



Dan's Divinities
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7 Ups from God

Most of us have experienced a lot of sadness during the Covid-19 pandemic. We have been cooped up in our homes and isolated from family members. We hear the daily hospitalization and death numbers on television, and many of us have lost friends and loved ones to the disease. Additionally, most of us have deep concerns about our country and we are deeply sad about the state things are in. Democrats in our community feel like islands of blue in a sea of red and Republicans fear liberals will run America into the ground. We are disturbed by the issues surrounding race and law enforcement. Our youth are struggling with social isolation due to school closures and online learning. Others are dealing with issues of aging, grief, loss, unemployment, underemployment, and a host of other issues bearing down on people. Some days, it is hard to keep our heads up!

As the specter of the cross lay across the path of Jesus, even he had a hard time avoiding sadness. He said, "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say – "Father, save me from this hour? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name" (John 12:27-28). Jesus knew that he was about to undergo extreme tortures of his body and of his mind as he faced scourging, ridicule, crucifixion, and finally death. Nevertheless, he could face them bravely because he knew that through his passion, the Father would accomplish the salvation of the world. He persevered in faith, and it eventually resulted in resurrection for him and for all who came to faith in him.

If you are struggling with sadness, let me suggest a solution: drink 7 Up! On second thought, drinking soda pop won't lift your spirits very much, but let me suggest **7 Ups from God** to help you get out of the ruts of life. First, **WAKE UP!** When you wake up in the morning, decide you will have a good day! Say, "Today is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it" (cf., Psalm 118:24). You are not powerless against the forces of sadness. You have a choice. You can decide to be positive instead of negative, powerful instead of impotent, and happy instead of gloomy. You can decide to give praise to God for what he has given you instead of dwelling upon your worries.

Second, **LOOK UP!** Look up to the Lord and say with the Apostle Paul, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). God has put his Holy Spirit in you, and you have the power to overcome. Reclaim your spiritual base and believe by faith that God is bigger than your problems, your trauma, and your suffering. God is using the things you are struggling with for your good. Romans 8:28 says, “All things work together for good for those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose.” Renew your faith in God’s promises and his plan for your life. Hope is your gift, claim it! Hope in the One who holds the future. God is bigger than your suffering and he will bring redemption. I Corinthians 13:13 says, “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love.” Even though you may be in distress right now, know that you are loved by the One who gave his life for you. You are the apple of his eye. He has not forgotten you. Look up in faith, hope, and love, and you will have the strength to pull through.

Third, **DRESS UP!** Don’t lie around in your bed clothes all day, get up and get dressed. This applies not only to material clothing, but also to the clothing of your attitude and your spirit. Dress up your attitude with a smile. If you don’t feel like smiling, do it anyway. Your attitude just might catch up to your face! Choose to dress yourself with positive lifestyle choices. Make good choices about diet. Start getting outside in the sunshine. Get regular exercise. Get plenty of rest. Have a daily quiet time with God. Take steps to get your personal finances in order. Dress yourself with good lifestyle habits, and you will find yourself steadily climbing out of the pits and into the sunshine of victorious living.

Fourth, **LIFT UP!** Lift up your prayers to your Father who loves you and wants to bless you. St. Paul said, “Do not worry about anything. Instead, **PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING!**” (Philippians 4:6). Allow yourself to feel your own sadness and experience grief over your losses, but keep turning your feelings and worries over to the Lord and allow him to comfort you with the assurance of his care for you.

Fifth, **SHUT UP AND SHOUT OUT!** Okay, I know it is not polite for a preacher to tell people to shut up, but the fact is we guide our lives with the rudder of our language. If we want to be happy and content, we must learn to shut up about negative talk about ourselves and life in general and shout out about the positive things we can confess about ourselves and life. If you talk negative, you will be negative in your attitudes and that will sap you of happiness. Positive talk will energize you and help you believe the best will happen, not the worse. And if you

are talking negative about other people, knock it off! There is no reason for you to poison others with your language. Learn to build others up instead of tearing them down. When you talk positively about others you will be much, much happier with yourself!

Sixth, **STAND UP!** Take charge of your future by setting some attainable goals for yourself. You don't have to save the world – that's God's job – you just have to make a better future for yourself. If you need a new job, set a goal of getting the job of your dreams and then work for it. If you are not attending church, get your Covid-19 vaccination and get back in church. If you need a sense of purpose in your life, volunteer and get busy doing something good. Galatians 6:9-10 says, "Let us not be weary in doing good; for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good..."

Seventh, **REACH UP!** Reaching up means to reach for something higher than just yourself. Reach up and become the person God has called you to be. Reach out and connect with people and find ways to develop positive relationships with others. You can reach up to God by reaching out to others.

If you practice these 7 Ups from God, you might just find that life is not so flat for you after all. You might just become as bubbly as a soda pop!