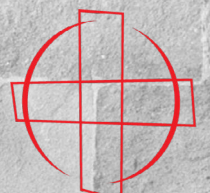


OVERCOME

JULY 2021

ADULT
CONNECT CLASS
CURRICULUM



DONALD J. WILLS
SENIOR PASTOR

The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

A Note From Our Pastor

Dear FBC family and friends,

Life is a journey! The journey is filled with choices and challenges that present opportunities for us to see God at work in our lives. Too often, when going through adversity, we lose sight of the fact that God is performing His perfect work in us while enduring the challenge. Rather than overcoming, we feel overwhelmed. The key to overcoming is choosing to trust God, follow Christ, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us on the journey.

As a reminder, the layout of this Curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to get the most from each study. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own methods for preparing the lessons and we encourage them to prepare in the way that makes them most effective in presenting God's Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for their own personal study and encouragement.

The lessons this month cover topics that most everyone at one time or another has struggled with; sometime we also struggle with a biblical approach to these issues that invade our lives on the journey. How we apply Scripture and approach these matters has a lasting impact on our future as we encounter more challenges in life. Choose wisely and trust what God is up to in developing you as His child. Remember Philippians 1:6: "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."

-Blessings

Pastor Don



Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively

Introduce

Day 1: Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Instruct

Day 2: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

Day 3: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

Inspire

Day 4: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Incorporate

Day 5: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

Day 6: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

Day 7: Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

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July 4, 2021

Overcoming Hardship

[1 Peter 4:12-19](#)

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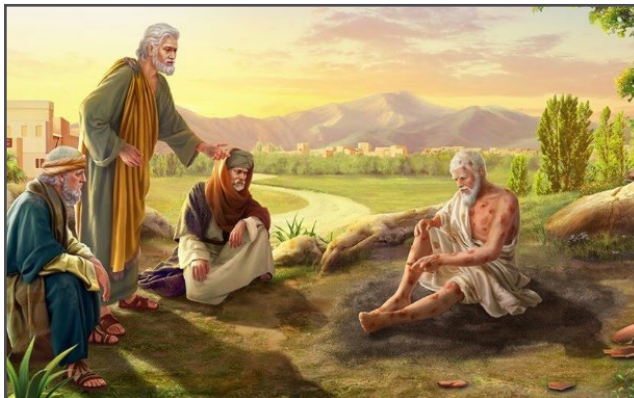


July 11, 2021

Overcoming Hurt

[Hebrews 12:12-17](#)

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July 18, 2021

Overcoming Heartache

[Job 19:1-29](#)

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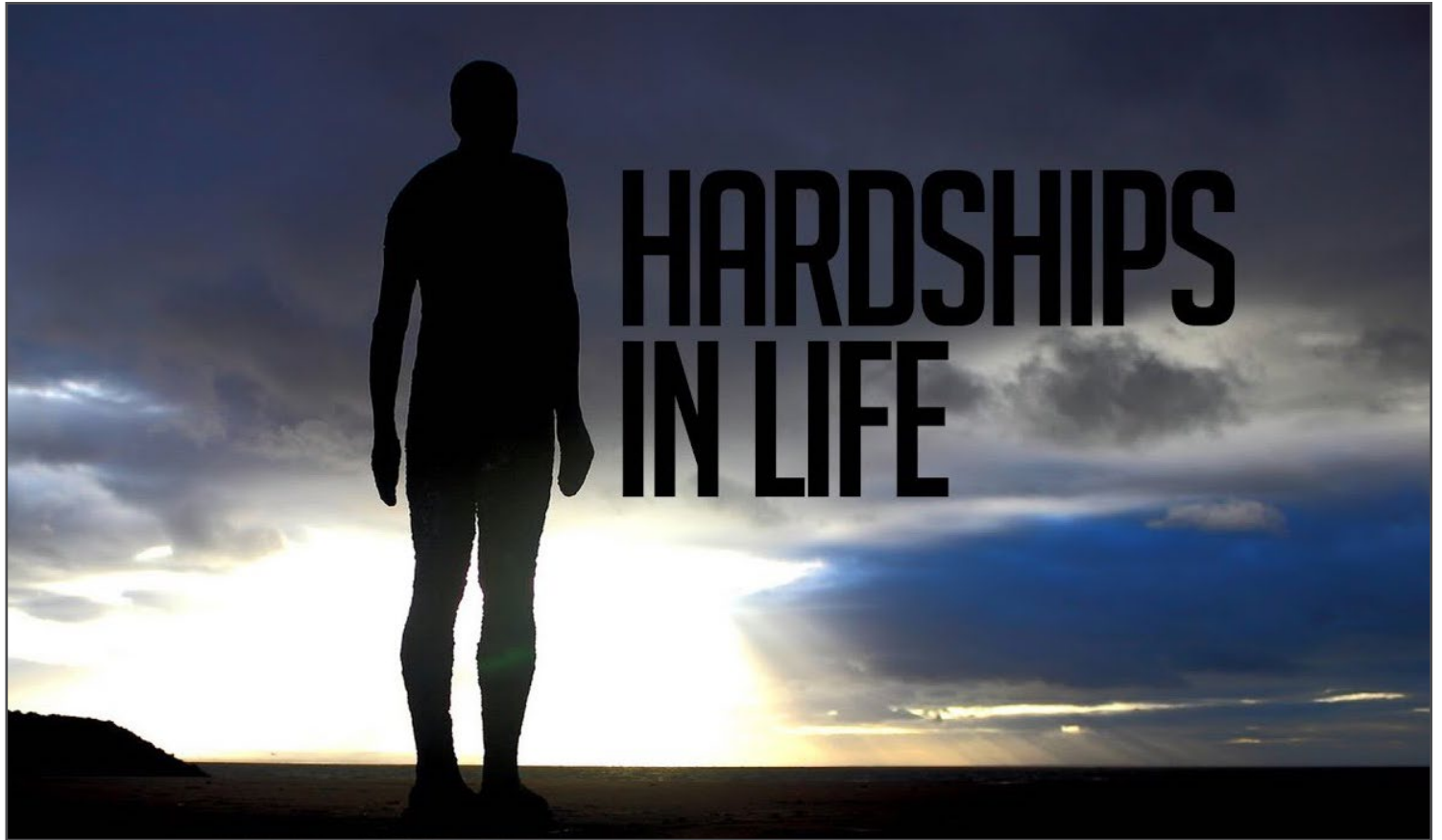


July 25, 2021

Overcoming Hatred

[Genesis 37:1-36; 50:20](#)

July 4, 2021



Overcoming Hardship

1 Peter 4:12-19

Focal Verse:

"But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy."

1 Peter 4:13

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Introduce

In 1870, a team led by Surveyor-General Henry Washburn set out on an expedition to explore and document an unusual region in northwest Wyoming which would eventually become Yellowstone National Park on March 1, 1872. One member of that team, Truman C. Everts, would have a particularly harrowing experience in navigating this untamed area when he became separated from the others in his party. In an area southwest of Yellowstone Lake on a peninsula of the smaller Heart Lake, the team experienced heavy brush in the dense pine forest—much of which consisted of trees that had been toppled by gale-force winds. This slowed their pace to a crawl while each man worked on a specific segment to clear a path so that the group could proceed. At that time, Everts wandered from the rest and found himself lost in the vast wilderness.

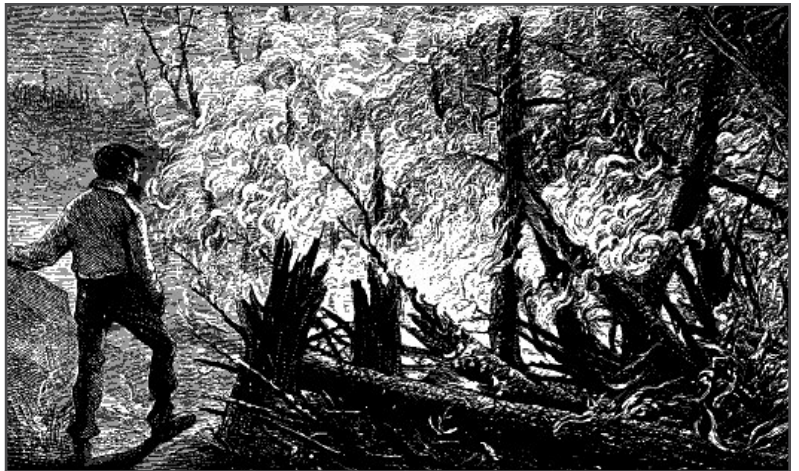


Illustration from *Scribner's Monthly*

According to his own words in an 1871 article in *Scribner's Monthly*, he didn't panic or feel anxious; he believed he would soon be reunited with his friends.* ([see In Reference on page 15](#))

For the next thirty-seven days, however, he would endure hardships and experience misfortune after misfortune which nearly cost him his life. Some of the perils he faced were unavoidable obstacles presented by nature whereas he brought others upon himself by his careless decisions and carelessness. Upon recognizing he had become separated from the group, for example, Everts broke the cardinal rule for one who finds himself lost: he wandered off in a direction in which he had mistakenly thought the party was rather than remaining still and allowing a search party to locate him. As a result, he continued to further separate himself from his comrades as he journeyed deeper into the forest. To scout a path through the overgrown brush, Everts then left his horse carrying all his supplies unhitched to explore ahead. Suddenly, something spooked the horse which bolted with lightning speed, leaving him with only the supplies on his person: a couple of knives and an opera glass.

Over the next couple of days, he focused on surviving and warding off attacks by the predators prowling the wilds of Yellowstone. At one point, he was cornered by an aggressive mountain lion which sent him scurrying up a small lodge pole pine. Having

Introduce

survived this encounter, he now found himself at the mercy of the brutal weather which even in early Fall can be cold and snowy. To stave off hypothermia and care for his already frost-bitten extremities, he slept by a hot spring in one of the region's many geothermal areas. But as he slept, the earth beneath him gave way, plunging him into scalding water giving him severe burns.

Persisting only on a diet of roots, he became weaker and even more susceptible to the elements. So, he realized that he somehow needed to start a fire to provide more warmth. Quite ingeniously, he used his opera glass to ignite tinder. Giving little thought about the wind, he constructed his shelter near the fire only to awake to it ablaze. This careless act caused a roaring forest fire which left him severely burned to the point of singeing all the hair off his body while he desperately tried to flee. A few days before being rescued, he tried to descend a cliff near Tower Fall, but he had become so weak that he fell into a pile of sagebrush. Lying there he thought, "The only chance for life was lost. The last hope had fled."

Somehow, he managed to regain some strength and began crawling. Two days later, two men searching for him thought they spotted a wounded bear. But it was an emaciated Everts who had wasted away to fifty pounds. In such bad shape even after being rescued, Everts recalls, "Suffering the most excruciating agony and thinking that I had only been saved to die among my friends." Ultimately, he survived and fully recovered. For this, we owe our knowledge of his overcoming of unspeakable hardships. The Apostle Peter reminds us that we too will encounter hardships in life. Some are the result of external factors, such as persecution, over which we have no control. Overcoming these trials with integrity and righteousness through Christ will reveal His glory. At other times, however, hardships come because of the choices we make—just as we saw in the life of Thomas C. Everts. Peter, therefore, warns us not to make poor decisions which lead to sin and induces suffering. On the contrary, we must seek strength from Christ who will propel us to live in holiness and respond with righteousness. Let us overcome hardships by looking to Christ for strength and direction to make the right choices in life which glorify Him.

Key
Question

What hardships have you faced in life? What have you learned from them?

1 Peter 4:12-13

REJOICE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING:

Throughout this letter, Peter has sought to encourage and strengthen fellow believers who are facing various trials and experiencing much suffering in their culture, particularly exacerbated by their faith in Christ Jesus. In 1:6, he has already reminded these believers to continue to “greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials.” We can “rejoice” in the midst of such trials because we know they are only temporary and we have a greater reward or inheritance that awaits us in Christ. We can find comfort in such an inheritance because it is both “incorruptible” and eternal through our relationship with Christ (1:4). Our temporary trials will be long forgotten and completely overshadowed by the inheritance we will receive in Christ!

Consequently, Peter tells his readers to expect trials because they are a normal part of life. Therefore, we should **not** consider **it strange** when we encounter **a fiery trial** as though something odd and out of the ordinary is happening to us. Everyone will

repeatedly face trials throughout their lives. As believers, however, we should not fear or despise any **trial** that happens to us when we live righteously in Christ and suffer reproach for His name. These kinds of trials will prove our faith genuine and sincere when we endure and persevere. In 1:7, Peter has already alerted us to the purpose of trials by reminding us “that the

genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” In this way, **a fiery trial** should serve to draw us closer to Christ and confirm our relationship with Him. Therefore, it reminds us of our dependence upon Him for everything in life, particularly in the ability to overcome hardship.

We sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.

1 Thessalonians 3:2-3

How have your hardships and trials drawn you closer to Christ?

Question
1

Unfortunately, some preachers and teachers wrongly assert that believers in good standing with the Lord will never experience problems; instead, they will receive manifold blessing in accordance with their own desires if they have enough faith. The Bible never teaches that believers will have a trouble-free life and can influence God to act in a certain way just because they have enough faith. Scripture teaches the opposite in fact! Several years ago during Vacation Bible School, we had children in attendance visiting from another local church that peddles this false doctrine to its members. These children could not reconcile why their families experienced hardships and problems in contrast to the doctrine this church taught. Such false teaching has the potential to do one of three things. It can mislead believers who have a relationship with Christ from understanding and exercising faith in the proper way, thereby stunting their maturation. It can also cause them to doubt their faith, causing undue emotional turmoil and hardship because of the conflict in their teaching from the reality of life. Finally, it can hinder people from the proper understanding of salvation and misdirect their focus away from Christ, leading to resentment and bitterness.

