

YOU CANNOT FOLLOW THE WAYS OF THE WORLD AND HONOR GOD!

Why Some Christians Struggle And Suffer In Life

(NKJV) Jdg 2:10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who 1) did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

11 Then the children of Israel 2) did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; **12** and 3) they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and 4) they provoked the LORD to anger. **13** They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. **14** And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. **15** Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

16 Nevertheless, *the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.* **17** Yet 5) they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. **18** And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. **19** And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

20 Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, **21** I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, **22** so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not.”

(NKJV) Ho 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

A. Consider Isa 1:2-20 Israel at another time:

(NKJV) Is 1:2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: “I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me; **3** The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master’s crib; But

Israel does not know, My people do not consider.” 4 Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward. 5 Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment. 7 Your country is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire; Strangers devour your land in your presence; And it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, As a hut in a garden of cucumbers, As a besieged city. 9 Unless the LORD of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah. 10 Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the law of our God, You people of Gomorrah:

11 “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” Says the LORD. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. 12 “When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? 13 Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. 14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.

15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. 16 “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil,

17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

18 “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

19 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; 20 But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword”; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

- B. **Judges 2:12 and 3) they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and 4) they provoked the LORD to anger. 13 They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. 14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers**

who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.

1. They kept doing it! They provoked him
2. God would send them Judges to deliver them but they did not listen to their Judges. The men of God.

(NKJV) 2 Ch 20:20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out,

Jehoshaphat stood and said,

“Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be ESTABLISHED; believe His prophets, and you shall PROSPER.”

- C. You cannot be like people of the world. You must listen to the men God sends to deliver you!

(NIV84) 1 Pe 2:8 and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

Key Sentence – *We are not like this world! We must not act like them!*

1 Pe 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

(NKJV) Jn 17:15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

(NKJV) Ro 9:25 As He says also in Hosea: “I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved.” 26 “And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ There they shall be called sons of the living God.”

1 Pe 2:10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

WE MUST TO LEARN TO THINK DIFFERENTLY!

(NKJV) 2 Co 5:16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

(NKJV) Ga 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

(NKJV) Col 3:11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

(NKJV) Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

(NKJV) 2 Co 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

D. God punishes those who will not recognize or honor him. Those who dismiss the work of his son.

Jdg 2:14 In his anger against Israel the LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist.

WHAT ARE RAIDERS THAT CAN PLUNDER YOUR LIFE?

1. He can rebuke the devour! Mal 3:11

2. At first, they could resist. He was their strength. He was their protection. He fought their battles for them, but because they turned away from him he let them go their own way.

3. He uses the world to beat us down when we ignore him.

(NKJV) Is 1:19 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; 20 But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword”; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

4. This is the reason many Christians are suffering today. They do things their way thinking what they do is alright with the Lord. They think they know the Lord but they are deceived.

a. Many may hear the word but they don't do it.

b. Just because someone hears the word it doesn't make them a Christian.

c. Many are misled by their preachers.

E. Look again at the reason they were suffering:

(NIV84) Jdg 2:10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.

THEY NEITHER KNEW THE LORD NOR WHAT HE HAD DONE BEFORE

15 Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress

WHY WOULD GOD BE AGAINST HIS PEOPLE?

1. They were going against the will of God. Paul was too.
(NKJV) Ac 9:5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”

(NKJV) 1 Co 10:14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

NKJV) 1 Co 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.

2. If they had known the Lord, they would not have had to fight the battles they had to fight! He would have fought them for them.
 - a. How much needless grief we bear too simply because we do not take it to the Lord in prayer!
(NKJV) Pr 13:15 Good understanding gains favor, But the way of the unfaithful is hard.
3. Clearly they were not fighting against just the physical enemy they saw, they were fighting against the Lord.
 - a. This is what is so terrible today. Many people think that they cannot pay their bills because they are not making enough money. The truth is, they cannot pay their bills, because the Lord is keeping them from doing it!
 - b. Dealing with this problem and that one. Issues are all around. Every time they turn around they have a new problem.
 - c. Disobedience, turns the Lord against you. Look at the Scripture again.

15 Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them.

4. All of this was due to ignorance of the word of God.
(NKJV) Ex 20:1 And God spoke all these words, saying: 2 “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Stop trying to deliver yourself!

3 “You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

This includes the images that are on money!

5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.

For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

5. Remember, your family is at stake!

YOUR FAMILY IS AT RISK WHEN YOU DISHONOR GOD!

- F. I am saddened because many times people suffer needlessly because of their rebellion against God.
1. Sometimes, people do people a disservice by trying to help them when God is trying to correct them by disciplining them in a trial.
 2. Think, How can a God robber expect to prosper when he is violating God?

HOW CAN A GOD ROBBER EXPECT TO PROSPER WHEN HE IS VIOLATING GOD?

3. Sometimes people try to help those who are going against God. They are actually themselves drawn into a battle against God by people they are trying to help.

BE CAREFUL NOT TO ASSIST PEOPLE WHO ARE AT ODDS WITH GOD AND BE DRAWN INTO THE FIGHT AGAINST GOD WITH THEM!

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- G. Not knowing the word of God causes them to not do the word of God.
1. As a result, they suffered because of their failure to take the time to know what God expected of them.
 2. How many of us today struggling because we are not doing what God says first to do? Sometimes it's simply because we just don't know what is the right thing to do.

H. Our whole household can suffer because of our ignorance of God's word. We must be serious about hearing the word of God. We cannot attend churches that do not teach us the whole truth. The cost of ignorance of God's word is too great!

(NIV84) Ho 4:6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. “Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

1. This is sad, but it is true.
2. God has said

(NKJV) Lk 12:47 And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few.

