

Major Tests of Our Faith – Lesson Five

Sickness, Grief, Financial Setbacks

It happens ... *life*. Sometimes life just happens. And it is not always the way we want or expect things to be, but at some point everyone will face disappointments ... or worse. Just when things are going great the doctor calls and says he needs to talk with us in person about the tests we had. Or it is the phone call that comes in the night delivering tragic news about a loved one. Or ... when things are finally getting easier for us financially but something goes wrong ... laid off from the job, unexpected major expenses, or investments fail. Life ... it happens to us all. That question is; ***how will we face these major tests of our faith?***

If we need a reminder that affliction can come to anyone we can think about the Bible character Job.

1. Spend just a few minutes and *read the first two chapters of Job.*
 - a. Describe the afflictions and losses Job suffered.

 - b. Give reasons why these afflictions proved to be such a test to Job's faith.

 - c. In reality, and ultimately, who brought Job's afflictions upon him?

2. What questions do people tend to ask when losses and setbacks come into their lives that may indicate they are struggling with their faith?

3. Read **John 9:1-3**.
 - a. What question did the apostles ask concerning the man born blind?

 - b. What was Jesus' answer?

4. Read **Luke 13:1-5**. What is the point of Jesus' response?

5. Read **Philippians 4:10-13** and be prepared to discuss Paul's attitude toward afflictions and setbacks that he faced.

6. What promise is found in **Hebrews 13:5-6**?
 - a. What makes this promise valid?

 - b. What personal applications might we make to this promise?

7. Read the **23rd Psalm** and think about this ... What is there about this Psalm that has made it a source of comfort to so many in their grief and afflictions?

8. When we are trying to encourage those facing adversity in life, reality forces us to admit that our answers do not always satisfy the one who is suffering. We must be careful to not be overly bold in our answers or we might become like Job's friends.
 - a. What can we do to help a person maintain his faith under such circumstances?

SOUL SEARCHER... Think fairly and honestly

Let's make it personal and ask ourselves... have I shied away from people who were struggling under afflictions, failing to lend them the helping hand that they needed?

If so, why?