

Savoring God's Goodness During Colossal Challenges

"Perfect."

That's what I heard them say—73 degrees, no humidity, no clouds. The day was perfect.

They were putting together a birthday party on the tables next to me and I kept hearing the same comment.

"It's a perfect day, isn't it? Perfect! Nice amount of breeze, not too hot."

The people at the table were as diverse as any place in the country. A smattering of different ethnicities, income levels, age groups, even hair colors. All of them smiling and all of them, one after another, remarking on how beautiful the weather was.

It struck me that the very reason the conversation kept coming back to the weather was probably due to the fact that the humidity levels and temperature had been a little less than desirable the last few weeks. The reason they were so aware of the weather was simply because it had been so bad previously.

The awareness of something so beautiful only came because of the contrast to something not so beautiful.

I spent most of my formative years on the Gold Coast in Australia. The Gold Coast has a sub-tropical climate with around 300 days of sunshine a year. The average temperature ranges from the low 50s in winter to the high 90s during summer. Yeah, it was rough. The problem with being in such a great climate (if you could find a problem) is that you never really experience the seasons in a way that makes you truly appreciate how "perfect" the weather actually is.

Our awareness of good things in life is actually enhanced by the tough things we have to endure. Climbing to the top of a mountain is exhilarating because of the energy you have to exert getting there. If it was as easy as walking down the street, I am not sure it would be as exciting to do. That doesn't mean everything has to be hard to be worthwhile, but it does give a little more initiative to keep working through hard things to get to the reward of that hard work.

Proverbs 13:11 says, "Wealth gained by vanity will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase."

Steady diligence through good seasons and through bad seasons pays off. The days of "perfect" weather are far more satisfying when they come at the end of a time of harsher weather. The satisfaction of seeing the top of a mountain is far greater when you have to climb it. Are there days I wish I lived by the beach again? Certainly. But that is not the place that God has currently called me. So while I await the call to go back to the coast, I will celebrate what He is currently doing through whatever season I am in.

Maybe today is a perfect day for you. If it is, be thankful for the tougher days that made you more aware of its perfection. Maybe today is a hard day for you. If so, take courage in the fact that things will change and you will be all the more thankful for it when it does. We all have days of hardship and days of ease. My confidence comes from keeping this verse always before me, no matter what the circumstances are:

"Not only so, but we also boast in tribulation, knowing that tribulation produces patience, patience produces character, and character produces hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom. 5:3-5). {eo}

Ben Woodward is the pastor of Bridgeport Community Church in

Kansas City. He is also a worship leader, speaker, author and songwriter from Australia. As you will find out by reading his book, You Shall Know the Truth, he is passionate about helping people discover Jesus through worship and prayer. He lives in Kansas City with his wife, Kathryn, and three children, Eliana, Cohen and Paisley.