Peter, however, desires that people know the truth. We will still experience trials and suffering when we live righteously for Christ. In fact, we will often encounter more



trials when we live righteously for Christ because the world opposes Him. Therefore, we must expect them! As an apostle and an eyewitness to Jesus' teaching, Peter heard Christ Himself teach such a doctrine. At one point, Jesus even says, "Remember the word that I said to you. 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also

persecute you. If they kept my word, they will keep yours also" (John 15:20). To say that believers will not suffer or experience problems in life contradicts Scripture as a whole, including the very words of Jesus Himself! It is incumbent upon us to know Scripture and teach the Word faithfully even when it may seem to be a difficult concept to understand, such as suffering and hardship.

Peter also explains that hardship and persecution unite us with Christ and help us to identify with Him. He bids us to **rejoice to the extent we partake of Christ's suffering** (v. 13). Subtly, this reminds us that we are not alone in our struggles. Christ, the perfect and sinless Lamb of God, suffered for His righteousness at the hands of a perverse world. In a sense then, there is nothing unique or distinctive about our suffering that Christ Himself has not faced. Therefore, we can identify with other believers in Christ because we will all encounter problems in life; collectively, as a church, we can find those who have the same kind of struggles we have. In Christ and through the church, we can find others who can walk with us through these struggles and keep us grounded in our faith. This is why God has placed us in a church family. But we often get into the rut of thinking that no one has had the problems we have or has faced the troubles we do. We perceive ourselves as alone, having no one to identify or empathize with us. Nothing can be further from the truth presented in Scripture!

How has being in fellowship with the church helped you to overcome hardship in life?

Question
2

Those who endure a **trial** with integrity and righteousness will reveal **the glory** of Christ which gives them cause for rejoicing; it will make them **glad with exceeding joy** (v. 13). This **glory** is not so much a badge of honor for the believer for having endured, but a testament of provision in Christ who has given them the strength to persevere. When coming through a trial, we must point others to Christ rather than draw attention to ourselves. Today, however, many people call attention to their suffering for the purpose of self-glorification. They want others to notice them. They portray themselves as victims so that others will take pity upon them. They may even embellish their suffering, attempting to show how much more unique their situation is than anyone else. Such a self-serving attitude attempts to find satisfaction and restitution in the world.

As believers, we should never tell others about our suffering to elicit pity, urging them to respond in a compassionate way that placates our emotional and physical needs. Pity from the world only offers a temporary respite from trouble by providing the illusion of overcoming because the only solutions it offers are temporary and completely ineffective. Instead of complaining to the world to draw attention to ourselves, we should communicate our trials to the Lord—not because He doesn't already know them, but because He loves us, wants to guide us to a permanent



solution, and desires to keep us from becoming distracted by the evil one. Jesus develops this very idea in the model prayer He teaches His disciples. He instructs them to pray, “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matt 6:13). The word translated temptation is the same word used here in 1 Peter 4:12 translated as **trial**.

Primarily, we use this phrase in the model prayer to show how God promises to deliver us from temptation when we submit to Him based on the traditional translations. And He will certainly do this when we earnestly seek Him ([1 Cor 10:13](#)). But we miss an even greater point that Jesus wishes to make when we don’t translate this word as **trial**. Just as God promises to help us overcome temptation, He will also help us to overcome any **trial** we may face. To put it in a more modern way, Jesus instructs His disciples to pray in this manner: “Do not allow (i.e., deliver us from) the evil one to use trials to distract us (i.e., lead us away) from You.” When we become introspective and inwardly focused on our problems, we become easily distracted from the Lord and can follow the advice of the world that proposes we do what makes us feel good. The distraction from the world can further make us think that God does not love us or even cause us to blame Him for our problems when He truly wants to rescue us and see us through them. We must keep our eyes focused on Christ and communicate with Him so that we maintain the right perspective in the midst of trouble.

How has prayer kept you from being distracted by trials in your life and grounded in Christ?

Question
3

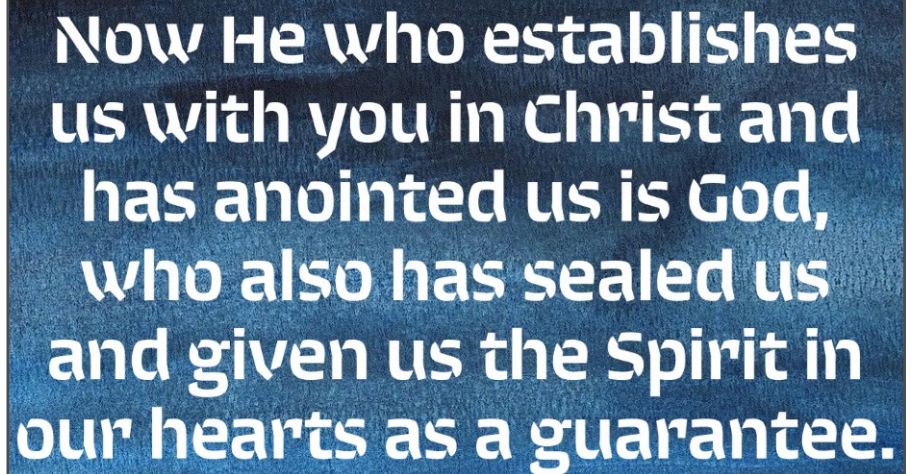
Whereas the world shares their troubles so that others will take notice, believers should share their plight as a testimony to Christ. Therefore, we should always use our trials to point others to Christ and show His gracious love and provision. We must exercise care, however, in telling our testimony so that the provision and strength He gives becomes the central tenet. Peter will now turn to address this very subject in the next section as

he exhorts us to regard reproach in Christ as a blessing.

1 Peter 4:14-16

REGARD REPROACH AS A BLESSING:

Peter explains that we are blessed **if we are reproached for the name of Christ** because it shows that God's **Spirit rests upon us** (v. 13). To suffer insult and incur persecution because of our faith in Christ indicates that we belong to Him and not the world. The world loves its own, but opposes the things of God. We do not belong to the world, but Christ. Romans 8:14 declares, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." Thus, the indwelling of the Spirit marks us as God's children. This should



Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

give us reassurance and enable us to persevere in any **trial** because we have a loving Father who goes before us in battle. The Holy Spirit is God's guarantee of victory to us! For this reason, [Ephesians 1:14](#) notes that the Spirit "is the guarantee of our inheritance." He is the presence of God living within us who reminds us that He is there to help us overcome any obstacle when we surrender fully to Him.

Although Peter uses the conditional **if** in verse 13, we could just as easily translate it "when" we **are reproached** based upon his previous comments that we should expect trials. At some point, we will face opposition to our faith in Christ; it's only a matter of time. The world blasphemes **the name of Christ**; they want nothing to do with Him because He exposes their wickedness and requires them to turn from their sin to have a relationship with Him ([John 3:17-21](#)). In contrast, believers **glorify** Christ when they act with integrity and withstand the onslaught of persecution from the world. Consequently, our perseverance in the midst of hardship serves as a testimony to the world about the power of Christ to transform and sustain, especially during hardships and opposition.

As Jesus sends His disciples to proclaim the gospel, He explains, "You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles"

Instruct

(Matt 10:18). In other words, how the disciples, and we who also follow Christ, respond to trials should **glorify** the Lord. The world should see Christ working in us to overcome these difficulties. The way we respond, therefore, should reflect the pattern of Christ who endured suffering righteously ([Heb 12:2](#)) rather than the pattern of the world which seeks to meet physical and emotional needs immediately.

How does the world seek attention by elevating their problems and playing the victim? How do you portray yourself to the world when problems arise in your life?

Question
4

None of us wants conflict in life and most, if not all, will do everything in our power to avoid it. Although we should not create unnecessary conflict or seek it, for it surely will find us on its own, we should never shy away from it when it comes to the truth espoused in Scripture. We must stand on the principles of Scripture without *compromise*. We must practice its precepts *consistently* by applying them actively in our lives. And we must allow Christ to work in and through us to *convict* others of their sin because they see the evidence of *change* He has produced in us whereby it distinguishes us from the world and doesn't portray us as hypocrites who don't practice what we preach!

Because the world looks at the outward, visible evidence of our testimony, Peter cautions us not to bring reproach by acting sinfully and unbecoming of Christ! We can take joy in being **reproached for the name of Christ** because it brings honor and

Looking unto Jesus

the author and finisher of our faith

who for the joy that was set before Him
endured the cross, despising the shame
and has sat down at the right hand
of the throne of God

HEBREWS 12.2 NKJV



glory to Him. But we can't achieve this when we act shamefully and sinfully. Hence, Peter warns **let none of us suffer as a murderer, thief, or busybody** (v. 15). If we say that we have a relationship with Christ and follow His teaching, what will the world think if we hate others and respond with vengeance? If we call ourselves a Christian and gossip, lie, and

slander others, what will the world think? When it comes to distinguishing between sin

and righteousness, it doesn't matter what the world thinks or believes; it only matters what God has said in Scripture. On the other hand, when it comes to the practice of righteousness or participating in sin as believers, what the world thinks does matter because it reflects upon our Savior! We should always bring honor to the Lord and never bring reproach or shame to His name by the way that we live.

How does your life reflect Christ?

Question
5

Peter follows this declaration with a reminder that when we do **suffer as a Christian** we should **not be ashamed**, but allow it to **glorify God** (v. 16). When people sin, for the most part, they don't want others to find out primarily because they fear getting caught and reprisal for their actions. But at other times, they feel ashamed of what they have done and hide. Today, however, many things the Bible clearly defines as sin are actually celebrated; people engage in them with no shame because culture has normalized them and made them acceptable. This may placate people's consciences, but does nothing to resolve the predicament in which they find themselves. God, not the culture, determines what constitutes sin and has clearly communicated this in His Word. As believers, we should live with integrity according to God's standards for all to see. We should not cower in fear; we need not apologize or be **ashamed** of living for Christ. We must exalt Him with our testimony, confirmed in how we live.

1 Peter 4:17-19

REMEMBER JUDGMENT COMES TO US:

Peter concludes this section with a stern warning about the **judgment** to come—first to believers and then the world. He asserts **the time has come for judgement to begin at the house of God** (v. 17). As believers, we will be judged based upon our obedience and faithfulness to God's Word. In fact, Peter has already said that God "without partiality judges according to each one's works, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here [on earth] in fear" ([1 Peter 1:17](#)). Even though God in Christ Jesus has forgiven all our sins, we are still held accountable for how we conduct ourselves according to the standard found in Scripture. Often, we tend to think about the **judgment** that awaits those who reject Christ while focusing on the reward of eternal life for those of us who have a relationship with Him. In so doing, we harbor the attitude that **judgment** comes to the other person—not me! This is a dangerous perception because it can cause us not to think much about the

consequences of our actions because we have security in Christ.

But judgment will come to us first, whereby we must give an account of the choices we have made. Certainly, we should celebrate the life we have in Christ, but we must also remember that **judgment will come to us!** This should cause us to stop and think about the consequences of our choices before acting upon them. No perfect illustration can encapsulate Peter's warning of **judgment**, but consider a child who defies his parents after having been given explicit instructions. In the end, he gets



**But when we are judged,
we are chastened by the Lord,
that we may not be
condemned with the world.
1 Corinthians 11:32**

caught in disobedience. As the child stands before his parents who know what he has done, he bursts into tears because his actions have been discovered. His parents don't disown him; they continue to love him and take steps to help him understand the consequences of the choices he made. The child feels a sense of remorse because he has dishonored and

disappointed his parents. This is not a perfect illustration because many children continue in defiance—even when caught. But it should help us understand how we should view the **judgment** that we as believers will face because it will become plain how we dishonored Christ through our disobedience.

How does knowing that we will stand before Christ as His followers in judgment to give an account of our lives affect the way you live?

Question
6

Peter's warning to us as believers about impending judgment should also serve as an even greater warning to those who have rejected Christ. He, therefore, asks **what will** happen to **those who do not obey the gospel of God** (v. 17). By employing the word **gospel**, Peter calls attention to the work of Christ in salvation; hence, he asks, "What happens to those who refuse to repent and have no relationship with Christ?" The quotation from [Proverbs 11:31](#) bears this out. The reference to **the righteous one** being **scarcely saved** points to the unique nature of the **gospel** (v. 18). The righteous

cannot be saved by their good works; it's not about their good works outweighing their bad ones. Rather, salvation only comes to them (i.e., **scarcely**) through Christ! It's not the work they have done, but the work that He has done on their behalf through which they must respond in repentance and accept the sacrificial gift He gave on the cross. Consequently, Peter returns to his initial admonition to believers. Because we have received the gospel of Christ and the salvation defined in its message, we have a new set of expectations. We are to submit **to the will of God**, committing **our souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator** (v. 19). The main idea Peter wishes to espouse is trusting in the Lord at all times—whether in times of triumph or trouble. The word **commit** in the Greek means trust or entrust. When we trust the Lord, it will lead to stability in our lives rather than inconsistency and chaos. Although we may face a multitude of trouble, this kind of trust still produces **good** works which honor Christ. Because He is always **faithful** to us, it frees us to trust in His Word and do **good** in accordance with His **will** no matter what the world hurls at us. No matter what hardships we may encounter or how the world may seek to persecute us for Christ, we must trust the Lord to help us to endure and overcome. Let us never compromise, but continue to walk in the way in which He has commanded us, doing **good** so that the world may see the transformation that He has produced within us!

Inspire

In the introduction, we met the hapless explorer Truman Everts who became lost in the Yellowstone wilderness. Some of the events that happened were indeed beyond his control and part of the natural realm while most other events were problems created by the choices he made. After getting separated from his party, he made the situation worse by not following pertinent principles of survival in the wilderness and putting too much confidence in his own ability as a survivalist—when he lacked much skill and wherewithal. When problems arise in our lives as believers, we must rightly evaluate their source. Are they self-inflicted because of the choices we have made or are they simply part of the natural order and the opposition that comes against Christ. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, do we trust the Lord to help us overcome and make the right choices or do we foolishly place confidence in our own ability to withstand on our own through our own wisdom? Let us not be foolish like Truman C. Everts and overconfident in ourselves. But let us trust Christ who can help us overcome any external hardship that the world hurls at us, remaining faithful and focused upon Him.

