

What to do when the odds are against you

Proverbs 3:5-6; 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

Let's Get Started

One of the spoof advertisements Garrison Keillor used to do on his "A Prairie Home Companion" radio show was "Worst Case Scenario." It's a telephone service where you can call a pessimist named Ralph, and he would tell you the worst that could happen to your proposed plans.

In one segment, a guy calls Ralph to ask what the worst-case scenario will be if he takes his wife to the movies that night. Ralph replies, "You want the worst-case scenario? Your wife will ask you to go out to the snack bar and get her something to drink. On the way back to your seat, you'll trip over someone's feet and spill your drinks on the people in the row in front of you. They'll sue you for all you're worth. You'll lose your house and car and job. Your wife will divorce you and take the kids with her. You'll start drinking and end up on skid row." The caller says, "Hey, thanks! I'd never thought about it that way. I guess I'll stay home tonight."

Odds are, if you are a Christian you have had choices to consider. Choices that could find you stepping out in faith and holding on to the promises of God—or taking the reins and doing what seemed right in your own eyes because trusting in the Lord appeared to be too tough.

Share a time and circumstance you had to work through when the odds were stacked against you. Maybe you chose the way of trust and have a great victory story to tell. Or, perhaps you chose a different path and learned a great lesson.

Let's Go Deeper

Obstacles to Trust

Read Proverbs 3:5-6 and fill in the blanks.

"Trust in the Lord with all your _____ and lean not on your own _____; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths _____."

- As a Christian, you are taught to trust God when the odds are stacked against you. The heart says, "Trust God. He will never let you down. He will always come through." But the head often contradicts the wisdom of the heart. Why? What are the obstacles that so often stand in the way of you giving complete control over to God?

Jumpin' Jehoshaphat

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-30.

- What was the situation? How were the odds stacked against King Jehoshaphat?
- In verse 15, what was the courageous wisdom that Jahaziel spoke to the people of Judah?
- In verse 18, what did Jehoshaphat do immediately after he heard the words of Jahaziel?
- In verse 20, we see what a difference a day can make! What type of leadership do you now see in Jehoshaphat? Timid Self-absorbed Uncertain Confident
- In verse 21, what surprise ministry team went before the entire army on the front line of the battle to come?
- In verse 24, what was the outcome for the enemies of Judah?
- In verse 29-30, what was the outcome for Judah?
- Jehoshaphat came home from this war a changed man. Change happens when we risk everything to trust that God has our best interest at heart. In the wake of the dangers associated with the coronavirus, are you finding your trust in God stronger and more reliable—or challenged more than ever? Or maybe it's a little of both? Why?

Let's Live It Out Together

Every day, the coronavirus pandemic is forcing us to contend with uncertainties, fears, and challenges that most of us have only seen in the movies. But throughout the history of our nation, there have always been men and women of great faith and courage who chose to tell the storm how big their God was instead of telling God how big their storm was. Let's decide right here and now that we will be people of ruthless trust in the promises of our great God, no matter what.

Read the scriptures below. In your own words, share how each scripture shows us how we are to respond when the odds are against us.

1. **Psalm 37:5**

2. **Isaiah 40:8**

3. **1 John 4:4**

4. **Philippians 4:19**

Finally, pray for people you know who are being affected emotionally, physically, financially, and/or spiritually by the crisis at hand.

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
-Psalm 145:18