resist when the tempter knocks on our door. It is important to remember that our Lord is hurt by every sin that we commit. Our sins were the reason for our Lord's suffering upon the cross, therefore we, who love our Lord Jesus, should do everything that we can do to avoid grieving our Lord.

Another way to use these days of summer to good effect is to have a summer Bible reading program. We've all heard books advertised as good summer reading, well then, how much better reading can we get than the Word of God? We can set up a reading goal for each of the summer months, for example we can read the Pentateuch for the month of July, the four Gospels

for August, and the letters of St. Paul for September. Then we can set a new goal for the fall and winter months. The point of all of this is simply to encourage us all to seek our Lord in all that we do, putting Him first in our daily routines and setting aside time to read our Bibles to worship and pray each day. In this way our faith will grow stronger and, because the times are evil, we need all of the spiritual strength that we can get. To this end let us be diligent in our prayers and in our Bible reading. Let us remember to attend worship services every Sunday so that our brothers and sisters worshipping with us may strengthen u& Finally, let us always seek the Lord in everything we do in order that His name may be glorified and the Gospel fully preached. Until next month, may the blessings of God, the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit rest upon you all.

Your brother in Christ Jesus;
Pastor D.W. Hutson