In Reference (from page 4)



Truman C. Everts, "[*Thirty-seven Days of Peril*](#)," *Scribner's Monthly* vol. 8, no. 1 (1871).

Incorporate

How have trials inspired you to do good when you have trusted Christ? How have they, at points, tempted you to compromise when you have taken your eyes off Christ?

What helps you to look beyond your circumstances and keeps you grounded in Christ? How do you find joy in the midst of your trials? How do you share this joy with the world?

In standing before Christ in the day of judgment, what kind of account will you give for your life? What are you doing well and where have you failed or need improvement?

July 11, 2021



Overcoming Hurt

Hebrews 12:12-17

Focal Verse:

“And make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.”

Hebrews 12:13

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Introduce

At some point in life, we all have experienced some type of hurt and, most likely, we have endured hurt on many different occasions. We should never trivialize any form in which hurt may manifest itself. In any form, hurt has the potential to affect tremendous harm if we don't deal with it in the right way by turning to Christ first for strength and wisdom. Certain types of situations which cause hurt may be uncomfortable for us to discuss in a general group setting and we must resist the urge to offer advice in such a setting in which the details of a particular instance are not fully known.

Although we should not discuss

the details of individual cases in general in a group setting which caters to gossip or "therapy" by consensus, we cannot fail to acknowledge that such hurt exists by trying to sweep it under the rug in order to mitigate and ignore it. At other times, sharing our personal testimonies with others in the right way through the right environment can encourage those struggling in a similar area by showing how Christ helped us to overcome through Scripture and prayer as well as godly counsel based on His Word from other mature believers.

Often, the people whom we trust and depend upon the most can sometimes hurt us the most. Sometimes we suffer physical, emotional, or verbal abuse at the hands of these individuals. Physical abuse can encompass both sexual abuse and physical beating. To be clear, we should never subject ourselves to any kind of physical abuse. We must seek help immediately through the proper channels. Don't remain silent. If such has occurred, we can still forgive and overcome the hurt in Christ. Abuse can also occur emotionally and verbally from those we love. As children, we learned the phrase "sticks and stones my break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Words, however, do have a major impact. We should never be careless in our speech whether posting online in haste, speaking off the cuff, or bursting out in anger; we must always think about the words we say and the impact they have. At the same time, we must forgive those who have spoken carelessly.



Introduce

We can also experience hurt in our relationships when those we love and trust deceive us. This deception may come in the form of outright lies or even in infidelity in marriage. Children may hurt their parents by doing the wrong things after they have invested time and effort in teaching them the right path in the Lord. Finances, whether in marriage, the dispersal of a will, or a business partnership, can also cause conflict and hurt. We can encounter hurt when we are passed over for a promotion, the recipient of gossip in the office or community, or excluded from something in which we believe we have a right to participate. For example, this can manifest itself when a close friend invites others to an activity but doesn't invite us.

As these examples indicate, our life experiences may vary vastly, but the hurt we endure can elicit a wide range of emotions. We may feel vulnerable, defeated, and helpless along with frustrated, depressed, and bitter. These feelings, however, can quickly grow into anger, animosity, and ultimately revenge. Yet, Christ calls us to forgive others. He wants us to respond with holiness, remembering the grace He has bestowed upon us. Thus, in Hebrews 12:14, the text urges us to "pursue peace with all people and holiness." We don't have to live with hurt without any recourse. We have Christ. When we look to Christ and pursue a relationship with Him, He will help us to overcome any kind of hurt that we have ever or will ever experience in life!

Key
Question

How has Christ helped you to cope with hurt in your life?

Hebrews 12:12-13

STRENGTHENED THROUGH RESILIENCE:

Verse 12 pictures an exhausted athlete after finishing a grueling contest where he slumps with his **hands** hanging **down** and walks feebly with tired **knees**. As believers, we have sustained such fatigue from doing battle with a hostile world that assaults us on every side. This image points back to [verse 3](#) which encourages us not to “become weary” or “discouraged” because we have a superior example in Christ “who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself.” Like Christ, we should never surrender to this hostility by giving in to the pattern of this world, for ceasing to do what is right will bring the correction of the Lord upon us ([Heb 12:5-11](#)).

Just as an athlete fatigues mentally, emotionally, and physically from having given his all in a contest, the world beats us down daily in the marathon of life. Secularly, people can refer to life as the daily grind or the rat race, particularly their pursuit of gain through work. Such descriptions envision repetitive behavior through which one wanders aimlessly without ever achieving satisfaction. This aptly describes life

without Christ because there is truly no purpose otherwise ([Eccl 1:2-3](#)). By the end of the day, we may literally bear the posture of this athlete with tired **knees** and drooping **hands** as we come home to more tasks and potentially more problems, wanting just to throw ourselves onto a seat or into our bed. Or, most likely, we feel mentally and emotionally stressed, drained of energy and lethargic. We are constantly bombarded; we have no respite. We’ve grown weary of all the events that life has heaped upon us. Often, however, it isn’t just a single day of activity that makes us tired, but the culmination of events weighing upon us day after day.

Typically, a day doesn’t pass by that we don’t experience stress, disappointment, frustration, failure, or hurt caused by others. We may have had a tough day at work



or have experienced the failure of some type of technology upon which we depend. We may have gotten into an argument which ended with hurtful words or false accusations. We may have had to deal with unruly or rebellious children. After a long day filled with problems, we arrived home to find a household full of them and a never-ending list of chores that we must do. We ourselves, or a close loved one, may have failing health and we must act as the primary caregiver. Life never gives us a break! It causes us to pull our hair out. We look around and wonder where God is in all this chaos and hurt. But we don't have to look far because God is right there with us, walking with us step-by-step even when He may feel miles away.

What causes you to grow tired or grates on your nerves?

Question
1

This command to **strengthen the hands** and **knees** comes from [Isaiah 35:3](#) and the original context offers us much insight as to how we should deal with the daily assault of life. Isaiah writes to the remnant of the nation of Israel in the midst of being besieged by their enemy. No matter how bad things may get for a time, they need not fear because God will intervene on their behalf. In fact, Isaiah exclaims, "He [God] will come and save you" ([Isa 35:4](#)). Although our problems and hurt may not immediately cease, we can rest assured that we serve a God who will save us and deliver us through them!

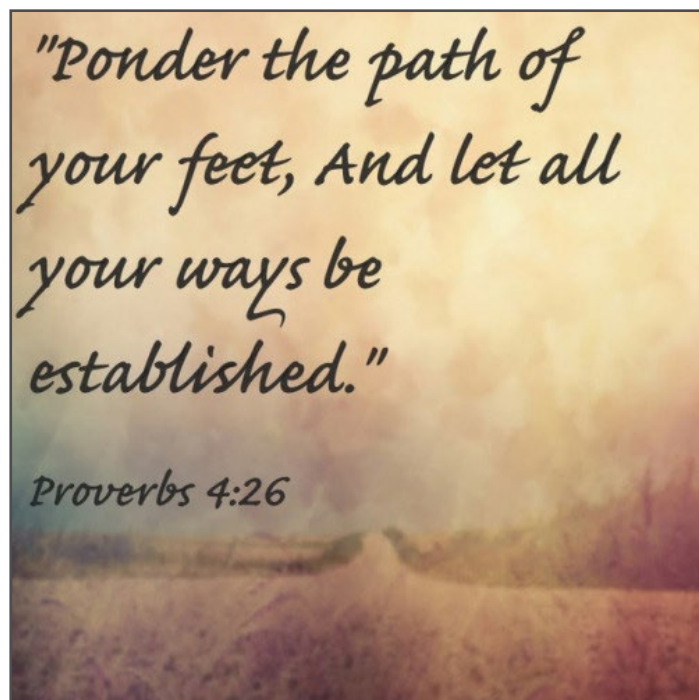
As believers in the church, we must also play an active part in how we overcome stress and hurt together as a community. The word **strengthen** is a second-person plural imperative (command). In North Texas, we would say *y'all strengthen* one another. The primary way we can **strengthen** each other as a church is to remind others of what God has said rather than give our own advice and opinions. If we do give "advice," it must come directly from Scripture. In addition, we can provide words of comfort, especially when we have faced similar issues in our own lives, by demonstrating how God remains faithful to His promises even though at times His promises seem delayed in coming ([2 Cor 1:3-6](#)). We can understand and empathize with people, but we must always point them to Christ. What good does it do if we identify with people or take pity upon them? It may make them feel better for a moment that someone can understand their problem from a human perspective, but the problem is still there. Only God can bring hope and joy in the midst of turbulence as we shall see when we

examine the words **be healed!**

How has God used you to strengthen someone going through a challenging time in life?

Question
2

Not only should we **strengthen** those in the church by reminding others of God's promises, but we should also **make straight the paths for our feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed** (v. 13). Whether on a maintained hiking trail or primitive, backcountry trail, we risk falling and suffering injury if we take our eyes off the course. It's easy to shuffle our feet or stumble over an object if we don't pay attention to where we're going. Moreover, injury becomes even more probable if we veer off the course. If you have ever had the privilege of hiking a primitive, unimproved trail, you know how fraught it is with danger from fallen trees, tree roots poking from the ground, rocks, divots, and uneven surfaces throughout the journey. Suffering catastrophic injury from a fall if we're not paying close attention is greatly increased. Likewise, venturing on our own apart from the prescribed direction of the Lord will always lead to disaster. It never alleviates our problems or quells our hurts if we try to go it alone, rather it compounds them and makes them worse! Too often, people seek advice and comfort from everyone else, but the Lord. They filter this advice with what sounds good to their ears rather than what comes from the wisdom in Scripture. Such advice sounds worthy of our attention and may even seem to help us overcome our problems, but it cannot since it is devoid of God's truth.



True healing of any hurt can only come from the Lord. In Greek, the verb **be healed** points to an action performed by the Lord; it reveals what God will do for us if we trust Him and turn to Him as His people. We cannot heal one another; we cannot truly offer solace and comfort to others apart from what the Lord does through us. Even though we can help to strengthen and encourage one another through Christ and participate in remaining on the right path, we cannot heal. This is something that only God can

Instruct

do! It doesn't matter what the hurt is that we have suffered. If we turn it over to the Lord, He can heal us. Trusting in human wisdom, trying to find human companionship or comfort, and turning to any other philosophy to find hope other than Christ and Scripture will end in utter disappointment.

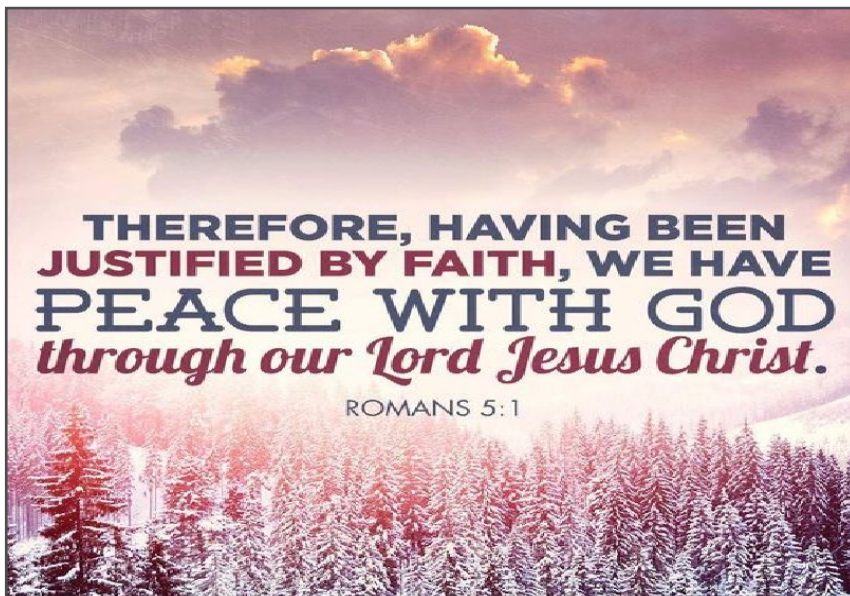
How have you been disappointed in life at times when you sought hope and healing apart from Christ?

Question
3

Hebrews 12:14-15

SEEK PEACE WITH ALL:

The author of Hebrews moves from a general description of the source of healing to a more specific application of how we should deal with the hurt that other people may cause. He urges us to **pursue peace with all people** and **holiness** (v. 14). Before we can **pursue peace with** others, we must have **peace** with God that produces **holiness**. As the author explains, **without** such **peace no one will see the Lord**. This does not mean that we will earn our salvation through good works or receive it because of our own self-righteousness (i.e., our "**holiness**"). Rather, as Paul has said in [Romans 5:1](#), we attain **peace** with God by responding to the sacrifice of Christ who through our repentance from sin gives us His own righteousness to make us holy and acceptable to the Father. **No one can see the Lord**, however, if he has not responded to this **peace** that Jesus offers! This is a prerequisite for overcoming hurt or any difficulties that we may encounter in life.



