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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Site logo image | Martha Rodman posted: " You should know this, Timothy that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 Timothy 3:1 NLT. I had a weird dream the other night...I dreamed I was discussing the difference between hard and difficult! It was like a philosophy debate, rig" [**Faith Encounters**](http://faithencounters.impart.org) |  [Faith and Hard and/or Difficult](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=http%3A%2F%2Ffaithencounters.impart.org%2F2023%2F11%2F16%2Ffaith-and-hard-and-or-difficult%2F&sr=0&signature=e171a79b09ac6b5357b64f0bccb59c7e&blog_id=127938330&user=d4772d34747c29138d6356de987fff13&_e=&_z=z)  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | https://0.gravatar.com/avatar/3f13af1d3e2a35ad581f9ba697fd060a4b7d8a719664a4a449058f8ff4e8c587?s=96&d=identicon&r=G | **Martha Rodman**  Nov 16 |   You should know this, Timothy that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 Timothy 3:1 NLT.  I had a weird dream the other night...I dreamed I was discussing the difference between hard and difficult! It was like a philosophy debate, right inside my dream between me and me! When I woke up, I actually googled it! Google's definition: something hard is tough, dense, solid, compact and impenetrable. It does not yield, its firm, like a wall, like a rock, like the concrete sidewalk you job on. Something difficult requires a lot more effort, is complex, arduous, irritating. But I think Quora gives the most complete explanation: ***Hard*** can be used to describe anything that is not easy. You can use it to describe an activity that requires a lot of effort or energy. Example: planting rice is hard. (It's not especially complicated, but it does require intense physical labor.) **Difficult** suggests that one needs to overcome obstacles or resolve problems in the process of doing something that managing these complications requires some level of skill. Example: I just completed a very difficult exam. (In this care, you would have exercised critical thinking, which can be considered a kind of skill, to complete the task.  Life throws us both hard and difficult situations. It was hard for me to focus on sitting down and writing this blog, even though I had thought it through many times. If I am confident I can do something, the difficulty level decreases, if I am worried or insecure, the difficulty level increases. Our perspective on the level of hardness or difficulty can affect our outcome, can't it? I want to encourage us to believe we are able to endure hard and difficult situations.  Paul's words to Timothy are to help prepare him (and us) for very difficult times. I think we are living in some very difficult times right now, don't you? Paul goes on to describe what believers will face during these difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. They will act religious, but they will reject the power that made them godly. Stay away from people like that. 2 Timothy 3:22-5. NLT. Its people and their attitudes that we will find hard and of course their attitudes affects their actions.  As I read these verses, I realize it would be easy to separate myself into a "me" vs. "them" situation. Without God's grace and mercy. I could become the people Paul warns against, I could easily be tempted to love only myself and money, to boast and be proud. My heart does not want to believe that I would ever scoff at God, but who knows? Paul warned Timothy to be careful. I was thinking about the "Karen" syndrome: people who become obnoxious, angry and feel entitled to use their privilege status to get their own way. They make life difficult for so many. This ought not be a believers stance. The very difficult times, Paul refers to is the action and attitudes of people. The Greek word is chalepos. Harsh, savage, difficult, dangerous, painful, fierce, grievous, hard to deal with. The word describes a society that is barren of virtue but abounding with vices. Spirit-filled Bible Word Wealth pg.1598. I believe Paul was warning Timothy to not be ensnared or influenced by these kinds of people. We aren't to make them our best friends, because we can be quickly influenced by their behavior.  We must stand strong in humility and love. We must allow the Holy Spirit to change us, not the world. Why would there be so many warnings in the Word about not letting our culture conform us to its ways, if it's not a possibility? It is, my friends. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12: 2 NKJV. So is it hard or difficult not to be conformed to the ways of the world. It's both. I don't think the word choice really matters. We just need to do whatever we need to do to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and His ways, knowing He will give us His strength when needed.  That dream was a bit crazy. My take away for myself and hopefully, for you, is we need to do whatever He asks of us. It may be both difficult and hard. Do the hard work of renewing your mind, it is always worth it. But the good news is we have Him to rely on. Him to strengthen us. Him to lead the way and help us overcome every obstacle that may try to stand in our way. Do not let the fear of hard work stop you from accomplishing any task set before you. Do not let the fear of failure stop you, either. Take the time to ask Him for wisdom, grace and favor on any task. He freely gives it! Remember, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6. NKJV. It is not by your might or power, but by Him. Be encouraged, my friends, we can do it!  Father, I thank You, that you are with us in both the hard things and the difficult things. You are not unaware of all the obstacles-physically, emotionally or spiritually that we need to overcome. I ask for Your strength today to accomplish Your will, in Jesus' Name. Amen. | |