

Because we live in this world, we partake of the human frailness of this life. Eventually every human will die of some accident or some sickness. Because I must leave this world, sooner or later, my prayers for my health (or for the health of loved ones) will someday seem to go unheard, simply because none of us will live forever.

✿ Some of the problems may grow out of *my own choices and unsound decisions*. My health may be impaired because of my choices in habits of caring for the body I live in. I may use my assets foolishly and have to live with the consequences.

✿ My life may be impacted because someone else made a bad decision. An alcoholic may cause an accident which affects me drastically. A loved one may choose divorce instead of working to grow a family. Though I may pray about the lives of others, and their impact on mine, God has allowed each of us “free will”, so He cannot overrule the choices of others in order to answer my prayers.

✿ I must be careful how I pray, desirous always that God’s will be done. In the life of Hezekiah, he did not want to die. He reminded God that he had been a good king and had done God’s will. Based on those facts, he asked for more life, and God granted fifteen years. During

those years, Hezekiah’s son, Manasseh, one of Israel’s worst kings, was born. If Hezekiah had known the hurt he was bringing to Israel by asking for healing, he surely would have preferred to go instead to be with his God (2 Kings 20,21).

✿ I must remember, too, that Satan is an active participant in the events of this life. Job made the mistake of laying the blame for his problems at the feet of God. In our lives, too, Satan is truly the roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8).

God has promised, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”* (Hebrews 13:5). *“Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; . . . Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret — it only causes harm”* (Psalm 37:7,8).

“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance” (Psalm 42:5).

WORLD EVANGELISM TRACTS

Phone: 662-283-1192;

Choate@WorldEvangelism.org;

www.WorldEvangelism.org

Request a free Bible Correspondence Course

Presented by the Church of Christ



When Troubles Come

Betty Burton Choate

We live in a troubled world. Statistics of hurting people bombard us daily on the news. But how do I deal with it when the trouble is *mine*, or when someone in my immediate family is stricken? How do I cope when there is no relief, day after day, from an overwhelming blow? It seems to me that there are three possible responses to be made:

(1) In my hurt, feeling that my prayers are futile, I can succumb to the doubts Satan would raise: “If there is a God, why is He so uncaring? He is not answering my prayers, so *I just don’t believe any more that He exists.*” Sadly, some experience a total disintegration of their faith under the pressure of crisis and trouble.

But, regardless of whether or not I feel God's response at this moment to my personal needs, everything in existence cries out that *there has to be a God!* I *don't want* there not to be a God; I *don't want* to live in a world devoid of the authority and control of God. I *don't want* to live without the security of an all-mighty Supreme Being. I *don't want* to believe that this life — these struggles, this hopelessness I am now experiencing — is all of the story. I *don't want* to be convinced that “chance” and “happen-so” are the mindless rulers of this world and of my own existence. I *don't want* to live without the security of believing that good will ultimately triumph over evil.

David wrote in truth, *“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.”* (Psalm 139:7,8).

So the first answer is not the choice that a troubled soul can make.

(2) My response may be to feel anger that my prayers evidently are not being heard. The anger brings bitterness, so that I turn my back on God. Feeling deserted by Him, I leave Him and His church in defiance. I stop studying and praying. I develop a hardness where religion is concerned. Though acknowledging the existence of

God, I determine to live my life without Him.

But what can anger and defiance toward Him accomplish for me? Can I bluster and bully my way through, causing Him to take away my pain? Will anger make Him ashamed that He has ignored my repeated prayers? Could I force Him to stir Himself on my behalf? Or would I, like Job, be found utterly wanting if God were suddenly to speak words to set my faulty thinking straight?

Job had cried, *“Oh, that I had one to hear me! Like a prince I would approach Him”* (Job 31:35-37). *“Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ‘Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me’”* (Job 38:1-3).

Obviously, anger is not the answer. God is too big for me to bully. And, what's more, having a bad attitude toward Him won't force Him to hear and answer my prayers. Anger will only separate me from God, leaving me in this world with no help greater than myself and fellow-human beings. That loss would be a blow in itself, too difficult to deal with.

(3) The third choice open to me is greater surrender to God, and greater defiance of

Satan who would weaken and destroy me.

Almost always, crises move people closer to God or further from Him. In my response, I can deliberately choose to draw closer to Him, reminding myself that there is no comfort, no strength, no hope, no solution without Him. And, in truth, *this third choice is the only option I have.*

How can I draw closer to God? I can combat doubts and questions with these thoughts:

✿ In Romans 8:28, God promised that He will work all things together for my good, *if I love Him.* I must rest my faith in this promise, and wait to see how He will fulfill it.

✿ I must remind myself that I cannot see the end of this road for me or for those I love. Therefore I cannot know just how God will use, in a positive way, what seems now to be negative.

✿ Neither can I see the other parts yet to come in my life, and how this is important in the over-all fabric God is weaving. I may need the wisdom, the increased faith, or some other molding gained from this experience to help me face other things, or to help others in their challenges.

✿ I must realize that *this physical world is not the important world,* and that God sees this even though I am sometimes blinded by the “now”. *God has never promised that His children will not face sickness and pain and eventual death.*