



Biblical Basics of Dealing with Problems

Whether one is a believer in Christ or not, there is no way to avoid problems (challenges) of life. God's Word, however, provides ample guidance for followers of Christ to be overwhelming conquerors whenever they face and deal with problems, no matter what the outcomes may be.

Whenever any challenge of life surfaces for a believer, there are a number of responses to take to obey God's Word and, thus, bring glory to God.

The responses listed below are not in a rigid or prescribed order. Verses are from the New American Standard Bible. WordTruth articles related to the following topics are listed at the conclusion.

A BELIEVER'S INITIAL RESPONSES TO ANY PROBLEM

A. What you should do

1. Commit that, with God's help and by His grace, you will bring glory to God and honor Christ in and through this difficulty (*1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17*)

1 Corinthians 10:31, Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Colossians 3:17, Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

2. Pray with thanksgiving (*Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18*)

Philippians 4:6-7, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

3. Ask for wisdom from God (*James 1:5*)

James 1:5, But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

4. Commit to solve this challenge God's Way (*Proverbs 3:5-7, John 14:15, James 1:25*)

Proverbs 3:5-7, Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

John 14:15, If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

James 1:25, But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

5. Humble yourself before the Lord, casting your cares on Him (*1 Peter 5:6-7*)

1 Peter 5:6-7, Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

6. Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger (*James 1:19*)

James 1:19, This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger

7. Maintain joy in the Lord (*1 Thessalonians 5:16, James 1:2-4*) . . . Especially so in light of the various aspects of truth in point B. below, “What you should know and bring to mind”

1 Thessalonians 5:16, Rejoice always

James 1:2-4, Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

B. What you should know and bring to mind

1. Trials are to be expected. Believers will experience trials that result in suffering for the cause of Christ (*Romans 8:16-17, Philippians 1:29, 2 Timothy 3:12*).

Romans 8:16-17, The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Philippians 1:29, For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake

2 Timothy 3:12, Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

2. You can reveal God's power and the life of Christ in this trial (*2 Corinthians 4:7-10*)

2 Corinthians 4:7-10, But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; ⁸ we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

3. Answers to this situation are in Scripture (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*)

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

4. The peace of Christ can be yours in spite of turmoil and difficulties (*John 14:27, Colossians 3:15*)

John 14:27, Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Colossians 3:15, Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

5. Trials are used by God to develop Christ-like character (*Romans 5:3-5*)

Romans 5:3-5, And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

6. Your Heavenly Father uses all things in your life for your good (*Romans 8:28-30*)

Romans 8:28-30, And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

7. God will not allow temptations that you are unable to bear (*1 Corinthians 10:13*)

1 Corinthians 10:13, No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

8. Trials will reveal the quality of your faith (*1 Peter 1:6-7*)

1 Peter 1:6-7, In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ

A BELIEVER'S ON-GOING RESPONSES TO ANY PROBLEM

A. What you should do

1. Pray without ceasing (*1 Thessalonians 5:17*), demonstrate divine love to your enemies in this situation, and pray for those who persecute you (*Matthew 5:44*)

1 Thessalonians 5:17, pray without ceasing

Matthew 5:44, But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

2. As you pray with regard to your own challenges, also remember to pray for others in the Body of Christ as well (*Ephesians 6:18*)

Ephesians 6:18, With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints

3. Remain obedient to God's Word out of your love for Christ (*John 14:23 and 15:10*)

John 14:23, Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."

John 15:10, If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

4. Spend time in God's Word to determine what specific truths are applicable to your current challenge (*2 Timothy 2:15*)

2 Timothy 2:15, Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

5. Discipline your thoughts to honor Christ (*Philippians 4:8-9*), focusing on eternal matters instead of being overwhelmed by the things of everyday life (*Colossians 3:2-3*)

Philippians 4:8-9, Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. ⁹ The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Colossians 3:2-3, Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

6. Practice biblical love in your interaction with others, especially to those who oppose or even hate you (*Luke 6:27-28, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8*)

Luke 6:27-28, But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly, it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth, ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away, if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away

7. Faithfully forgive those who have wronged you (*Matthew 6:14-15, Ephesians 4:32*)

Matthew 6:14-15, For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Ephesians 4:32, Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

8. Return a blessing in response to any evil you might receive from others (*Romans 12:17, 1 Peter 3:8-9*)

Romans 12:17, Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

1 Peter 3:8-9, To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

9. Judge yourself in this situation to determine if there are sinful things in your life that need to be addressed, confessed, and removed (*Matthew 7:1-5*)

Matthew 7:1-5, Do not judge so that you will not be judged. ² For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. ³ Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
10. Look for verses to memorize that will help you grow in the Lord (*Psalms 119:11*)

Psalms 119:11, Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.
11. When you speak, use words that are wholesome, gracious, and uplifting to others (*Ephesians 4:29*), especially avoiding gossip (*Proverbs 13:3 and 20:19*)

Ephesians 4:29, Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Proverbs 13:3, The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.

