

Toughen up for tough times

Chris Lew June 2017

Our news is constantly filled with items telling us to brace ourselves for tough times – but this is how it has always been: good times come and go, and so do bad times. Whatever the news may be and whatever reasons we have for publishing it, there is good to be made from every situation.

Tough times provide us with great opportunities to become tougher and better people. It shows up our weaknesses, which is useful for people who want to improve, and who are willing to change. Such people will learn from past mistakes, reset course and forge ahead with renewed vigour. It is however not so good for people who do not want to change! Such people will continue to blame others for their hardships.

We expect our children to learn more at school every year; so year after year we feed them with more information and we set them tougher tests to prove that they are expanding their knowledge of all related subjects. We don't just make it easy for them to pass because then they'll learn nothing new. In the same way: Life challenges us with constantly tougher tests, and it is up to each of us to stop thinking that it is up to others to make life easier for us.

Whether we want to admit it or not our world is in a mess; and most of us have contributed in some way or another to its chaotic state. The question that each one must ask: Do I want to remain part of the problem, or do I want to be a part of the solution?

If we want to see a better world, then we must make a better world; if we want to see a better South Africa we must make a better South Africa, and so on. We need people to set the example and inspire others to change, we will not achieve anything positive through finger pointing, name calling and excuse making.

There may be many things slowing our progress and our country definitely needs transformation - as does the entire world! We must however start by transforming our minds so as to develop a more productive and a morally sound society.

There are surely enough capable people to deal with every human problem; and with every negative and destructive force in our world; but too many people are overly concerned about who gets the credit, rather than working for the benefit of humanity. Too many people are only interested in their own needs and that of their interest groups rather than looking for ways to serve humanity at large.

We can, and we must develop a social structure with more integrity and for this we must develop better leaders for the future - that is, if we want to leave a better world for our children, and for their children.

I want to ask for your help to take stock of the following habits in your environment (in your heart, your home, your workplace, the schools and churches you are involved in, etc.), and then look for ways – with the help of others - to help break down the negatives and build the positives. These are some of the bad habits to look for:

- too much blame-shifting and too little learning from our mistakes;
- too many excuses and not enough solutions;
- too many claims about our rights and too little accountability;
- too much pride and too little humility;
- too much prejudice and too little respect;

- too much fake news and fake promotion, and too little truth; etc.

We cannot change the past; but we must all learn from it in order to make a better future. Everyone can play a meaningful role; but we need higher standards to build more integrity. We should all start by judging ourselves instead of judging one another; perhaps a good a start will be to use the following questions as a form of self-evaluation:

- Is what I say in the light consistent with what I do in the dark?
- Am I willing to do something positive to build a better nation, or will I leave the tough stuff for others to do while I complain about what others are doing wrong?

Let's work and pray together for stability; and for peace and prosperity for all.

Let's be grateful for every opportunity that we get to make this a great nation and let's count this as a privilege and not a burden.

God Bless South Africa.

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