By having **peace** with God through Jesus, we will have a different outlook on life shaped by His Word and motivated by His Spirit living within us. Thus, it causes us to respond and act differently than the world or even we ourselves did before our relationship with Him. Our relationship with Christ produces **holiness** and leads us to do the right thing even when

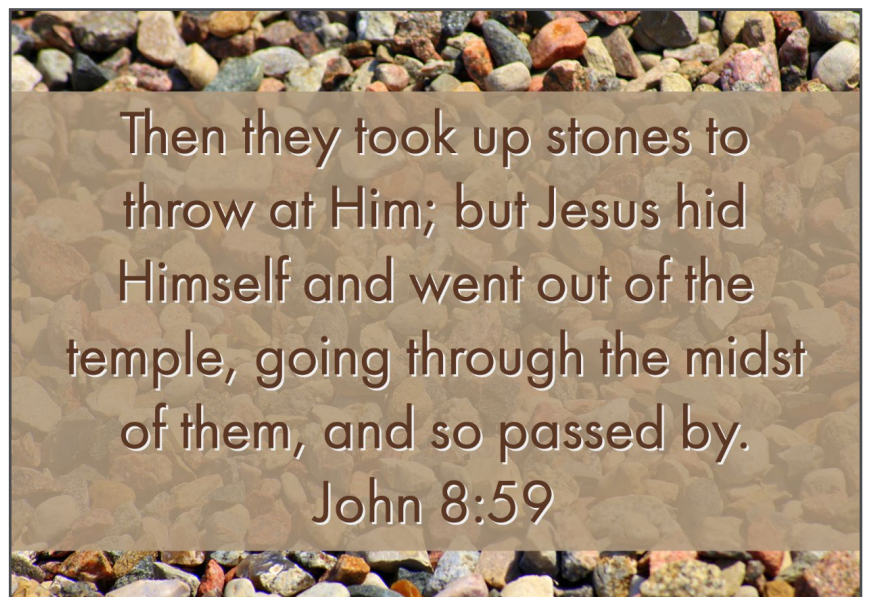
we experience the hurt of life. Certainly, as humans, we will still experience all the emotions that hurt brings upon us. Just because we have a relationship with Jesus doesn't mean that it will change the way we experience emotions. But the way we deal with them as His followers does! Emotions cannot be our guide because that takes the focus from Christ and puts it upon ourselves and our circumstances. This will lead to the dislocation and injuries addressed previously in [verse 13](#), making the situation much worse because we have taken our eyes off Christ. Yet, we shouldn't beat ourselves up for experiencing emotions nor should we constantly dwell upon them; we must learn in Christ to have the self-control to express them in a healthy way that honors Him according to the principles in Scripture.

How can emotions distract us from Christ and keep us from experiencing healing for hurt?

Question
4

The phrase **pursue peace with all** has two primary applications for our context. First, it means we must remain peaceable and respond civilly or peacefully in any confrontation. When confronted with hurt and other problems, the world bursts into fits of rage. They immediately seek to put themselves into a position of challenger—much like a boxer. They hope to beat their opponent into submission by a barrage of hateful words or insults which can easily devolve into physical violence when left untempered. In so doing, they may seek to destroy the other person, but in the process they have destroyed themselves. We don't have to look far to see the evidence of this in our own society and perhaps even in our own lives. The world cries for "justice," but that phrase is a mere call for revenge and retaliation for many.

As believers, we must respond as Christ did with those who challenged Him. He spoke the truth in love without animosity and **bitterness**. He didn't retaliate or seek revenge; He forgave. He had a civil dialogue, as much as depended upon Him, with others and never mimicked the anger His opponents displayed. Thus, as Paul also adds in Romans 12:18, "If



it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” To be clear, no one should stay in a place in which they are suffering physical or sexual abuse. Turn to Christ first, but remove yourself from that situation and seek the proper help. Before His hour had yet come to suffer crucifixion, Jesus removed Himself from such violent situations in which they sought to stone and kill Him ([John 8:59](#)). Still, we are to remain peaceable and **pursue peace**, but we should not knowingly remain in a situation that could potentially bring physical harm.

What helps you to remain peaceful and peaceable in tense situations created by conflict?

Question
5

Second, to **pursue peace** means to seek reconciliation and extend forgiveness. In verse 15, the author reminds us to find **grace** in God. The phrase **fall short of God’s grace** may sound strange to our ears. Salvation is by **grace** through faith and those who refuse it will indeed fall short ([Rom 3:23](#)) and receive the due penalty of death for their sins. But the author is addressing believers, not unbelievers, here. God offers us **grace** to overcome our hurts and **be healed** in Him. Although He may not choose to remove the situation and alleviate the problem, God guarantees that His **grace** will sustain us and see us through tough times. Perhaps the most well-known statement on the **grace** God offers comes from the Apostle Paul. After God has refused to remove the thorn in the flesh for which Paul had prayed diligently, the Lord taught him, “My **grace** is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Consequently, Paul responded by asserting, “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” ([2 Cor 12:9](#)). He saw beyond his troubles to the power of Christ to overcome!

Although the source of the hurt may remain and never abate, God promises the **grace** to overcome if we look to Him. If we fail to look to God for **grace**, we will never overcome the wounds and scars from the hurt in our lives. We will wallow in self-pity and linger in the despair of having no hope. In other words, we will **fall short of His grace** that He so lovingly offers to us to help us overcome! Apart from His **grace**, our lives will be dominated by depression, remorse, regret, anger, hatred, **bitterness**, and a whole host of problems. The **bitterness**, pain, hostility, and virulence that wells up inside of us will cause **many to become defiled!** Rather than **pursue peace** and seek reconciliation, people who do not seek the **grace** of God will pursue sinful means in

an attempt to satisfy their emotional needs and rectify their situation. But in the end nothing can satisfy them and much more **trouble** springs up! Instead, we should look to Christ for the **grace** to forgive. After all, He has forgiven each one of us so much!

How has God's grace helped you to overcome hurt? How can you use that experience to help others?

Question
6

Therefore, to overcome hurt effectively we must first deal with our own attitudes, actions, and issues. Only Christ can change others and only He can circumvent the circumstance; we have no power or control over what others may do or how they'll respond. But we do have control over our own actions and attitudes.

When dealing with hurt, we must first assess whether we are harboring any unconfessed sin. If so, we must get rid of it—confess it and repent. Only then can we have the right perspective to deal with hurt. Whether we harbor sinful attitudes or not, we must all be conscious of our focus. We



We must assess the source from which we seek restitution and find solace: is it in **the grace of God**, the comfort of others, an act of revenge, or the philosophies of the world? Anything other than seeking **the grace of** the Lord will end in more problems. As we deal with hurt, let us seek an honest evaluation from Christ who will never lead us astray; He will always heal us if we turn to Him.

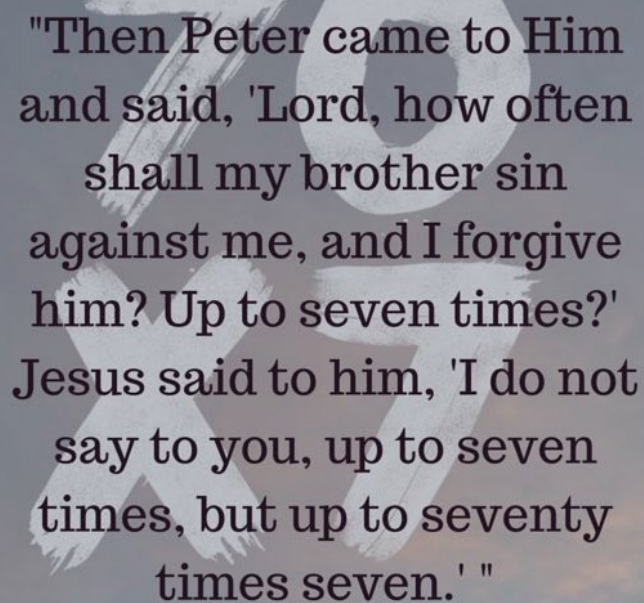
Hebrews 12:16-17

SPURN THE PROFANE:

The author of Hebrews warns us to think carefully about the consequences of our actions, for they will remain despite anything else we may do. For this reason, we should spurn the **profane** way of the world and trust in the **grace of God** to guide us. To illustrate, he appeals to the Old Testament figure of Esau who made careless decisions in regard to his life. Most of us probably remember the story of Esau and his brother Jacob. After hunting in the fields, Esau returned famished which Jacob

exploited to secure his **birthright** or inheritance as the firstborn. Esau impetuously agreed to sell it to his brother for a mere bowl of soup (v. 16). Subsequently, Jacob and his mother schemed a way to deceive their father, Isaac, to pronounce that blessing upon him. Esau, once again, had gone into the fields which gave them the opportunity to put their plan into action. Because of Isaac's failing eyesight, Jacob dressed in his brother's clothes, wore goatskins to imitate his hairiness, and brought the tasty game meat and bread to serve his father. Although he recognized Jacob's voice, everything else pointed to his son Esau, so Isaac blessed the younger. When Esau returned, he flew into a rage and he regretted all that he had done (v. 17).

Even though Esau regretted what he had done, nothing could reverse the consequences of the actions he had taken. He had lost the **birthright** permanently even though he and Jacob reconciled much later in life. This leads the author to



"Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.' "

Matt 18:21-22 NKJV

declare that Esau **was rejected** and **found no place for repentance when he wanted to inherit the blessing** although he **sought it diligently with tears**. The phrase he found no place for repentance does not mean that neither he nor Jacob could forgive what the other had done; it does not entail that God will not forgive either or imply that no one can be reconciled with Him. Rather, **repentance**, in this context, carries its usual nuance in Greek of changing one's mind. Thus, Esau could not reverse what had happened to him; he could not change the circumstances

or the situation to get back his **birthright**.

God always stands ready to forgive us and welcome us back into right standing when we repent of our sins. Yet, other than the removal of the penalty of death when we begin our relationship with Christ, the consequences of our choices remain. God doesn't hold or count our sins against us, but He does not remove the consequences. We cannot go back and erase the situation as if it never happened. To illustrate, think

of people who come to know Christ after many years of hard drug or alcohol use. God will forgive them and not count their sins against them when they accept Christ. But they must live with the toll their choice to use these drugs have taken on their bodies; the damage remains even though they have life in Christ. This is the point the author of Hebrews wishes to make here about Esau.

What is the application for us in this example? We must weigh all our choices in life carefully; we must analyze how we respond to hurt by seeking the **grace of the Lord** to overcome rather than the way of the world. In any case, we must think about the consequences of our actions because they have significance upon our lives. In Christ, we have two primary ways that we should responsibly overcome hurt. First, we must forgive and reconcile, if possible, with those who have hurt us or whom we have hurt; the author has already told us to **pursue peace** in verse 14. Even if they don't reciprocate, Scripture commands us to forgive as Christ has forgiven us ([Eph 4:32](#)).

How have you had to forgive others to overcome hurt in your life?

Question
7

Second, since we cannot go back and erase what has already been done, we need to learn from the situation and move on. We can't get ourselves so mired in self-pity, guilt, or even consumed by what ifs: what if this would have happened, what if I had done this, what if they had responded this way, etc. When we focus on the past, we lose focus on Christ and what He wants to accomplish in us right now. Before we respond to any situation, we must remind ourselves that the consequences of our actions and words will remain; certainly, others can forgive us, but we must ensure that we reflect Christ in our response. Therefore, we should learn from the past, particularly the mistakes that we ourselves have made, and seek strength from Christ to become more like Him every day. God has given us the grace to overcome any hurt in our lives if we would seek Him first. The scars will remain and the episodes etched in our memories, but they should never consume our thoughts and lives. Christ should be the center of our focus—the only One who can heal us.

What happens to our lives when we become stuck on events in which we have suffered hurt in the past?

Question
8

In the introduction, we dealt with some difficult subjects which may have left much emotional hurt on our lives even years after having endured them. Although I may never know what you have personally had to experience or the tremendous amount of hurt and pain that you've had to face, I know One who does. He loves you more than anyone else here on earth and wants you to trust Him enough to bring your deepest hurts and concerns to Him. Don't try everything else first; seek Him first and find true comfort and healing in His grace. Apart from that grace, we will find ourselves miserably stuck in the pattern of this world, trying to cope with our own hurt with nowhere to turn. But God is right there! Salvation and healing are near if only we would look to Him!

The scars of hurt will always remain. It would be nice if God would erase our memories of all the bad that we have done or have had done to us. But He doesn't. We need to move beyond hurt by asking for forgiveness or forgiving others. But, even then, that doesn't remove the consequences of our choices or even the actions done to us. Therefore, we must look to Christ as the text says in [Hebrews 12:2](#). We must keep our eyes focused on Him rather than our past. He is our hope and source of strength. So, let us move beyond our hurts and find comfort by looking to our Savior for grace and healing.

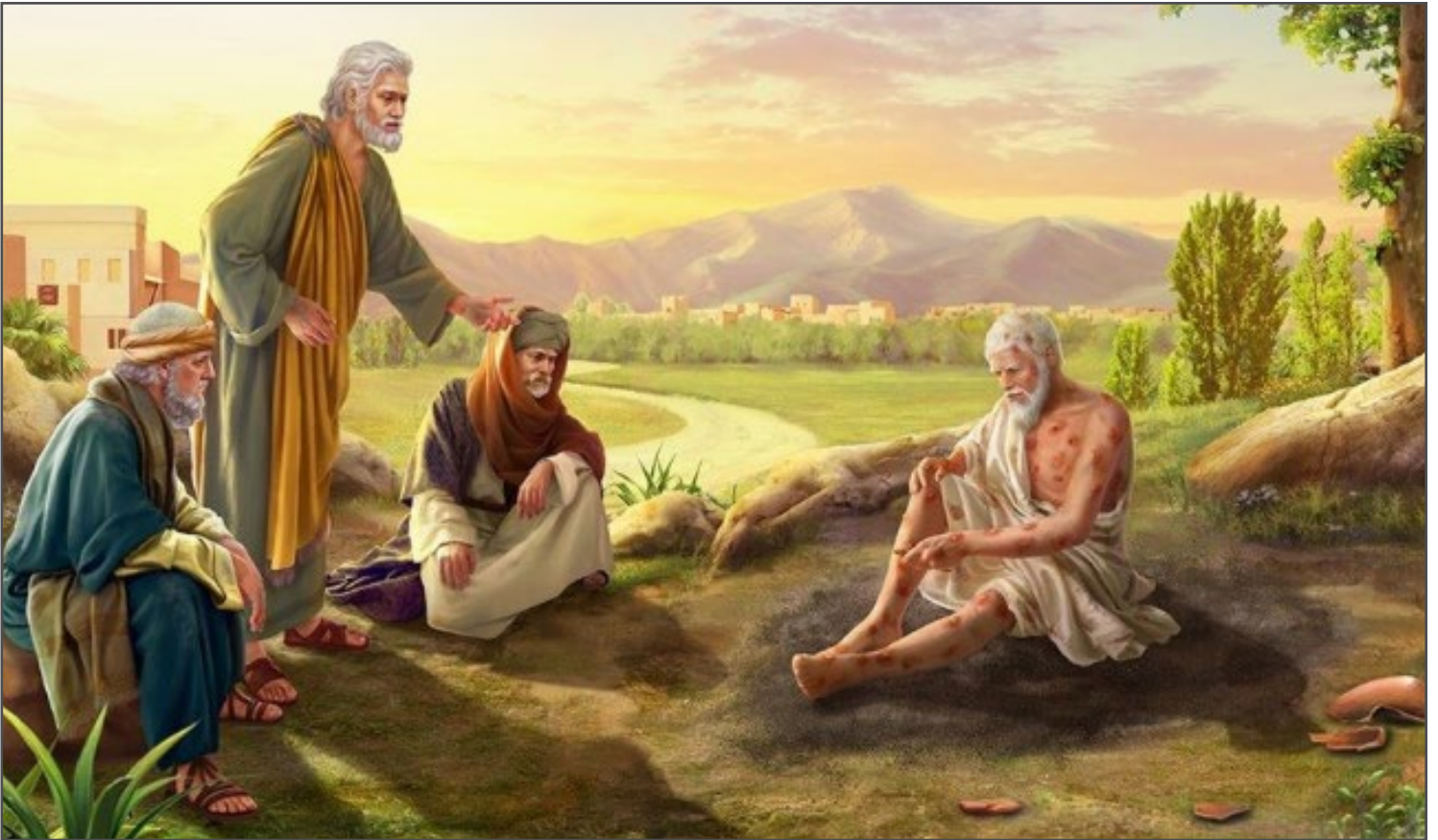
Incorporate

What hurts have you experienced in life? Have you moved beyond them? If not, what is keeping you from being healed of your hurt? If so, what has helped you cope?