For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

- a. Today, we have no excuse. All of us have the word of God right within our reach. We have our Bibles right in our cell phones.
- b. Do you think God is going to excuse us for not knowing his word when his word is so very near us!

GOD'S WORD IS NEAR YOU, IT IS AS CLOSE AS YOUR CELL PHONE

3. Instead of using it to get close to God, you use it to get close to your friends on Facebook.
 - a. To text during church.
 - b. To watch internet fight.
 - c. To look at cats!
 - d. To keep up with the latest gossip.
 - e. To tell people what you ate this morning
 - f. To find a boyfriend or girlfriend
 - g. Whatever!

- I. We must put God's word first in our life. Remember why the people suffered?

THEY NEITHER KNEW THE LORD NOR WHAT HE HAD DONE

1. The Word is near us all. It is as close as our mouths to repeat it. It will not return to him void.
2. Life and death are in the power of the tongue! Be careful what you say!
 - a. You are children of God created in his image and have the power of the words you speak to make you or break you!
(NIV84) Pr 18:20 From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied.

- J. When you know the word of God you can use the power of your tongue to command angels to bring to pass God's word for your life.
(NKJV) Ps 103:20 Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word.

(NKJV) Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

1. God will give you the fruit of your lips and you will be judged by not only what you do, but by also what you say!

(NIV84) Mt 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

THEY NEITHER KNEW THE LORD NOR WHAT HE HAD DONE

- K. Therefore, what must we do?
(NKJV) 2 Ti 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
(NIV84) 16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.
Again the power of the tongue!

1. This is the reason I am presenting the Back to the Bible program to you.
2. Everyone in this church needs to start carrying their Bible with them.
Especially here in church!

- L. We must come to know the word of God so that we can trust God over ourselves.
We have to remember, our ways are not his ways. He is our deliverer!

GOD IS OUR DELIVERER! WE CAN'T DELIVER OURSELVES!

1. Our ways will destroy us.
2. We have to deny what we want and do what God says!
3. We are killing ourselves by ignoring God and not knowing that he will take care of us if we devote ourselves to him.

- M. He tells us to come together and encourage one another. This is the reason you must have a good church!

(NKJV) Heb 10:24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching

1. How can you encourage others if you are not in contact with them?
2. You must be around believers that will hold you accountable.

FAILURE TO ATTEND CHURCH DISHONORS GOD WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT

3. You better have a pastor that will teach you God's word.

IGNORANCE OF GOD'S WORD IS COSTLY. YOU NEED TO KNOW IT!

4. You need to know God's Word!
 - a. The members of this church should be encouraging one another to do what is right.
 - b. We should see each other as family!
5. We don't need to seek out a church where we can hide out, we need to be in a church where we stand out as servants of God!

DON'T SEEK A CHURCH TO HIDE OUT IN, SEEK A CHURCH TO STAND OUT IN

6. You need to be encourage and able to do the work of the Lord.
 - a. Remember, God expects you to bear fruit!
 - b. Remember also, if you do not bear fruit, you are disobeying him and he will hold you accountable.
- N. Look what happened as a result of ignorance to Eli's sons
(NIV84) 1 Sa 2:12 Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD.
(NKJV) 1 Sa 2:12 Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD.
- (NIV84) 1 Sa 2:17 This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they were treating the LORD's offering with contempt.**
(NKJV) 1 Sa 2:17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.
1. God destroyed Eli's family because of their ignorance and their ignorant disobedience and disrespect to him.
 2. What does this verse say they did wrong?
 - a. What would it mean to treat it with reverence?

NOT KNOWING THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT AN EXCUSE GOD WILL ACCEPT FROM YOU!

3. You must come to know the word of God! You must make sure you have his word in your heart!
 - a. This is your most important responsibility in life! Remember the words of Solomon:
(NKJV) Ec 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.
14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

ETERNITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE HERE AND NOW

- O. Again, why do many people suffer in life?
(NIV84) Jdg 2:10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.
- (NIV84) Jdg 2:10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.**

THEY NEITHER KNEW THE LORD NOR WHAT HE HAD DONE BEFORE

- P. They did not know him to know what he expected of them and they did not know what he would do for those that love him and put him first!

1. They were ignorant of his word
 - a. which meant an ignorance of him
 2. They were ignorant of his works.
 - a. they would not trust him with take care of them
- Q. it is time for us to come to know the Lord and to remember who he is and what he will do for us.
- R. It is better to obey God than to try to make it without him. If we know him, we know he will not forsake us.
- S. Here is the God that we serve and his words to us
Je 29: 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
1. These plans are based upon a condition
12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”
- T. **(NKJV) 2 Ch 7:13 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.**
- U. So now, no matter your situation, now is the time, this very moment to make up your mind that you will turn to the Lord. You will put him first and as he has said he will deliver you when you call upon his name!
- V. Now is the opportunity for everyone to return to the Lord to honor him and to come to know him.
1. I now open up the doors of this church for you to join with us and for those that have been to make the commitment to put him first.
 2. To stop missing church thinking that other things are more important.
 3. Remember, you must know the Lord and what he expects of you and you must know how he will take care of you.

THEY NEITHER KNEW THE LORD NOR WHAT HE HAD DONE BEFORE

- W. God does not automatically fulfill his plan for us. We have to accept his plan.
1. God had a plan for Adam and Eve. They rejected it!
 2. How did they reject it? They were disobedient!
 3. If they were obedient they would've had the best of the land and death would have never entered the world.
- X. Don't forget, that's the reason he established his church - so that we will not be prey to situations in this world.

(NKJV) Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Y. Your success in life is dependent upon your knowing the Lord and that he will take care of you.

Z. Now,

(NKJV) Mt 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.