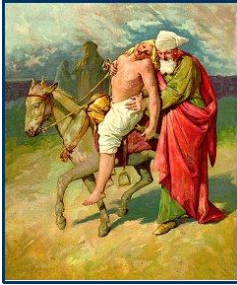


## New Horizons Newsletter



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*"May the Lord show you His favor and give you peace."*

(Nu. 6:26)



November 2010 Issue

## WHY DO "BAD THINGS" HAPPEN TO CHRISTIANS?

This is one of the most asked questions among our Christian Counseling clients. Another frequently asked question is; "Why me?" The most common answer to these questions that I frequently hear is; "You just have to accept it by faith. . .It rains on the just and the unjust." While these answers are true, maybe we can give a little more insight for you to feel more comfortable about; "Why do bad things happen to Christians."

When people say bad things are happening to them, what do they really mean? A "bad thing" can range from stubbing a toe to death of a close family member. Everyone has their own perspective of what is considered "bad" in their life. Whether it is a minor or major event, it has impacted the individual in a negative way. Since we do not like to give up the right to be right, something or someone must take the blame.

### **If It Is Good Enough For Jesus. . .**

In Matthew 16:21, we read; *"From then on Jesus began to speak plainly to his disciples about going to Jerusalem, and what would happen to him there - that he would suffer at the hands of the Jewish leaders, that he would be killed, and that three days later he would be raised to life again."* (TLB)

The Bible is full of passages talking about the pain and hardships people went through. In this passage Jesus is explaining that even He will not be exempt from suffering. In Daniel 9:26, 27; 7:13-14, the passages refer to the Messiah being cut off and there would be a period of trouble before glory. We see in the New Testament the disciples going through persecution and suffering before receiving their rewards in Heaven.

This was hard for the Jewish people and disciples to understand. They saw their coming Messiah as one who would be immune from "bad things." The people of faith in God saw all illnesses as caused by sin in the sufferer's life. This is similar to some faith movements today. Jesus was sinless and yet, he suffered *bad things*. God used Jesus' suffering to teach us about faith and to glorify God. When asked about a certain blind man's sin, Jesus replied that in this case, the man was blind not because of sin, but to demonstrate the glory of God. (John 9:1-41)

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In fact, our "bad things," may be a result of our being faithful Christians. Troubles and hardships can be trials and testings that are God intended to make us stronger in faith and in life. *"Experiencing problems and persecutions can build character (James 1:2-4), patience (Romans 5:3-5), and sensitivity toward others who also face trouble (2 Corinthians 1:3-7). Problems are unavoidable for God's people."*<sup>1</sup>

During His human presence God, through the God man, Jesus Christ, never promised that Christians would not suffer (Luke 21:5-36). He did not say that we would not be persecuted or go through *bad things*. What Jesus taught was that none of His followers would suffer spiritual or eternal loss. During our human lifetime, everyone will physically die. However, believers in Jesus Christ will be saved for an eternal life free from pain and suffering.

### Does God Cause "Bad Things" To Happen To Christians?

I know some people who would shudder at such a thought. However, Scriptures tell us that sometimes His will is for us to suffer. Don't let other people shame you into thinking that you must have been bad (have sinned) because of the *bad things* that are happening in your life.

*"12 Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life. 13-15 Don't let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, 'God is trying to trip me up.' God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one's way. The temptation to give in to evil comes from us and only us. We have no one to blame but the leering, seducing flare-up of our own lust. Lust gets pregnant, and has a baby: sin! Sin grows up to adulthood, and becomes a real killer."* (James 1:12-15 MSG)

I know many Christians who do their very best to avoid *bad things* from happening in their lives. The reality is that no one can stop upsetting events from impacting their life. What is important to know is that whatever *bad things* may happen to you will cause God's goodness and glory to be seen more easily (Zechariah 3:1-4).

In the Old Testament passages (1 Chronicles 21:1; 2 Samuel 24:1) we read that God's sovereignty permits the existence of evil in a limited way. God does not do evil things to us, but He does allow the evil as a means for achieving the greatest good. Because of God's own anger, He puts within David a desire to have a census done of Israel. Therefore, God allowed David to be incited by Satan to sin in doing a census. But, God's glory shined forth by giving David a choice of consequences; to be punished by men or by God. David chose to be punished by God, "...for his mercy is great" (2 Samuel 24:14).

In Scripture, the name Satan is often transliterated (e.g. tempter, enemy, power of darkness, etc.) thirty-four times in the New Testament alone. God has granted Satan limited power over death. Fear of death is therefore what Satan uses to keep people in bondage to him (Hebrews 2:14f). "He does this by contrasting the anxiety and despair associated with death with immediate, albeit temporary, gratification that can be obtained by following his ways rather than God's."<sup>2</sup>

In brief, at the center of Satan's strategies is to weaken a Christian's faith through lies to believe that when *bad things* happen, God must be punishing them (1 Thessalonians 3:2-5). When

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, N., Editor, (1992) *The Handbook of Bible Application*, page 608, Tyndale House Pub., Wheaton, IL.

