

HARD TIMES

by JOHN COSPER

GENRE: Drama

SYNOPSIS: Five people discuss their struggles in life, and the hope they still have in God.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: The three “sets” of monologues allow for a lot of possibilities. The monologues could be done together from beginning to end as written, or without the final set of monologues as a gripping sermon introduction, or the final set could come at the conclusion of a sermon. (If your church uses multi-media, the monologues could also be very effective on video.)

TIME: Over 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 5

TOPIC: Faith, Hope

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Job 1:20-21

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Seeker Service

CHARACTERS:

MEREDITH—a wife struggling with infertility

BRIDGET—a young woman whose best friend died in a car wreck

ADAM—a young professional in debt

LISA—a young woman with cancer

ROY—an unemployed, middle-aged husband

PROPS: None

COSTUMES: Modern dress appropriate for the characters

SOUND: Five wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Unspecified

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All the actors are lined up on stage. They take turns addressing the audience, freezing in place after each monologue.

MEREDITH: Jim and I have prayed for one thing since our wedding day. From the beginning I had no illusions about being a career person. Not that that's a bad thing, but it was never meant for me. Jim and I both believed in having not only a family, but a large family. He even broke up with a girl when she insisted that she would have no more than three children. We were the perfect combination ... and yet after six years, nothing seems to work for us. Fifteen different prescriptions, seven different artificial insemination techniques, and countless thousands of dollars ... and all we have to show are three miscarriages and a never-ending stream of tears.

BRIDGET: Amy was on her way to the mall. We had spent the night before making a list of everything we would need in our dorm room. Three years of college, and we finally had it right. Best friends who COULD live together, ready to take on the world and our senior year. She was going to decorate the dorm, as only she could, and she had all these great ideas ... She was four blocks from Kmart when the truck hit her. The cops said there was no way she could have stopped ... and no way she suffered. She was gone in an instant.

ADAM: I didn't need to listen to my father, or any of the dozens that lined up to tell me how to live my life after grad school. The firm started me at a good salary, maybe not enough to support the lifestyle I chose, but advancement was inevitable. I had the best apartment, the best stereo, the perfect pad for luring that beautiful bride I so desired. I had no problem showering the bridal candidates with the finest gifts. Then the interest rates started piling on. It came down to paying the rent, or the credit card bills. I knew the end of the tunnel had to come soon in the form of a raise. Instead, there came budget cuts, bad credit reports, and an eviction notice when even rent became out of reach.

LISA: A young mom has enough to worry about. Nothing can prepare you for the challenges of raising an infant, especially when your husband is already a handful. Katy was three months old when the doctor decided something was wrong. I thought the fatigue was all a part of being a new mom. And Michael and I refused to worry ... even as the doctor ordered more and more tests. Finally, our optimism was denied, and one word brought our happy home crashing down: cancer.

ROY: I was the good guy. On sales trips, I was the one turning in early, calling home to tell the wife and kids I love them while everyone else went out to the clubs. I never wasted a bonus or any commission on myself. Trips to Disney, to the beach, and new school clothes took priority over anything I might selfishly desire. We weren't the wealthiest, we didn't have the biggest house, but we had a happy home. Until eighteen