

Christianity 101

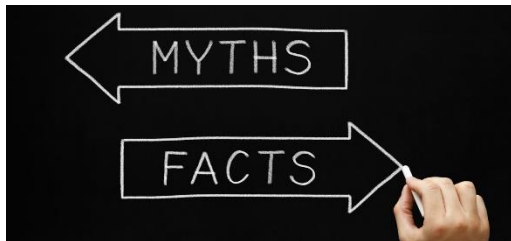
Dealing With Troubles in Your Life!

A Bible Study of The Mount Zion Church

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Introduction: The current study on Christianity is intended to help students to focus on fundamental truths found in God's word. Matthew 7: 24-27 presents a picture of two-house builders who construct their home in two different ways. The first constructs a home on rock which withstands the difficulties of life. The second constructs his home on sand which is not able to handle the challenges of everyday life. The result of the one who built his house on sand was devastating. Jesus told the parable to illustrate the result of our lives if we do not have The Word as our foundation. When we face change, ups and downs, confusion, and difficulties of life, we can either look for answers in God's Word or we can look elsewhere. The following lesson will help students understand the benefit of choosing God's Word and God's plan even when times are tough. Welcome to Christianity 101 Lesson 3: Dealing with Troubles in Life!



Reality Check for Christians!

Fact # 1:
YOU AND I WILL HAVE TROUBLES IN LIFE!

Contemporary Christian teaching often messages to believers that our lives will be easy once we accept Christ. This false narrative not only presents an un-Biblical perspective, it also does not make sense if we really think about it. To be a Christian means we are Christ-like. Unfortunately, many of us forget that to be Christ-like means more than simply acting like Christ or modelling our lives after his behaviors. To be like Christ also means we will experience similar responses from the world (people) to our belief system. The question we should ask is what was Jesus' Earthly life like? Then we should answer and realize that we will experience many of the same issues.

Consider the following passages of scripture. In John 6: 25-59, Jesus was teaching about who He was and His mission to save the world. Because the teaching was different than what many believed about The Messiah, many followers left and went back to their former lives.

Mark 10: 17-20 reads that a young man came to Jesus asking about inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven and leaves frustrated. Do I need to remind everyone that Jesus was crucified by the government, but turned over to the government by His own people? If we are truly followers of Christ, then we cannot expect that our lives will

be that of comfort every moment of every day. There will be times when we are in conflict. Jesus speaks to this when He told the disciples that they would have trouble but not to worry because He had already overcome the troubles of the world for them (John 16: 33).

1. Why do we need to be reminded that discipleship also has some difficulties?
2. What would you say to someone to reconcile their disappointment when they realize that they cannot expect eternal comfort as a follower of Jesus?
3. How does this realization impact you?

Fact # 2

TROUBLES ARE NOT NECESSARILY AN INDICATION OF SIN!

Why do we have troubles? This fundamental question perplexes many Christians. In fact, many Christians indicate their trouble should not occur because they are doing what God asks of them. Of course, as we mature in Christ, we should have outward signs that we are influenced less by sins that we struggled with in the past. However, none of us can hold God hostage to the idea that our newfound “good behavior” warrants an absence of struggle. Nor can we equate our problems as a direct correlation with sin.

At times we may identify our problems as a consequence of sin, but this is not always the case. For example, getting a flat tire is not necessarily a direct consequence of sin (unless of course you are sinning and driving over nails purposefully !!!!)

Notice in Matthew 5: 45 how those who are unrighteous are treated by God. Until final judgment occurs they receive _____ just like the righteous! Simply put, many challenges of life are simply a part of life. Remember, the stress and strain and struggle of the world is a result of the sin of Adam in Genesis 3. However, you losing your keys, or spilling your coffee on a new outfit should not necessarily be cause for you to think that God is punishing you. Perhaps, you simply need to organize more and put a lid on your coffee!



- By the way, National Coffee Day is Friday September 29th!!!!

This issue of good happening to bad people and vice versa was addressed when Job found himself facing difficulties. He asked about fairness for the righteous in Job 21: 7-17. What are some of the lessons we can understand from Job's comments in the 11 verses?

I can learn:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Fact #3

TROUBLES WILL TEST YOUR FAITH IN JESUS

The apostle Paul faced many difficulties. Imagine the numerous times he was in prison, abandoned, kicked out of town, dealing with difficult church people, etc. This all happened as he was fulfilling the task that God assigned to him. Have you ever wondered if Paul got frustrated or wanted to quit? We do not have scriptures of Paul giving up, but we do have a glimpse of his thinking about times in life when he was disappointed in the churches he planted. One example is the book of Philippians which has a famous quote of Paul's. Christians love Philippians 4:13 but we often pull it out of context. The full idea is across 4 verses (10-13). Paul declares that his faith is still strong despite the disappointments of inconsistent people. What secret did Paul learn? Contentment!

To be content is a state of satisfaction with what one has or does not have. Paul's contentment in the face of trouble was a learned state of being. The attitude of contentment was being content in Christ. No, he was not happy with suffering. He did not choose suffering. Nor did Paul look for suffering. Paul accepted what life threw at him and used it as fuel for ministry. He did not want to be in jail, but when there, he chose to use that location as an opportunity to tell people about Christ. Whether he was suffering or at ease, he learned to use whatever state he was in, through the power of Jesus, to do all things that needed to be done.

Remember, this was a learned behavior of trusting in Jesus.

1. What challenges has The Lord taken you through so that you can trust Him more?
2. How do those challenges increase the power of your testimony?
3. Are those challenges easy or hard?

Fact # 4

TROUBLES DO NOT HAVE THE FINAL WORD IN OUR LIVES

Finally, we must conclude that either God is in control or my difficulties are in control. Either conclusion is acceptable. If your troubles are in control then they will be the god controlling you. You will be directed by worry. Led by frustration. Controlled by the problems you face. You will always look for answers that take away the problem or soothe you while you are in the midst of the problem. Your faith will not be enough because you see the problems as bigger than God.

However, for those who understand that God is in control of everything, you already can see that:

³⁸neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8: 38-39).

Our basic and foundational faith statement is that God really is in control and knows what is going on in my life. While troubles come, and they do, I do not lose heart because all issues that come my way are God approved. Remember, even Job's trials had to meet the approval of God. For those who love Jesus, He is able to make all things (good and bad) work in unity for our good (Romans 8: 28).

If you are facing difficulties now and are a follower of Jesus, what seems like an ending is what Paul called light afflictions in 2 Corinthians 4: 8-18. He reminds us that what is faced now and feels so challenging will give way to eternal glory with the Lord. On this side of life, we simply must hold on to God's promise to never leave us knowing that "troubles don't last always!"

Conclusion: Now that you have learned today’s lesson, you can approach your troubles in a different way. Jesus reminded His disciples that trouble was coming. It is a part of life, but also a part of the Christian walk. No, everyday is not hard. We must admit that we experience good days! So, seek the joy of the day. Find a moment of contentment with The Lord. Thank God that even at the worst, you know He is present in your life carrying you through.

The Next Time Troubles Come, I Will ????

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