With whom have you had to seek reconciliation or pursue peace? How did Christ use that to help you overcome hurt? If reconciliation couldn't be achieved, have you still forgiven the person and moved on? What is the danger of harboring resentment and unforgiveness?

How careful are you in the way that you act or respond to things that have been done to you? How often do you think of the consequences of what you do or say before you act or speak?

July 18, 2021



Overcoming Heartache

Job 19:1-29

Focal Verse:

“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth.”

Job 19:25

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Introduce

Heartaches in life come in many different forms for many different reasons. Each presents us with unique challenges to overcome. And how we deal with them tells us much about our perspective guided by our relationship with Christ. Undoubtedly, every one of us has incurred more than one heartache in our lives and many of us have likely gone through extended periods in which trouble seemed to pile upon trouble. If left unresolved through Christ, heartaches can fester, causing bitterness, severe depression, prolonged grief, animosity, and self-loathing. Only when we turn to Christ can He heal our heartaches and deliver us from the grips of despair.

On March 24, 1820, in the hamlet of Brewster, New York approximately fifty miles

north of New York City, John, a re-married widower, and Mercy gave birth to a healthy baby girl which became the most celebrated and cherished day of their lives since their wedding. Although born healthy in every aspect, their daughter became gravely ill with a cold that caused severe inflammation in her eyes. Unfortunately, their trusted family doctor was out of town, so the couple decided to consult with another man who identified himself as a trained medical doctor. Quickly, however, they discovered him to be a quack, but not until after he had treated the six-week-old child with a hot mustard poultice on her eyes which caused



irrevocable damage to the optic nerves. Having been exposed as a fake, this man fled town, leaving the baby blind without the hope of ever seeing again.

After a few months had passed, the baby's father suddenly passed away, leaving only her mother and an older step-sister to care for her. The baby who had already suffered so much trauma within the first few months of her life would now never truly know her father. As a result of financial hardships imposed upon the widow, Mercy dedicated her life to tireless service as a maid to provide for her family. Because of the tremendous amount of time and work required to make ends meet, Mercy hardly ever saw her daughter who was practically raised by her paternal grandmother, Eunice Paddock.

As a godly woman, Eunice taught her granddaughter the importance of studying and memorizing Scripture and prayer. By the girl's eleventh birthday, her grandmother had passed away—once again stirring the feeling of orphanhood within her.

Introduce

Her mother, Mercy, eventually remarried and had three more children, but her husband had abandoned them by 1844—sending the family spiraling into destitute poverty and struggling to survive. This cycle of heartache and hardship seemed to be the predominate pattern for this young girl’s life. Most of us probably would not blame her if she were bitter, jaded, and cynical about the world. We might even say that she had the right to complain and present herself as a victim of unfortunate circumstance so the world would notice and take pity. Yet, this young woman did the exact opposite. She praised the Lord despite her circumstances and did not see herself as a victim, but seized the opportunity to allow Christ to use her life in a mighty way.

In her memoirs, she once wrote, “It seemed intended by the providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank Him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow, I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me.”* (see In Reference on [page 45](#)) Even when others lamented on her behalf, this woman always saw the positive in her challenges. When a preacher once remarked, “I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when He showered so many other gifts upon you.” She replied, “Do you know that if at birth I had been able to make one petition, it would have been that I was born blind? Because when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior.” Christ had performed a wonderful work in this woman’s life and changed her heartache into unshakable joy. We know this woman well, for she wrote some 9,000 hymns—including “To God be the Glory” and “Blessed Assurance.” This is the story of Fanny J. Crosby, the most prolific hymn writer of the nineteenth century. If we think of all the tragedies and heartaches in Fanny Crosby’s life as well as our own, they pale in comparison to those in the life of Job. In a matter of minutes, Job lost almost everything he held dear. Problems fell upon him like a massive flood that breaches a dam and sweeps down the valley destroying everything in its path. Still, Job never lost hope because Job could say, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth and after my skin is destroyed; this I know that in my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:25-26). Let us turn to our Redeemer, like Job, so that we too can overcome heartaches and allow Him to achieve great things through us.

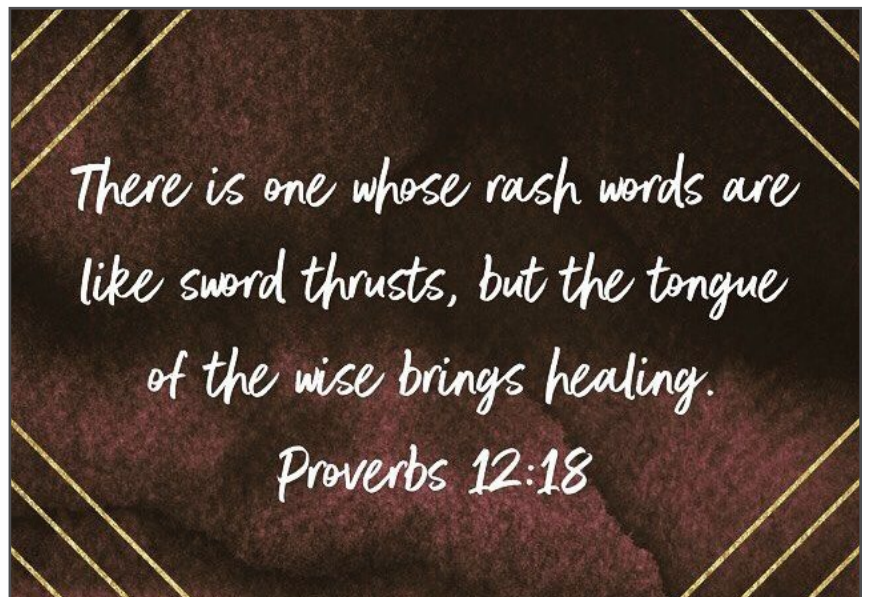
Key
Question

How has Christ helped you to overcome heartaches in your life?

TORMENT OF WORDS:

For the fifth time in this book, Job rebuts the charges his friends have levied against him. In their attempt to offer “comfort,” they actually accuse him of acting sinfully and bringing this suffering upon himself. Instead of helping to heal Job’s hurt, they make his situation more unbearable, prompting him to ask **how long** they **will** continue to **torment** his **soul** and **break** him **in pieces with** their **words** (v. 2). The phrasing of Job’s response in verse 2 reflects a direct challenge to Bildad who previously asked, “How long till you put an end to words?

Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak” (Job 18:2). To put it in more modern language, Bildad is saying, “Stop defending yourself and listen. We can talk when you realize your mistake.” His friends have scolded him **with** their **words** because they have wrongly surmised that the Lord would not allow suffering to befall the



righteous; only the wicked, in their view, would suffer. But their view contradicts reality. Often, “good” people suffer while the wicked seem to prosper and get away with their sin. Job indeed knows that he hasn’t sinned to bring about this suffering, so he seeks an answer from God who has thus far remained uncharacteristically silent about his plight.

In this opening refrain, Job directs his remarks to his friends to show how out of touch and off base they are. He notes that they **have reproached** him **ten times** and they **are not ashamed** that they **have wronged** him (v. 3). The Hebrew word **have wronged** is rare and difficult to translate. It most likely means that they have shamefully mistreated him. In any case, the idea is that they have spoken **wrongly** about him and misjudged his character, thereby humiliating him publicly. For this reason, Job confesses that **if** he has **indeed erred** then he doesn’t know what he has done to deserve all this suffering (v. 4). He cannot fathom any inadvertent or

Instruct

unintentional sin that would cause all this. And he certainly knows he hasn't sinned willfully and maliciously against the Lord.

Yet, his friends persist in attacking him. Rather than presenting concrete evidence to show Job where he has **erred**, they speak in generalities. They **exalt** themselves **against** him in the sense of taking pleasure in his **disgrace** in order to make themselves look wise in the advice they render (v. 5). In their quest to prove themselves right, they take delight in his suffering. Evidence doesn't matter to them, but being right does. Consequently, they attempt to alter the facts to fit their conclusion rather than speak with objectivity and true wisdom. Therefore, they don't truly desire to aid and restore Job, but to **plead** their case **against** him, so they can point their fingers at him and say, "See, I told you so."

How does the world attempt to alter facts to fit their conclusions rather than look at the world objectively through the lens of Scripture?

Question
1

Through this **torment** of **words** inflicted upon Job by his friends, we can draw two conclusions about dealing with heartache. First, we must have intimate knowledge of the situation before we speak or offer advice and we must never generalize. The fallacy, or error, of generalization takes a general principle that may be true in one scenario and applies it to every situation indiscriminately regardless of evidence. We could brand this as "a one-size-fits-all" model. But life simply does not work that way. Sometimes we do suffer because of our sin. We learned this principle in our first lesson this month where Peter commends us, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or

as a busybody" ([1 Peter 4:15](#)). Therefore, we must acknowledge that the advice of Job's friends does apply to *some* situations.

On the other hand, sometimes we suffer for doing the right thing; we suffer heartache simply because we live in a fallen world affected by sin even though we ourselves have not sinned in that particular moment to

**HE WHO ANSWERS A MATTER
BEFORE HE HEARS IT,
IT IS FOLLY AND SHAME TO HIM.**

Proverbs 18:13 NKJV

induce it. Job, as we know, was a blameless and upright man who served God ([Job 1:8](#)). Throughout the book, we know that he did absolutely nothing wrong to cause his suffering. He suffered because he lived in a fallen world, like we do, dominated by an enemy who seeks to destroy us. Before giving advice like Job's friends, we must ensure that the principle we endorse matches the evidence. We should never assume or generalize that every situation is exactly the same. We need to take time to investigate before we speak!

What advice have you heard people attempt to generalize? How did it affect the person receiving it?

Question
2

The second conclusion piggy backs off the first. We must know the whole situation and examine the evidence before drawing any inferences and especially before offering any advice. Proverbs 18:13 offers us sage advice in this matter: "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him." Unfortunately, our world frequently engages in such folly. People put in their two cents who have little to no knowledge about a particular subject. Some may only be acquainted with partial knowledge or overhear part of a conversation, but attempt to worm their way into the discussion. This often leads to misinformation, poor advice, and probably an argument or debate. Rather than take time to investigate a subject thoroughly and understand the background, we tend to read a little information whether online or through the media and consider ourselves an expert.

Consider the danger of overhearing part of this conversation. While in a line, we hear a man who says, "She's old, sits most of the time, and is not very reliable." Feeling compelled to speak up and offer advice that he's learned from his own experience, another man says, "Sir, let me tell you how I help my wife to remember." Clearing his throat, the first man replies, "Sir, I'm talking about my car, not my wife." Perhaps, this illustration made us chuckle because it is very likely that we have been a part of a conversation with a similar outcome. But it serves to illustrate the importance of knowing the context and background before we speak. Job's friends, however, saw themselves as wise; they even believed to have the necessary background information, but in reality they had not done their due diligence and had spoken wrongly.

What miscommunication and misinformation have you observed because people didn't truly know the whole background of a situation?

Question
3

Instruct

In addition to applying these two principles, we, as believers, must always allow the Holy Spirit to guide us when we speak. We can have all the necessary knowledge about a situation and still draw the wrong conclusions and offer bad advice when we do not consult Him. So, the two principles above must be performed in the context of prayer, reading Scripture, and applying it through the wisdom only God can give. Many of us sincerely desire to help others, but we must take the time to do so in the right way which points to Christ, leading to the maturation and growth of the individual.

Job 19:6-12

TRAPPED BY CIRCUMSTANCES:

Because his friends continue to berate him, Job cries out in exasperation—this time directed toward the Lord. He declares that **God has wronged** him and ensnared him **with His net** (v. 6). At first glance, this may look as if Job has been charged with acting



unjustly and wrongly inflicting him with this suffering. But this is not the case. He doesn't accuse God of wrongdoing, but of remaining silent and not answering his pleas—in that sense He **has wronged** him. Therefore, Job laments that God has **not heard** when he cried out **concerning** the **wrong** done to him; even though he cries **aloud, there is no justice**

(v. 7). In a sense, God has trapped him by not answering; he has nowhere to turn if God will not defend him. Since God hasn't defended His servant to this point, these friends remain free to hurl their wild accusations against him. "Where is the **justice** in that," Job contemplates.

