



Peter Paul Rubens
Prometheus Bound
1618

*the philadelphia
museum of art*

How shall we live?



God comes down



God brings up

A love affair

-DEVOTION-



TRIALS

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers,
whenever you face trials of many kinds,
³because you know that the testing of your
faith develops perseverance.
⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that
you may be mature and complete, not
lacking anything.



Helmut Thielicke

“They have an
inadequate view
of suffering”



Sanitized

**The Hygiene
Hypothesis**

Vulnerability
not an option

in it alone..





Life that happens to us...

JOY in PAIN

the opposite of what we're taught

Life under Grace



spiritual growth & maturity

“...that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”

reactions to trials



Fear – What will become of me?

Anger – How can they do that to me?

Self-pity – Won't somebody feel sorry for me?

Envy of others – Why aren't they suffering like I am?

Confusion – Why is this happening to me?



reactions to trials

A jealous focus on material wealth

A selfish neglect of others' needs

A judgmental spirit & hurtful speech

A bitter fighting with one another



Five Stages of Grief

Denial

"This can't be happening, not to me."

Anger

"Why me? It's not fair!"

"How can this happen to me?"

Bargaining

"I'll do anything if this were different."

"I will give my life savings if..."

Depression

"Why bother?"

"Nothing works, what's the point?"

Acceptance

"It's going to be okay."

"I can't fight it, I may as well prepare for it."



II corinthians 4:8-9

“⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.”



mature Christians...

a blessing & loving confrontation

convicting & challenging

soothing & spurring

confuse & attract

Happiness & Joy



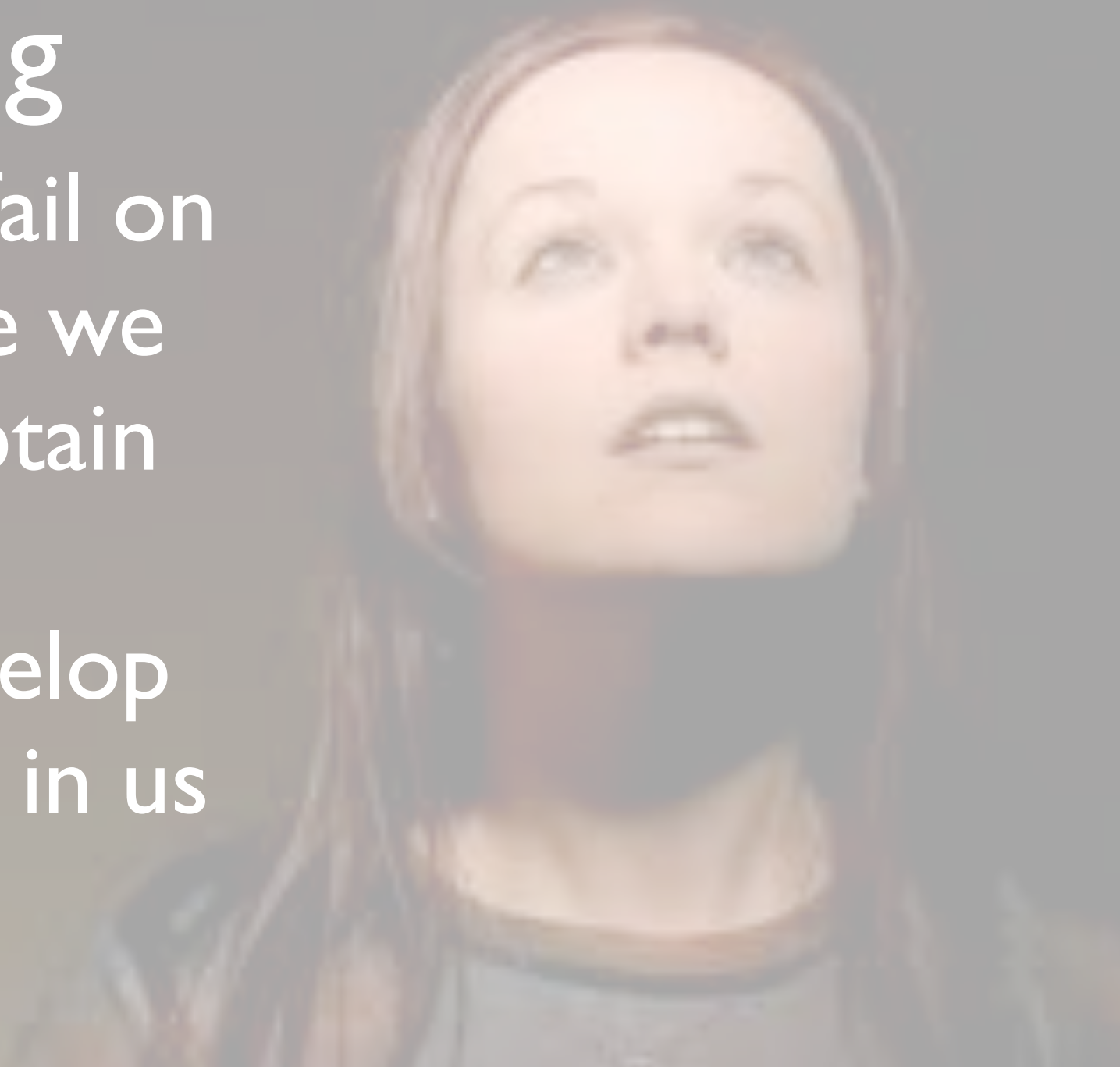
Happiness - positive circumstances

Joy - a choice

Testing

NOT pass/fail on
knowledge we
already obtain

but to develop
what is not in us





**Allowing
kids to fail**

**God loves us enough to allow us
to experience pain**

Psalm 55:12-14

‘If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the House of God.’



**soft-hearted
with the
skin of an elephant?**

or...

**soft-skinned
and hard-hearted?**



James 1:5-8

⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ⁶But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.



James 1:9-11

“⁹The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. ¹⁰But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position. ¹¹For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.”

Christ the great equalizer

Lee Atwater

“The 80’s were about acquiring - acquiring wealth, power, and prestige. I know. I acquired more wealth, power, and prestige than most. But you can acquire all you want and still feel empty inside. What power would I not trade for more time with my family? What price wouldn’t I pay for an evening with my friends? It took a deadly illness to put me eye to eye with this truth, but it is a truth that the country, caught up in its ruthless ambition and moral decay, can learn on my dime.”

A woman in a sari is shown in profile, looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a white metal railing.

James 1:12

“¹²Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”

obedience in waiting for answers

not everyone who grows old grows up

Fear – What will become of me?

Anger – How can they do that to me?

Self-pity – Won't somebody feel sorry for me?

Envy of others – Why aren't they suffering like I am?

Confusion – Why is this happening to me?

a soft-hearted
elephant

a gem worth giving
to your first love,
JESUS