<sup>2</sup> Bromiley, G., Editor; (1988), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 343, Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI.

the Hebrews were judged by God and sent into exile, I am certain many thought that they were abandoned by God. In a similar way today, when a Christian believes the lie, confidence that God has their back can become significantly shaken.

*"11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV).*

In keeping the faith - the shield of faith - to stay strong during adversity, the Christian must arm himself with the promises of God to the believer (Romans 10:17). Reading, memorizing, and dwelling on the Scriptures will act as a shield of faith quenching the fiery darts of Satan (Ephesians 6:16).

*"2 May grace (God's favor) and peace (which is perfect well-being, all necessary good, all spiritual prosperity, and freedom from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts) be multiplied to you in [the full, personal, precise, and correct] knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."*

*"3 For His divine power has bestowed upon us all things that [are requisite and suited] to life and godliness, through the [full, personal] knowledge of Him Who called us by and to His own glory and excellence (virtue).*

*4 By means of these He has bestowed on us His precious and exceedingly great promises, so that through them you may escape [by flight] from the moral decay (rottenness and corruption) that is in the world because of covetousness (lust and greed), and become sharers (partakers) of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:3-4 AMP)*

When you first learn of a crisis or calamity in your life, as quickly as possible, remember God's promises (Romans 4:20). Use those promises to stand against/resist the bad thoughts and feelings. This is not saying that you are denying the reality of the moment. It is looking beyond the moment into God's vantage point of His good and perfect intent for you. This helps to instill peace that helps you to believe that everything is going to turn out OK. This is entrenching yourself to fight the good fight (1 Timothy 6:12).

When something upsetting is happening to me, I will often think: "Who (or what) just stole my peace away." That helps me to get into spiritual reasoning rather than reasoning by my flesh which will generate fear and doubt. Thinking on God's promises and His faithfulness (Deuteronomy 7:9; Hebrews 10:23; Titus 1:2) will help generate inner peace and joy.

*"13 May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing [through the experience of your faith] that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound and be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope." (Romans 15:13 AMP)*

Unbelief will knock you down as quickly as a bicycle wheel rolling through soft sand (Hebrews 3:12). We overcome by believing and trusting in God's promises despite what we are seeing and feeling (Revelations 12:11; James 4:7).

"As with Job, God sometimes permits Satan to work evil against His people so that they might learn to trust Him more fully. God allowed a messenger of Satan to buffet Paul so that Paul, in weakness rather than in proud self-sufficiency, would learn that Christ's power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)."<sup>3</sup>

This is why we must help one another when adversity strikes. This becomes a time when we can remind one another of the promises of God; not to ignore the present situation, but to give love, understanding, and hope.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Eerdmans, p.343.

When talking about suffering and adversity, Billy Graham said: *"Nowhere does the Bible teach that Christians are exempt from the tribulations and natural disasters that come upon the world. Scripture does teach that the Christian can face tribulation, crisis, calamity, and personal suffering with a supernatural power that is not available to the person outside of Christ."*<sup>4</sup>

*Dr. Pierre J. Samaan*

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## Pray About Being a Prayer Partner & Financial Supporter

With your financial help we have been able to purchase an ASUS Laptop computer. It was taking about ten minutes on my old Laptop to go to a webpage to do my research. I was thrilled when with the new computer, I could instantly go to all web sites. We are still in need of a wireless router so the counselors in the other offices can use their computers on the internet for their research (old one was fried by lightning). We are grateful to each of you who have sent us donations.

### PRAYER REQUESTS:

- **Pastor Josh McKeown of our United Brethren In Christ church is the youngest son of the senior pastor. Pastor Josh was recently diagnosed with Leukemia. He has begun aggressive chemotherapy. We ask for your prayers for Pastor Josh, wife Julie, and their four children. We are "standing on the promises" of God.**
- My mother-in-law, Barbara Senkovich, had a "heart event" at our home where she now lives. A few days ago she returned to our home after surgeons performed a triple bypass to her heart. Please pray for and safe and complete recovery for her and peace for my wife Linda, who is shouldering much of the caregiving.
- We have a couple who is praying to get legal custody of a grandchild. The parents are in jail and will not be coming out in the near future. Please pray that God, who already knows all the details, will have mercy on this toddler and the grandparents. We pray that God will give guardianship to these grandparents who are very capable of loving and caring for this child who is in Foster Care.
- There are many couples who are estranged in their marriages. Please pray that circumstances will change that will cause them to give their marriages another chance; this time with Clinical Christian Counseling.
- There are many who are being turned down for bank loans for no good reason. Please pray that God will direct their ways in the future to a special blessing.
- Several psychotic clients will be seeing Psychiatrists this month. I have prayed and layed hands on them for healing. In doing what God tells us to do for those who are sick amongst us, we now must believe without doubting that the Lord will bring healing in His timing.
- There is a Christian father who will be starting a new job this month. He has Asperger's Disorder which is higher functioning Autism. While others file for disability, this Christian brother believes that God intended for us to work and not be dependent on others, especially the government. Please pray that God will have this man be seen with favor at his