As a result of God's silence, Job feels isolated and alone. He describes this feeling as God having **fenced up** his **way, so that** he **cannot pass** and how **He has set darkness in his paths** (v. 8). As long as God remains silent, Job has no way of escaping the problems he currently faces. He is trapped with no way out; he can't even see to flee. Only God, as he later acknowledges, is his only hope for vindication and justice.

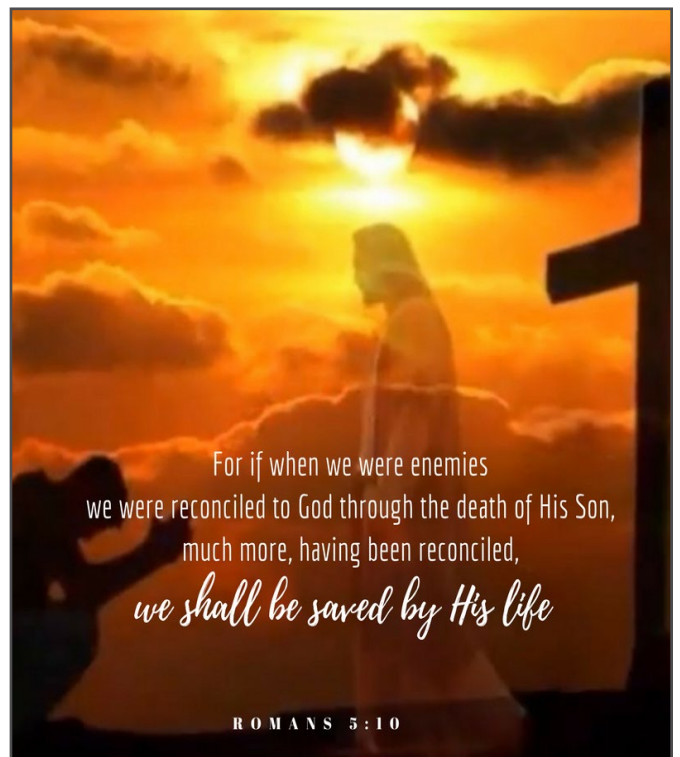
Although he doesn't know why these things have happened, Job feels besieged by God. He's lost everything; he has nothing left to look forward to. God **has stripped** his **glory** and removed his **crown** (v. 9). A once-respected leader who sat at the gates of the city ([Job 29:7-12](#)), he now sits in a heap of ashes, reviled among the citizens. God has broken him **down on every side** and **uprooted** him **like a tree** (v. 10).

The silence from God has taught Job one valuable lesson—albeit a very difficult lesson to learn. Without the Lord in his life, Job truly has nothing. Certainly, Job must have recognized this prior to these events as demonstrated by his unwavering faithfulness. But now Job knows it for sure because he has experienced it first-hand. As God revealed from the beginning to the Accuser, this test demonstrated much about Job's character and ultimately reinforced what Job already knew—that God is the source of all his blessings. It's one thing, however, to recognize God as the source of all blessings and another thing to actually live it as Job did! Would we pass this same test as Job did?

How has God tested you in the past? What did you learn about Him and about yourself through that test?

Question
4

Even though Job doesn't know why, he feels God's **wrath has been kindled against** him which seemingly counts him as **one of his enemies** (v. 11). Not only does he feel trapped, but he compares it to being surrounded by God's **troops** (v. 12). These **troops** have constructed a siege wall (i.e., **road**) and encamped **around** his **tent**, waiting for the opportunity to strike. God's silence makes it seem as if He were leading the charge to destroy him. Scripture teaches that those who pit themselves against God by refusing to repent and continuing in unrighteousness are indeed His enemies ([Rom 5:10; Jas 4:4](#)). God does not consider Job an enemy, but a blessed servant. In his isolation, however, Job is searching for answers; he feels like a prisoner of war because God has not yet responded and no one else has come to his aid nor can they. He has nowhere else to turn.



Instruct

This brings us to an important question we must ask: What do we do when God remains silent? When we have a relationship with the Lord, we confidently know that He will never abandon us or forsake us. But sometimes He tells us to wait and delays His response according to His perfect timing. We live in a day in which we seek immediate gratification and resolution to our problems. Life in Christ, however, doesn't always produce immediate results. Salvation and the transformation from death to life is always immediate. But our growth in Him takes time and requires patience. We may not want to hear this, but the most important thing we can do when God is silent is to continue seeking Him while we wait. And we must wait upon Him. He will reveal Himself and speak to us at the right time when He so chooses. There is no magical plan or method to prompt a response; there is nothing we can do. We must simply wait! Job learned this.

What should we do while we are waiting on God to speak?

Question
5

While waiting to hear from the Lord, we may run the gamut of emotions as Job did. We can converse with Him frankly, but still reverently, about how we feel. As we wait for Him in the midst of silence, we must rely upon Him alone and continue to live faithfully. The worst thing we could ever do is grow impatient and search for answers elsewhere. The world often employs a trial-and-error method which some believers have adopted too. When they don't get an answer or a satisfactory answer in their opinion, they go to other sources until they find what they want to hear. This causes people to turn to others, and away from the Lord, to seek consolation and comfort. Some may even turn to worldly devices that promise to conceal pain and gladden the heart. But in the end, none of these methods works; none of them leads to a good resolution. Only God, when He chooses to speak, can produce a lasting resolution for any test we may endure. All we must do is wait, continue seeking Him, and make ourselves available to Him so that we may hear when He does speak to us.

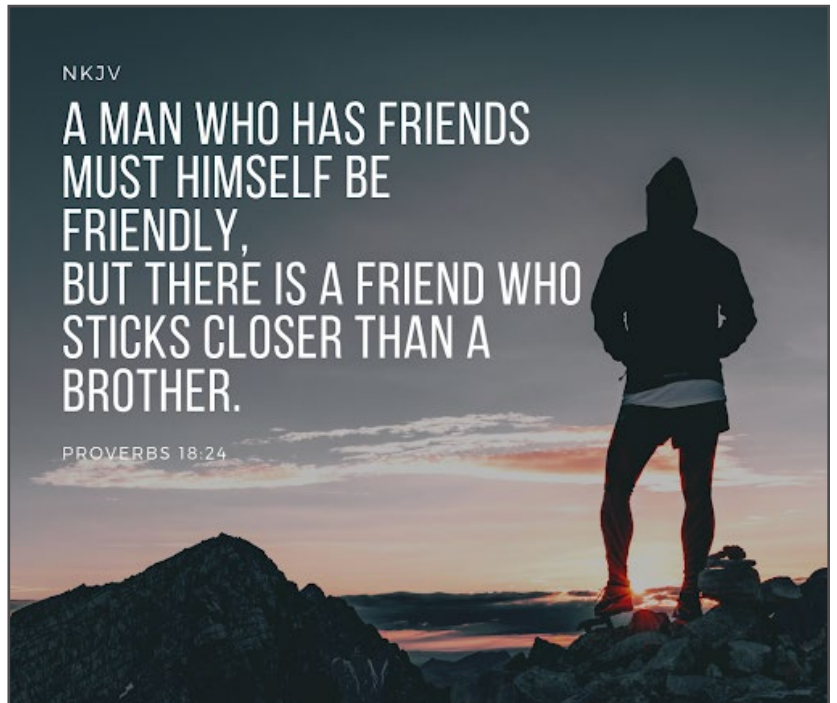
How do you overcome impatience in your life? What areas of impatience do you most frequently deal with?

Question
6

THOUGHTS OF ABANDONMENT:

The fact that everyone has abandoned Job has further compounded his problems. From experience, we have all probably learned how fragile relationships can be,

especially when problems come. We have very few people on whom we can count to be there for us when we go through heartache like Job. Most likely, we have less than a handful of people who would stick with us and support us. But Job had absolutely no one! When problems come, most people don't want to deal with them, so they abandon people in their time of need. For this reason, Job grieves that God **has removed his brothers far from** him (v. 13) and his **relatives**



have failed him (v. 14). His **acquaintances** have been **estranged** from him and his **close friends have forgotten** him. Indeed, the **close friends** who now surround him promising comfort are truly strangers who do not know him because they accuse him of acting both stubbornly and sinfully toward the Lord.

Job bemoans that **those who dwell in his house**, as well as those whom he employs as **maidservants, count** him as **a stranger** and treat him as a foreigner (v. 15). His **servants** no longer beckon to his call and perform their duties though he may **beg** (v. 16). Even his **wife** finds his **breath offensive** and his **children** find him **repulsive** (v. 17). Indeed, his own **wife** who should have been a source of support and comfort treated him with contempt when she advised him to “curse God and die” ([Job 2:9](#)). The second reference to **the children of his own body** may cause some confusion because we know from [1:18-19](#) that his **children** died in a gale-force wind when the eldest brother's house collapsed. The phrase translated literally means “sons of my womb.” Two possibilities exist for understanding this phrase.* As the patriarch of the family, Job could have considered his descendants, that is his grandchildren, as his progeny. However, the text doesn't specifically or clearly mention that his **children** who died had children themselves. Yet, the phrase could still refer by extension to his extended

Instruct

family such as we see with the other patriarchs like Abraham. On the other hand, the ambiguity of the phrase could have referred to his mother's womb and, therefore, signify his brothers. In either case, the meaning remains the same. All Job's family—those closest to him—have alienated him and pushed him out of their lives. They haven't simply abandoned him; they want nothing to do with him.

When have you felt abandoned and most vulnerable in life?

Question
7

In Reference



For more information, see John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job, New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), p. 288-289.

He further bewails that **young children despise** him and **speak against** him (v. 18).

"Though He slay me,
yet will I trust Him.
Even so, I will defend
my own ways before
Him."
Job 13:15

Children in the community at that time were taught to respect their elders, but these **children** join in a chorus to mock him. Even his **close friends whom** he loves have **turned** on him (v. 19). He has nowhere to turn and find comfort which is compounded by the fact that God has remained silent. Perhaps, they have become especially repulsed by his horrendous physical condition. He has become so emaciated that his **bone clings** to his **skin** and **flesh**; he has only **escaped** death **by the skin of his teeth** (v. 20). Rather than take pity upon him,

people can't stand to look upon his condition.

Job pleads with his friends to **have pity on** him; he wants them to extend mercy and show compassion upon him instead of heaping accusations and hurling insults that deepen his depression and compound his problems (v. 21). He acknowledges that the hand of God has indeed struck him with these calamities, but not for the reason they think. He has done nothing wrong. Still, God does not come to his defense which

leaves him feeling persecuted (v. 22). They viciously attack him like a wild animal devouring its prey (i.e., **flesh**).

When God has remained silent in the midst of our heartache and everyone else, including those closest to us, want nothing to do with us, what should we do? Where should we turn? Once again, this shows us that the only hope that we truly have is in the Lord. We must maintain our faith in Him and trust Him implicitly rather than turning to the world for solace. Everyone and everything on earth will fail us at some point! We may think we have other people upon whom we can count and rely—and they may be reliable for the most part—but at some point they will fail. They will leave us disappointed. Job recognizes that the only hope we have comes from the Lord. God will speak and reveal His plan at the right time. This is why Job continually calls upon Him and seeks an audience with Him. Even in all this turmoil as God remains silent, Job still trusts Him! Hence, he can exclaim, “Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him” (Job 13:15).

What is the danger of seeking justice and restitution from the world? What should we do as we wait for God to respond?

Question
8

Job 19:23-29

Having lamented all the trouble in his life and the callous response of his friends, Job turns to the one true source who will not fail; He will not abandon him: the Lord who is his **Redeemer**. He commences this last section of his response by yearning for a way to take up his cause for justice and vindication even after he has died. He longs for his **words** to be **written in a book** or **engraved** upon **a rock** and lined with lead so that they catch people’s attention (vv. 23-24). This would serve to remind people of his plight until someone took up his cause on his behalf. Although this would serve to memorialize his cause, it is not the most effective way. However, the only thing that Job knows for sure is that his **Redeemer** lives (v. 25). Only God can deliver justice; only He can restore Job’s reputation and vindicate his name. Even though he may die before he receives justice, God will not fail him; God will speak when He is ready to defend His servant.

Job, therefore, acknowledges that God **will stand at last on the earth** (v. 25). The word translated **earth** literally means “dust.” Perhaps, it could refer to the heap of dust or ashes upon which Job now sits or even his physical demise as he returns to dust



This is only an example of an engraved stone. It is secular, not biblical.

from whence he came. Nevertheless, Job is confident God will have the last word and He will reveal in His righteousness the true nature of His servant, silencing his friends. Thus, Job can express assurance that he **shall see God in his flesh** even **after his skin is destroyed** (v. 26). He will see for himself and receive the vindication that the Lord gives first-hand. No **book, engraved stone**, or person could accomplish this feat. In faith, he waits confidently as he longs for that day! He knows God Himself will redeem him because He alone is holy and righteous.

Job concludes his speech with a stern warning to his friends whom he characterizes as sitting around thinking of ways to **persecute him** (v. 28). He summarizes the **root** of their position that he has caused his own problems because of his sin. Consequently, he warns them to **be afraid of the sword** for themselves (v. 29). They who have cast such unfounded judgment upon him will themselves be the subject of judgment for their own analysis of the situation and their misguided advice. Indeed, Job speaks prophetically in this instance because God does later judge these friends for their role in speaking incorrectly ([Job 42:7](#)). Therefore, we must be very careful when we give advice. What we say and what we encourage others to do must characterize the Lord correctly and fit the evidence of the situation. We must be guided by the Holy Spirit and allow Him to speak through us rather than giving our own observations.

When have you received advice that has turned out not to characterize the Lord correctly?
How did you respond?