Proverbs 20:19, He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip.
12. Respond in ways that make for peace (*Romans 12:18*) which includes asking forgiveness from others for your sins against them (*James 5:16*)

Romans 12:18, If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

James 5:16, Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.
13. Stay focused on Jesus Christ and what He has done and continues to do for you (*Romans 12:1-2*)

Romans 12:1-2, Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
14. If you sin, confess your sin(s) to the Lord to receive His forgiveness (*1 John 1:9*)

1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
15. Commit to live faithfully in a manner that pleases the Lord (*2 Corinthians 5:9, Colossians 3:17*)

2 Corinthians 5:9, So therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

Colossians 3:17, Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
16. Determine ways you can die to self (*Luke 9:23*), especially by responding to needs of others instead of dealing only with your own interests (*Philippians 2:4*)

Luke 9:23, And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Philippians 2:4, Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
17. Listen carefully to all input related to your problem(s) before coming to any definitive conclusion(s) (*Proverbs 18:2, 13, 15, 17*)

Proverbs 18:2, A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.

Proverbs 18:13, He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.

Proverbs 18:15, The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

Proverbs 18:17, The first to plead his case seems right, Until another comes and examines him.

B. What you should know and bring to mind

1. Trials are used by God to produce greater fruitfulness in the lives of faithful believers (*John 15:1-2*).

John 15:1-2, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit."

2. Trials provide opportunity for members of the Body of Christ to minister to one another (*Romans 15:1, Galatians 6:1-2, James 5:16*).

Romans 15:1, Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

Galatians 6:1-2, Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

James 5:16, Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

3. Believers are recipients of God's comfort in any trouble and, as a result, are divinely enabled to comfort others in their difficulties (*2 Corinthians 1:3-5*).

2 Corinthians 1:3-5, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

4. God disciplines His children when they disregard His Word. This reproof is painful, but it produces Christ-likeness in believers who respond to the Lord's discipline (*Hebrews 12:5-11*).

Hebrews 12:5-11, And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." ⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. ¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

5. Perseverance is integral to Christ-like development (*2 Peter 1:5-8*) and also brings eternal reward (*James 1:12*)

2 Peter 1:5-8, Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

James 1:12, Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

6. The Holy Spirit helps you in your weakness, and Jesus intercedes for you according to God's will (*Romans 8:26-27*)

Romans 8:26-27, In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

7. Never be surprised at your trial(s) since you have the privilege of sharing the sufferings of Christ according to the will of God (*1 Peter 4:12-19*)

1 Peter 4:12-19, Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the

name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶ but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? ¹⁹ Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

8. If you suffer unjustly, Christ provided the example for how you are to respond to bring glory to God (1 Peter 2:20-21)

1 Peter 2:20-21, For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. ²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps

9. Others may eventually glorify God if you remain Christ-like in your response(s) to slander (1 Peter 2:12)

1 Peter 2:12, Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

10. Angry outbursts create more problems (Proverbs 14:29)

Proverbs 14:29, He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.

11. The points under “What you should know and bring to mind” in your initial responses to a problem (pages 2-3) remain applicable and are reprinted here:

* You can reveal God’s power and the life of Christ in this trial (2 Corinthians 4:7-10)

* Answers to this situation are in Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

* The peace of Christ can be yours in spite of turmoil and difficulties (John 14:27, Colossians 3:15)

* Trials are used by God to develop Christ-like character (Romans 5:3-5)

* Your Heavenly Father uses all things in your life for your good (Romans 8:28-30)

* God will not allow temptations that you are unable to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13)

* Trials will reveal the quality of your faith (1 Peter 1:6-7)

Every believer would be wise to take time to learn and be ready to apply these truths personally *before* major challenges appear. The biblical responses to life’s challenges are topics for personal study and application and are key points to be used when counseling others.

The truths that are mentioned above may seem too numerous to remember when you are going through a personal challenge. The fact that there are so many truths demonstrates the complete sufficiency of God’s Word to handle every aspect of any challenge that may arise. Yet applying just one biblical truth through the leading of the Holy Spirit will prove to be sufficient to meet the need of any given moment.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan to sin (Matthew 4:1-11), Jesus was an overwhelming conqueror by His reliance on and use of specific truth in God’s Word. Christ set the example—know God’s Word, use it specifically, and become an overwhelming conqueror no matter how severe your personal challenges may be.

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