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<sup>4</sup> *The Billy Graham Christian Worker's Handbook*, p. 265, The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Charlotte, NC, 2005.

new job. May God give him the abilities to carry out his job with swiftness and accuracy. May his family be blessed by this brother's modeling of a Christian.

- We need daily prayer partners who will dedicate a moment of each day to pray for the Clinical Christian Counselors and clients.

Today I spoke to a young adult woman who was feeling desperate. She was living alone and could not afford to go to the doctor's or a counselor. She was beginning to have suicidal thoughts and this scared her. Her thoughts have led to rejecting her friends and church. After a period of time trying to lift her spirits, I arranged for her to come in for a series of sessions at no cost to her.

Thank you for those who are praying and donating to this counseling ministry. I would not have been able to help this young lady without your helping us. If you have a business or ministry, please consider adding us to your budget. We do not turn away those who cannot give a donation for their counseling; we do not believe Jesus would either. But, the fact remains, we have to pay our expenses.

Would you please consider adding us to your budget for giving to this tax exempt counseling ministry? Thank You!

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## **New Horizons Institute of Counseling/ United Brethren Counseling Ministry**

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*"Seeking True Recovery to Replace Pain With Healing Peace."*

Clinical Christian Counseling/Clinical Pastoral Counseling is crisis intervention and strengthening of Christian character and values, which is Discipleship. Our Ordained and Professional Clinical Christian Counselors are committed to the welfare of the Christian. Clients are encouraged to take advantage of their own church programs as part of their Christian Counseling Treatment Plan. We are credentialed professionals who must follow state confidentiality guidelines. This is not church Lay Counseling in which your confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Professional Clinical Christian Counseling will help the client, couple, or family move beyond tolerable existence into genuine inner healing, renewal, and wholeness through the work of God's Holy Spirit in the counseling.

Tolerable recovery is the process of getting better. True recovery says, "I made it!" This is when I can look at the source of my pain - which has become a stronghold - and realize it has been replaced with God's healing peace - Replacing the source pain with God's Truth.

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## NEW RESEARCH FINDINGS

### [Reaction To Stress Improved By Walnuts, Walnut Oil,](#)

A diet rich in walnuts and walnut oil may prepare the body to deal better with stress, according to a team of Penn State researchers who looked at how these foods, which contain polyunsaturated fats, influence blood pressure at rest and under stress...Read article at:

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/203463.php>

### [ADHD In Children Linked To Depression And Higher Suicide Risk During Teens](#)

Children who are diagnosed with ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) have a higher chance of developing depression and/or attempting suicide during their teenage years, or 5 to 13 years after being diagnosed, say researchers in a new article published in Archives of General Psychiatry...Read article at:

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/203593.php>

### [Early Female Puberty Linked To Absent Biological Father](#)

A girl whose biological father does not live in her household has a higher chance of entering puberty earlier than her peers, say researchers from the University of California, Berkeley, in an article published in the Journal of Adolescent Health...Read article at:

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/201709.php>

### [A Correlation Found Between Childhood Adversity And Exaggerated Inflammatory Response To Stress Among Seemingly Healthy People](#)

Seemingly healthy adults, if they were abused or neglected during childhood, may suffer physiological consequences decades later. In research published online by the journal Neuropsychopharmacology, a team led by psychiatrists at Brown University and Butler Hospital found that healthy adults who reported being mistreated as kids appear to have an elevated inflammatory response to stress compared to adults who had happier childhoods...Read article at:

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/204006.php>

### [Doctors, Med Students Face Higher Risks Of Suicide](#)

News outlets report on workforce issues for doctors, including elevated suicide risk and hesitance to e-mail with patients. In a reported column, The New York Times reports that for "several decades now, studies have consistently shown that physicians have higher rates of suicide than the general population - 40 percent higher for male doctors and a staggering 130 percent higher for female doctors. Read article at:

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/204122.php>

### [Need A Study Break To Refresh? Maybe Not, Say Stanford Researchers](#)

It could happen to students cramming for exams, people working long hours or just about anyone burning the candle at both ends: Something tells you to take a break. Watch some TV. Have a candy bar. Read article at:

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/204787.php>

**\*To read the full article, click or copy and paste the URL. The articles are for informational & educational use only. The released studies are not necessarily a reflection of beliefs of this ministry.**