Question
9

Nothing and no one on earth can ever help us overcome hurt, heartache, and hardship. No amount of human counseling can alleviate these things—especially the misguided counsel like Job's friends. In addition, we may not see restitution nor a resolution to our problems before we die. All this sounds hopeless. And it is when we focus on

temporal solutions that have no power to rescue and transform. To have hope and assurance, we must look beyond our circumstances and see beyond our temporary trials to the **Redeemer** who will have the last word. Our faith and trust must rest solely in Him. Job never lost hope; he never lived in defeat because he had confidence in the righteousness of the **Redeemer**. Because we live in a fallen world, we will all experience hardships and heartaches until we die or Christ returns. Do not fear! We know the one who has overcome the world and will help us overcome when we turn to Him in unswerving loyalty.

Despite having confidence in the **Redeemer**, Job still experienced a flood of emotions. His confidence didn't immediately remove his physical pain from boils nor did it alleviate the mental anguish caused by his friends trying to "help." Job didn't have a magical prescription for motivating God to respond to his plight and restore him. What his confidence in the Lord did was give him the right perspective. It helped him to remain focused on the Lord, waiting for Him to respond at the right time. As he waited, Job continued to seek the Lord and plead with Him. He never stopped once to cry about his situation. He realized God was the only source of hope. This is a tough lesson for Job and any one of us to endure and learn. It's hard when we perceive God to have remained silent and unaware of our situation and everyone else to have abandoned us. But like Job, we can confidently rest assured that God will do what is right in the end if only we would continue to trust Him daily as we walk through life step by step. Such is the prescription that allowed Job to overcome heartache and hardship.

Inspire

We will all face problems in life because we live in a fallen world destroyed by sin and dominated by an enemy who seeks to accuse and destroy us. Quite often, we have done nothing to cause these problems as Fanny J. Crosby and Job both learned. At other times, however, people do create problems for themselves because they don't follow God's divine plan. We must learn to recognize the difference between these two instances and respond appropriately whether by asserting our confidence in the Lord to provide justice or by repenting when we ourselves have erred. To overcome heartache, it requires trust in the right Person and patience. We must trust in the Lord and wait patiently for Him to respond, never doubting that He will act at the right time and do the right thing. It will take time to heal. We must maintain our focus on Christ so that we have the right perspective to see beyond our problems and look forward to the redemption we have in Him.

In Reference (from page 33)



*For a history of Fanny J. Crosby's life, see Ola Aboderin, *Against All Odds: Men and Women who Turned Adversities to Opportunities* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2014), p. 97-138.*

Incorporate

Before giving advice or commenting upon a situation, what process do you use to determine what you will say? How does that compare to what Scripture says we should do?

When have you felt alone or abandoned in life? How did you keep focused on the Lord? How did the Lord help you endure and control your emotions?

When facing a difficult situation, what do you do when God tells you to wait for His response? In the past, how have you seen God be faithful to respond even if, like Paul, He didn't remove the thorn in the flesh?

July 25, 2021



Overcoming Hatred

Genesis 37:1-36; 50:20

Focal Verse:

“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”

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Genesis 50:20

Introduce

“Band of Brothers,” whether referring to the 2001 miniseries or the book of the same name by Stephen E. Ambrose, follows the soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division E Company in the 2nd Battalion of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment during World War 2 from boot camp to their insertion into the war on D-Day and their advance

toward Berlin. This company, known as Easy Company, had many noble Americans who fought valiantly against tyranny, putting aside their fear and personal aspirations to serve their country and truly the world. Many of these men gave their lives in the pursuit to defend freedom and stop a maniacal dictator in peddling his



hatred. Every one of them experienced the atrocities of war inflicted upon the citizens of Europe and many saw the unspeakable horror of concentration camps such as Auschwitz. We have many such men and women who serve faithfully with honor in our Armed Forces and as first responders today. They are guided by love and devotion to their nation as well as dedicated to helping their fellow man.

Sometimes, however, a few people become blinded by hatred which causes them to lash out in uncontrolled rage. Captain Richard Winters of Easy Company understood this propensity well especially in the heat of battle. During Operation Pegasus which was employed to rescue British soldiers in the failed Market Garden campaign, Easy Company captured a squad of *Waffen SS*, the military arm of the highly trained SS forces. Although the squad had surrendered, Private Joseph Liebgott continued firing toward them, causing Winters to approach and order a cease fire. Seeing Liebgott had been wounded with shrapnel to the neck, Winters commanded him to return to base to receive medical treatment, but also to escort the prisoners back safely as well.

Realizing the numerous war crimes committed by the *Waffen SS* and the animosity Liebgott felt and displayed, Winters demands that he drop his ammo so that the private could not exact revenge whether for his wound or sheer hatred for the Germans.

Noting they had eleven prisoners to escort, Winters hands him one shell and says, “You have one round; if you drop a prisoner, the rest will jump you.” Winters recognized that we as Americans must rise above hatred which fuels retaliation and revenge. We

Introduce

should never repay the evil perpetrated by some Germans by engaging in barbaric and evil acts of our own.

Unfortunately, Winters had witnessed some of these acts first-hand when some in his company became overwhelmed by hatred. In Normandy, he recounts an incident where Captain Ronald Spiers killed six German soldiers after they had surrendered and had been secured. This seems to be corroborated by Art DiMarzio in a YouTube video in which he reflects on the war. Although he doesn't specifically name the commander, he recollects being told to hide among the trees. As the German soldiers approached with their hats off—a sign of surrender—the commander opened fire killing them all. At the time, they posed no imminent threat and were cooperating with the given instructions.

Unresolved and unfettered hatred can cause havoc as it leads to anger and eventually revenge. We see this hatred on display in our very own society almost every day. Let me emphasize that all hatred against people is sin and goes against God's holy character. This means hatred against someone because of their race as well as hatred against those who serve in particular positions in our community—whether first responders or leaders. This command against hatred also applies to those in our circles of influence and relationships—family, friends, church members, and acquaintances. Although God directs His wrath against sin, He loves people and has offered them a way to escape the consequences of their choices if only they would repent and turn to Him. However, people choose to endure His wrath rather than turn from their sin. In Scripture, Joseph provides a good example from a human perspective in how we should deal with hatred levied against us. His brothers allowed their jealousy to fester and turn to hatred. Their hatred enraged them to the point of murder, but God intervened and they ended up selling him into slavery to Midianites which ultimately led him to Egypt. Joseph never responded with anger nor did he ever retaliate; He realized that God had a greater plan and purpose to save not only his family, but really the whole world. Eventually, when reunited with his brothers, Joseph forgave them and reconciled with them. Let us imitate Joseph and respond with godly wisdom which leads to forgiveness and love rather than allowing hatred to seize and guide us.

Key
Question

In what ways have you experienced hatred in your own life?

Genesis 37:1-4

THE MALEVOLENCE IN JEALOUSY:

As chapter 37 opens, **Jacob** and his family have settled **in the land of Canaan**—no longer as nomadic wanderers like his forefathers, but as permanent residents (v. 1). The events that will follow in Genesis will indeed relate **the history of Jacob**, but through the eyes of his sons—and one son in particular, Joseph (v. 2). God will use Joseph, as we know, to rescue His servant Jacob's family through whom He has chosen to physically save the nation from starvation during a severe famine and later send the promised Messiah. The account commences with Joseph as a young lad of **seventeen** who worked **with his** ten other **brothers** from Jacob's three **wives**: Leah, **Bilhah**, and **Zilpah**. As they worked together in the pastures, these ten brothers became enraged with Joseph which ultimately culminated in a searing hatred that led to murderous intentions. When we fail to deal with anger and frustration properly, they can have a devastating impact upon our relationships. Fortunately, however, God can overcome hatred and evil plans when His servants rely upon Him in faith. From the text, we can observe three reasons why Joseph drew his brothers' ire.

Having kept **the family's flock with his brothers**, Joseph returned to **his father** with a **bad report** about **them**. The text does not reveal the content of the **report** or Joseph's reason and motivation for giving it. The Hebrew word translated **bad** can also mean "evil," so presumably Joseph revealed to his father some **bad** or evil act which his brothers perpetrated. Yet, we often vilify and blame Joseph, like **his brothers**, for being a tattle tale. Perhaps, Joseph did tattle in order to play upon his father's propensity to show favoritism



and make himself look good by giving an unfavorable account of their actions. On the other hand, Joseph may have had a legitimate reason for informing their father about their behavior. To warn against actions that potentially endanger one's life or

could bring harm to others does not necessarily constitute “tattling.” The same goes for exposing activities that are sinful and in direct violation of God’s Word. Rather, it shows responsibility and concern. However, we simply don’t know enough about the situation to cast blame or heap praise upon Joseph. Based on what we do know, it still does not excuse the animosity which his brothers displayed and their actions directed toward him.

Making assumptions about the text when we don’t know the full background can teach us a valuable lesson about how we should respond when we face similar situations in life in which we aren’t privy to all the details. We tend to view things from a limited perspective based upon our own experiences in life. Thus, we are inclined to take sides based upon incomplete and partial information. Therefore, we may identify with Joseph’s brothers who regarded him as an informant because someone has previously “tattled” on us which influences how we perceive this situation. Or we identify with Joseph because we perceive we have a legitimate reason for telling—and we may depending upon the circumstances. Still, this incident should teach us two things. First, it takes two parties to create dysfunction and there are always two sides to every story, so we must attempt to discern the truth from an objective point of view especially when we are involved. Second, we should not make judgments or give counsel without attempting to know the circumstances and ascertain all the facts. This type of assumption causes more problems than it could ever resolve.

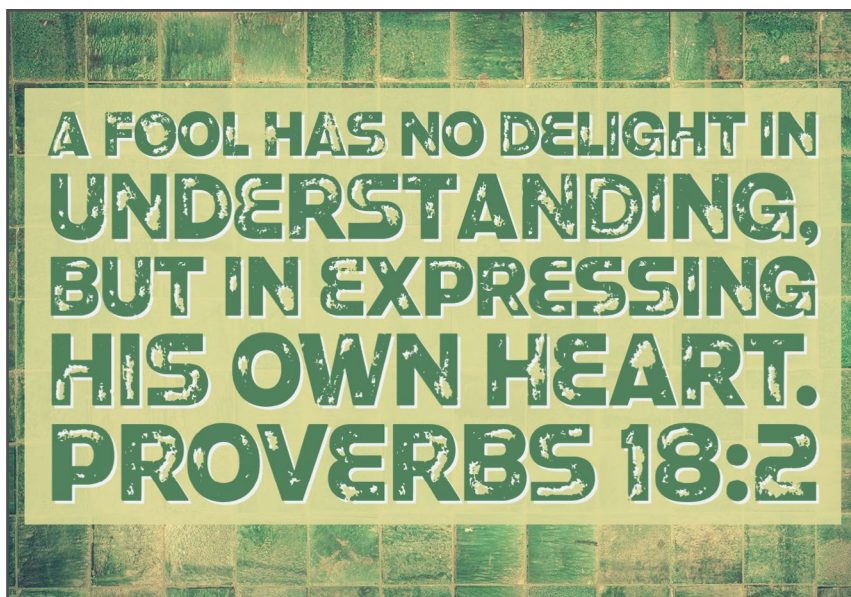
When have you assumed something or had things assumed about you that have proven wrong? What did this teach you about the appropriate way to respond?

Question
1

Whether attempting to resolve conflict in which we are personally involved or offering advice to others, we must practice the following practical principles. First, we should never jump to conclusions based upon an immediate reaction guided by our emotions! We must take time to evaluate the situation. James, for instance, implores us to be “swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” ([Jas 1:19](#)). This means we must take time to get in the right frame of mind by reading Scripture and praying, so that God may guide us in the proper perspective for dealing with the problem. We may agree with this advice, but do we actually practice it? Second, we must seek wisdom from the Lord objectively because He alone knows the details of the situation intimately and sees

the motives of the heart—including our own. Proverbs 19:21 astutely states, “There are many plans in a man’s heart, nevertheless the Lord’s counsel—that will stand.”

Therefore, we must be open to the possibility that the Lord wants to reveal something about us and not only about the other person! God may wish to reveal something about our motives or convict us about how we responded because we have become blinded by our own biases. Finally, we must be willing to forgive no matter how the others involved may respond.



Although we may not always be able to reconcile and restore broken relationships, Scripture teaches that we must forgive as Christ has forgiven us ([Eph 4:32](#)). Christ offers forgiveness to all, but not everyone chooses to be reconciled with Him.

Even though you never know the full details of a situation in the past, how has God given you wisdom to respond biblically with righteousness rather than emotion?

Question
2

Next, we see how Jacob created dysfunction in his own family by showing favoritism to his penultimate son. If anyone should have known the danger of favoritism, it should have been Jacob. Rather than learn from the favoritism his father (Isaac) showed his brother Esau and his mother (Rebekah) showed him which led to chicanery and the stealing of a birthright, Jacob repeated it with his own sons! The text divulges that Jacob (**Israel**) **loved Joseph more than all his children**, so he gifted him a distinctive **tunic** or robe that distinguished him from the others (v. 3). From childhood, we see this referred to as the “coat of many colors.” The word translated **colors**, however, is exceedingly rare and difficult to interpret. Most likely, it refers to a long, flowing robe with long sleeves. It could have been sewn from many different types of fabrics, giving it different hues. Regardless of how the robe looked, the brothers immediately recognized that **their father loved Joseph more than** them which caused them to be unable to **speak peaceably to him** (v. 4).

As humans, we will always show partiality when guided by our flesh. Favoritism will

Instruct

always create a sense of jealousy in others when those involved look only from a human perspective. There is a greater lesson, however, that we can learn from this episode than just the danger of favoritism within a family or even in society in general. The utter failure that occurs here is that Jacob has not learned from past mistakes. He has perpetuated the same mindset that caused strife in his father's family now in his own. God can indeed overcome our mistakes and work through (and despite) them to accomplish His plan, but it doesn't absolve us from the turmoil it causes and the bad choices we make. We are still responsible for our actions. Rather than continue repeating actions that can induce dysfunction, let us look to the Lord for our example and pattern our lives after His holiness.

How have you or have you seen others repeat the same mistakes? How can we overcome continuing to make those same choices?

