

WHY BAPTISTS BELIEVE WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE, PART 31

A CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE

What is to be our response to all of this? What is our plan of action? We should have one, right? Let's go to First Corinthians and get some answers...

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

This verse encourages me. It is a great verse to memorize.

[Question 15] What does this verse guarantee when we are tempted or tested? There are several mentioned. Let's go down the list you were give and see which ones apply.

That we will only have to face it one time. **No**, it never says that.

That we will not be tempted over and above what we can stand. **Yes, Check that one.**

That it's normal and nothing that other people have not experienced. **Yes, check that one.** That's exactly what "that is not common to man" means. You are not an island. You are not alone.

That God will provide an escape route from it. **Yes, check that one.**

That we will thoroughly enjoy the experience. **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**

That He will give us strength to endure it. **Yes, check that one.**

Here's a verse everyone loves to quote, especially in times of trouble, tempting, loss – the bad times: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

This verse is a promise. God is going to work out everything that happens for good. He is in control. But it is a specific promise for a specific group.

[Question 16] To whom is this promised? “For those who love God.” For those who believe in Jesus. First John 5:2 says, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.” God works all things together for good, not only for those who love God and obey Him, but also “for those who are called according to His purpose.” So, this is a specific promise for Christians, **for believers in Jesus Christ**.

Do you believe in Jesus? Are you a Christian? Then Romans 8:28 applies to you. But let's think about what Paul is saying. It doesn't always seem like things are working out that way. As we go through the bad experience, it doesn't seem like God is working it out for our good. We wonder, “What good is coming from this?” We become frustrated. Well, let's go to Romans Chapter 5...

“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame [disappoint], because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:3-5).

[Question 17] How should we respond to trial and tribulation? This is a hard pill to swallow... **Rejoicing**. What? Are you kidding me? You need to understand that rejoicing is a kind of expectant joy, an excitement and anticipation of what God is doing through a given situation in our lives in order to make us better, stronger

and more mature. This is a completely different way of looking at adversity.

Let me share an experience from my own life. Years ago, I was living in Littlefield, Texas. I had a group of black friends who were Christians. We met on a regular basis. One of them was sharing with the group about an awful experience he had been through. Right in the middle of sharing this, he got a big smile on his face and began praising God for it. He said that he knew that through this experience God was doing something in his life. At the time, I could not believe what he was saying. But as started thinking about it and reflecting back on this through the years, I realized that this man had a mature attitude. Frankly, at the time, I did not have that same attitude. I never forgot his testimony. It shook me and made me think. It even made me question my own theology!

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

[Question 18] What should we give thanks for? All these things! **Check them all.** The good (our blessings, friends, etc.); and the not so good (our enemies, sickness, all the adversity we face). Easier said than done, right? We need to look beyond our current circumstances and view things from a heavenly perspective. There is something on the other side that is better for us. God is much bigger than any issue we will face.

The end result of the difficulties that God allows in our lives is shown on your sheet. In *[Question 19]* You are asked to match the list with the appropriate scripture verses. Again, I'll let you do that on your own. You'll see that all the good godly character traits listed on the left are somewhere in the passages listed on the right.

Sometimes we Christians tend to look at things through limited, biased, warped, sinful human perspective. We may feel at times as though God doesn't care or He's mad at us. Such an attitude leads to depression, coldness of heart, prayerlessness, distrust of God and of other Christians, worry and selfishness. We may even consider abandoning our faith. Our attitude makes all the difference. We need to look at the situations of our life through God's eyes. God sees the big picture of our life looking down through the corridor of time. He knows what we need to grow. Face it, sometimes the experiences He knows we need are unpleasant to put it mildly. Trust God that He knows what you need. Thank Him in advance for what He is going to do in your life through whatever it is. He's at work doing something in your life. He knows what He is doing, even if we don't know right now.