Question
3

Genesis 37:5-11

THE MYOPIA CAUSED BY HATRED:

In this section, we see the proverbial final nail in the coffin that sends Joseph's brothers into a fit of rage. He had **a dream** and he **told it** to them for which **they hated him even more** (v. 5). Briefly, we will summarize the content of the **dream** and how it foreshadows God's future work in Joseph's life. In the **dream**, as they worked **in the field binding sheaves**, Joseph's **sheaf stood upright** and those of his brothers **bowed down** to his (v. 7). Although Joseph does not explicitly relate the interpretation of the dream and may not yet know how God intends to use him, his brothers immediately recognize its implication, if not the actual reference to Egypt, and draw an unflattering inference. Aroused in their **hatred** for his **dreams** and **words**, they balked at the thought that this seventeen-year-old boy would exercise **dominion** and **reign over** them (v. 8). For most, the thought of control by and subjugation to any sibling would elicit such feelings and encourage the need to rebel in defense of their freedom and pride.

Without an indication if any significant time had passed, Joseph has **another dream** which he tells first to **his brothers** (v. 9) and then again to them in the presence of their **father** (v. 10). In this **dream**, the **sun**, **moon**, and **eleven stars** bowed down to him. This time it prompts a rebuke from **his father**. He castigates Joseph for even

contemplating that he, his **mother**, and his **brothers** would **bow down before** him. Despite this rebuke, Jacob responds differently than his sons. His sons respond with envy and anger whereas he thinks about it, keeping **the matter in mind** (v. 11). He may not like the implications of the dream and understand the ramifications fully, but he keeps an open mind. He doesn't dismiss it as childish nonsense. He waits to see how it may play out and how God intends to use his son.



We have an advantage because we know how the story ends. These dreams foreshadow how God will use Joseph to rescue his family from famine. **The sheaves in the field** certainly represent Joseph and his brothers who would **bow** in respect to him as second in command in Egypt when they came seeking food because of a severe famine gripping the entire Middle East. **The sheaves**, therefore, also remind of the provision of harvest. Likewise, the second dream foreshadows the same event, but expands it to show how God truly saves a family and a nation from starvation. It would be years later that these dreams would come to fruition and everyone involved would understand its significance. But for now, it caused dysfunction and motivated deep-seated **hatred**.

How have you seen God work in the midst of and despite dysfunction?

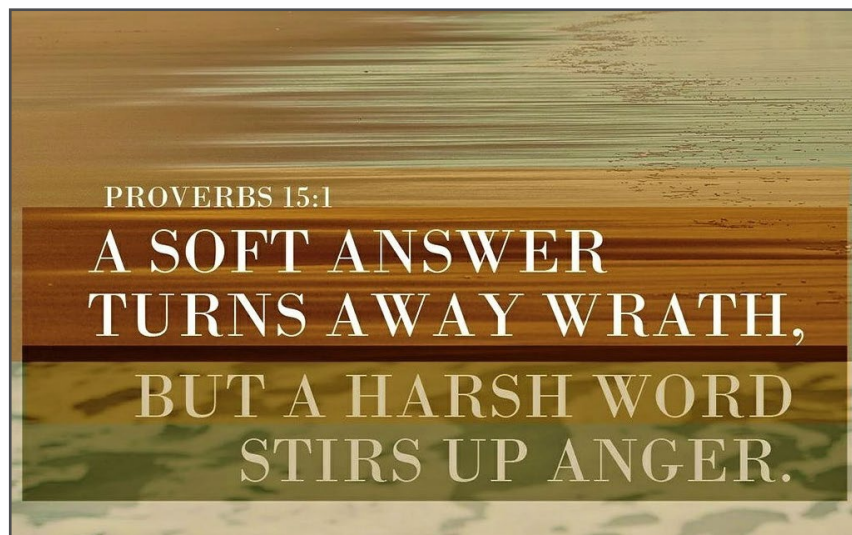
Question
4

Again, we most often malign Joseph as a brash youth who spoke boastfully and pridefully to his family. But once again, the text remains silent on his motivation nor does it condemn him outrightly for hubris. It simply portrays what he did as fact, leading us to speculate. Joseph may have been arrogant in relating these dreams, but he may have not had that intention either. What the incident teaches most clearly is the folly of youth in speaking without thinking about the consequences or how others will perceive and interpret his **words** and actions. With the portrayal of this account, it doesn't seem that he considered much how others would respond. In reality, however, this is not just a folly of youth, but problematic for all ages!

Instruct

Sometimes we may be right and even well-intentioned in our words. We may truly want to offer encouragement, comfort, and sound advice, but we spend very little time in thinking about the impact of our words and how others may perceive them. This doesn't mean that we should mislead people or not declare the truth. On the contrary, it means that we should consider our words carefully so that they edify rather than destroy. At times, we may need to be blunt; we may need to share from our personal experiences. But we must do so in the right way and in the right context. Sometimes words meant to inspire and encourage can do the opposite if we don't consider the context carefully.

For example, crassly telling someone that they need to get over a spouse who has died and move on or even oppositely that they'll never get over their spouse often fails to consider the impact of words. This goes for anything that we say whether jokingly or



seriously; it applies to any situation whether family dysfunction, relationship issues, health crises, financial problems, or anything else. We must first ensure that we can relate the biblical perspective on an issue before uttering any words while at the same time considering how we can relate the words in a way that will be well-

received. We want to point others to Scripture, leaving a lasting impact rather than a collateral trail of damage because we speak without thinking.

To what instances can you point where either you or someone else has been well-intentioned, but careless in their words? What impact did this have?

Question
5

Genesis 37:12-20

THE MURDEROUS THOUGHTS OF HATRED:

Continuing to seethe in their anger against Joseph, the opportunity had now come for the brothers to act upon their hatred. Having traveled to **Shechem**, some fifty

miles from home to care for **their father's flock**, Jacob sent Joseph to check on them and **bring back word** so he could determine if all were **well** (vv. 12-14). When Joseph arrived in the area, **a man** saw him and inquired **what** he was **seeking** (v. 15). He explained that he had come to find his **brothers**, so he asked if he knew **where they were feeding their flocks** (v. 16). The man indicated that they had gone to **Dothan** another fifteen miles from there (v. 17). So, Joseph continued his journey in faithful obedience to his father's request.

Seeing their brother approaching from **afar**, they immediately recognized him—perhaps from his distinctive **tunic** given to him by their father (v. 18). Now, their unresolved anger and hatred had turned to literal thoughts of murder. Being so far from home, **they devised to kill him**. Derisively, they cried the **dreamer** is coming and plotted to **kill him now**, throwing his **body** into a **pit** (vv. 19-20). They then corroborate the story they would tell their father to cover their tracks and not implicate themselves in their brother's murder. They would explain that **a wild beast had devoured him**. Their hatred of him propelled them to take matters into their own hands in a way that they could stop his **dreams**!

Such hatred puts into perspective John's warning in the New Testament: "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" ([1 John 3:15](#)). These are harsh words, but unresolved anger which festers into hatred never produces anything good. Hatred directed toward another human being is always sin regardless of what someone has done. We can certainly disagree with and disapprove of a person's sinful choices as God does in Scripture, but we are not to hate them. Living with hatred, therefore, always incites more sin even if we don't act upon it physically. Dwelling upon hatred causes bitterness, envy, jealousy, unforgiveness, and thoughts of

**Do not hasten
in your spirit
to be angry,**

**For anger rests in
the bosom of fools.
Ecclesiastes 7:9**



revenge—all designated as sin by Scripture. Often, however, these thoughts become actions as proved by this very incident in the life of Joseph. Rarely, do they ever just stay thoughts! They often lead to exacting revenge, and in the worst case, crimes of passions which involve physical harm and even death. Hatred causes us to lose control of our emotions and act irrationally. Instead, the Bible encourages us to act reasonably

Instruct

with self-control and love ([Gal 5:22-23](#); [Eph 4:26-27, 31](#)).

What is the danger of continually dwelling upon hatred? In what ways have you experienced thoughts of hatred that have turned into acts?

Question
6

Genesis 37:21-36

THE MISDIRECTION OF HATRED:

Now, Reuben, the eldest son, steps into the fray. Having overheard their plot, he tried to deliver Joseph from **their hands** by urging them **not to kill him** (v. 21). He proposed an alternate plan in which they would **not lay a hand on him**, but throw him in a **pit** (v. 22). He reckoned to return and rescue Joseph, bringing him back to their **father**. When Joseph arrived, they **stripped him of his tunic** and threw him into a cistern with **no water in it** (vv. 23-24). The construction of the cistern would have ensured his death. It would have had a narrow opening, often covered, at the top and the walls would have been smooth plaster. He would have no way of escape. Callously, **they sat down to eat a meal**, showing no remorse for their actions or compassion toward their brother (v. 25).

We often categorize Reuben as somewhat of a hero who attempted to do the right thing by saving Joseph's life. Although he does dissuade his brothers from killing Joseph, he doesn't truly confront their sin, recognize his complicity, or do the right thing. If he had done the right thing, he would have first confessed his own sin of hating Joseph, for the Bible does not absolve him from harboring this emotion. And he would have addressed the brothers' sin and evil intentions in spewing hate and seeking revenge. Perhaps, he realized that he couldn't reason with people consumed with hate. In their rage, it could have most likely resulted in his own death. But this does not excuse his actions. Instead, this incident clearly shows how hatred can cause people to think and react emotionally and irrationally. Acting in righteousness as specified in the Bible will always put us at odds with the world and it could cost us enormously in terms of suffering and persecution in this life. However, we are still called to do the right thing without compromise no matter what!

How do we sometimes compromise the righteous principles of God's Word and see ourselves as still "doing the right thing?"

Question
7

While eating, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelite traders carrying their goods on their **camels** headed to **Egypt** (v. 25). **So**, Judah reason that they should profit off their **brother** rather than **kill** him (v. 26). Therefore, he persuaded them to **sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites** (v. 27). They **pulled him** from the cistern and **sold** him for **twenty shekels of silver**—the going rate for human chattel (v. 28). In the meantime, Reuben who had gone elsewhere **returned** to rescue Joseph, but discovered the **empty pit** (v. 29). Distraught that his plan had been foiled and not knowing what his brothers had done, he found them and said, **“The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go”** (v. 30)? Undoubtedly, as the eldest he felt responsible and grieved about what he now must tell his father.



Likely, the brothers told Reuben what they had done and conspired to lie to their father. They took **Joseph’s tunic**, **killed** a young **goat**, and **dipped** it in its **blood** (v. 31). They then presented the blood-stained tunic to their father; claiming they had found it, they asked whether he could identify it as Joseph’s (v. 32). Immediately, Jacob recognized it and surmised that a **wild** animal had mauled his son (v. 33). Jacob flew into a fit of mourning, tearing **his clothes**, wearing **sackcloth**, and morning **for many days** (v. 35). The text indicates that his whole house, both **sons and daughters**, attempted to console him. Whereas the **daughters** tried to offer genuine comfort not privy to the situation, the **sons** feigned it. As the chapter closes, Jacob never expects to see his son again and we learn that he has been sold to **Potiphar** in Egypt—**the captain of the guard** for **Pharaoh** (v. 36).

In-Depth Information



*Some see a historical problem in this text. It identifies the traders as both **Ishmaelites** and **Midianites**. To provide a simple and concise answer to help us defend our faith, the **Ishmaelites** refer to the larger group whereas the **Midianites** are a subgroup of the **Ishmaelites**. Although it’s not exactly the same, it would be close to the way we call ourselves Americans, but also refer to ourselves as Texans.*

Genesis 50:20

THE MOTIVATION OF GOD:

To conclude this story and learn how we too can overcome hatred through the Lord, we must fast forward several years as the book of Genesis closes. Throughout Joseph's life, we see how he remains faithful to the Lord no matter what happens to him. He never lashes out or seeks revenge against his brothers. He doesn't harbor bitterness. Nor does he ever blame God, complain, or lament his circumstances asking, "Why me?" On the contrary, he exercised great patience, found contentment in honoring the Lord, and he forgave! He recognized and understood that God had a greater purpose in the things that he endured. This allows him to declare, "**But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive**" (50:20).

To overcome hatred in a way that honors God, we need to follow Joseph's example. We must remain faithful to Him no matter the circumstance. We must also recognize that God has a greater purpose and wants us for His glory when we submit to Him. Whether we contributed to the hate directed toward us or we experienced it unjustly, we must look beyond our immediate circumstances to see the bigger picture of what God wants to do. This requires that we act with integrity and be willing to forgive others. Everything we do must point them to salvation in Jesus Christ.

How can we turn hatred against us into a message about the grace and salvation Christ offers?

Question
8

It is impossible to overcome hatred and aggression directed toward us when we have a limited perspective guided by our flesh. Humanly speaking, we would never blame those in war for harboring such emotions and even acting upon them even when we have a strict code of conduct about how we should treat others, particularly prisoners of war. We may verbally condemn their actions, but we can empathize and understand how they feel because we have likely felt the same way at some point in our lives. God, however, holds us to a higher standard because He has given us His Spirit to guide us! He expects that we look beyond our immediate circumstances to see His greater purpose. We may have limited knowledge of how things may turn out; we may not immediately understand why things happened to us in the way they did. Yet, we must learn to trust God, allowing Him to speak to us and teach us about the way we have conducted ourselves as well as how others have responded to us. We must pursue righteousness and integrity at all costs and compromise in nothing! To overcome hatred, we must learn to exercise self-control in the Spirit and take time to hear God speak about how we should respond. Above all, however, we should learn to forgive. When we have a perspective guided by the Lord, we can overcome hatred and leave a lasting testimony for His glory even if it means persecution to the point of death.

Incorporate

How can hatred and the inability to forgive cause problems in the church beyond just those people explicitly involved?

How can hatred cause us and others to be short-sighted in the way we conduct ourselves? How does it often cause us to lack self-control?

How has Christ helped you to overcome hatred against others or hatred directed toward you? If you harbor any unforgiveness or bitterness still, take a moment right now to ask God to help you resolve it.

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