

407 Problems: A blessing or a curse?



**Too many Christians are settling for being safe and average when we need to be getting bold! This world has absolutely nothing decent to offer - so you might as well slam your foot to the floor for Jesus and do some damage to Hell!**

Find out your PQ - Take this test.

PQ = Problems quotient

- \_\_\_ I can control my life and keep problems away.
- \_\_\_ God will keep problems out of my life.
- \_\_\_ I hope problems don't come, but if they do, God will solve them.
- \_\_\_ When problems come, I am privileged because I see them as opportunities.

**Lets take a Biblical view at problems and sufferings.**

- Jesus warned us in John 16:33 that in this world we would have much tribulation, suffering and problems, but not to worry because He had overcome the world.
- God does not originate our problems. That is proven in the Book of Job. Satan brought the problems.
- God does not always help us avoid problems, but normally shows us how to go through them and overcome them, and actually use them to profit not only ourselves, but especially the Kingdom of God.
- 1 Peter 1:6-7 says, "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed."
- The New Testament states that there is a "share of the sufferings of Christ" that is ours. Lets just make sure that we understand what that is supposed to be and not get religious about it. (Romans 8:17 - Phillipians 3:10 - 1 Peter 4:13)
- Joshua and Caleb thought that their enemies would be "bread" for them; actually make them stronger. (Numbers 14:9)

**In Acts chapter 6-7, Stephen had a hard time, but it was worth it:** He was a disciple who was described as one who was full of the Holy Spirit, full of wisdom and the people could not resist his speaking because it was so anointed of God. The religious people came up with false accusations and false witnesses in order to have Stephen arrested. His only crime was helping the widows, being a servant to the poor and being full of the Holy Spirit and speaking out for Jesus.

Acts 6:15 says that in his trial, as he testified, they all saw that his face had the appearance of the face of an angel. After that Stephen gave a very God anointed speech and in 7:56 he said, "Look, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at God's right hand!" Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses placed their garments at the feet of a young man named **Saul**. And while they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, Lord Jesus, receive and accept and welcome my spirit! And falling on his knees, he cried out loudly, fix not this sin upon them! And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Later **Saul** got saved and became the Apostle Paul.

### **A little church history:**

**In Acts 1, Jesus told His followers, just before He left for Heaven, that the Kingdom was not coming right away, but He would give them power to be witnesses (THAT WORD MEANS MARTYRS).**

In the early church, Roman leaders burned Christians at the stake, fed many to wild beasts in huge coliseums, and made many political friends with their acts of violence. The early church grew mightily in faith and noticed that for every 100 martyrs, 300 people got saved. They saw the value in this and they understood the connection. At many burnings, the person on the stake would hold up 2 fingers to indicate that God's grace was sufficient for what they were going through. They would smile, sing a psalm and go be with the Lord as a hero.

Later, when Rome made Christianity a mandatory religion, and killed people who would not become a Christian, the church grew weak. The Christians were taught to be guilty because they were not suffering, so they figured that their sickness, disease and poverty was suffering for Jesus. This began a false heresy that still exists today.

Not all of us are called to give our lives as martyrs, but there is a guarantee that all of us will face problems that only God can handle.

**AS BELIEVERS IN JESUS, WE ARE TO HAVE THE MINDSET THAT "PROBLEMS" ARE FRIENDS, NOT ENEMIES OR SOMETHING TO AVOID!**

### **The Conquest of Evil - THE CROSS.**

**This is the power God uses to change our problems into profit** - Jesus did not avoid the world's biggest problem of killing the Son of God, but instead He used the Cross to His benefit and billions of people will go to Heaven.

By Jesus, the sinless God in flesh, going to the "execution chamber" of the Cross, He overcame and conquered evil forever.

How? Evil, Satan's worst efforts, were put on Jesus. He could not kill Jesus during his 33 years because Jesus was sinless. One must have sinned in order to die. But Jesus never sinned. He could have lived forever. But Jesus accepted God's will and plan to *become* sin for us, take our sin in His own body and spirit and trade places with us.

When Satan took Him to Hell, He was there illegally. So Acts 2:24 says it was impossible for Hell to keep Him dead.

**At the Cross of Jesus, all evil was born by Him forever. Nothing can hurt us any longer. Evil, problems, bad things can still happen, but they no longer have any power of Jesus, and over those in whom Jesus lives.**

**When Jesus rose from the dead and received His new birth, He resurrected as a new race of people over which death, evil and all it can do, no longer has any power over.** Romans 6:9-11 says, “For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Then He put this power into you and me. When evil tries to hurt us, it cannot, unless we do not have the proper information.

**If this is true....**

**How do we make it work?**

In Luke 19:11-13 His disciples thought that the Kingdom of God was coming to earth right now. That all their problems would be solved the next day. He taught His disciples a lesson for you and me.

He told a parable about a king going into a distant country to obtain a kingdom, and then soon to return. He called his servants and gave them each an amount of currency equal to about 4 months salary (10 minas). He told them to **OCCUPY** until He came back. Many of them detested his authority.

**There were four classes of people present at his return.**

1. The group that detested his authority and did not want anyone to reign over them, were banished from his presence and killed.

2-3. Others **OCCUPIED** or did business and traded with the currency. According to their success, they were given more currency and rewarded with kingdom authority over many cities.

4. Others **did not OCCUPY** because they thought that the king was a mean person who would punish him for OCCUPYING. Not only did he not get any rewards but his currency was taken away. Use it or lose it!

**What is this word OCCUPY** - The word OCCUPY means to do business, to trade for profit. Business by definition is to take a raw material or service, add value to it and make it more profitable so it can be useful or sold. It means to exchange or to even change something to make it more profitable. It is used in the Bible to describe people who had businesses, cattle farms and other businesses both good and bad.

**Proverbs 3:13-18** says, “Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding. For the profit (MERCHANDISE, OR OCCUPY) from it is better than the gain from silver, and its produce more than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies; and all the things you can desire are not to be compared with her.”

**How to you do business or occupy with WISDOM?**

**Matthew 25 unfolds this mystery.**

**Occupying with WISDOM  
gives us some responsibilities.**

**A little holy algebra - (the cross + problems) + (faith, hope, love & patience) =  
blessings.**

**Parable of the Talents:** Matthew 25 is almost the same parable as Luke 19. The master left and left currency later to return. We are to use what God has put into our hands today, whether that be good or bad. We are to make good use of our time and of the situations we find ourselves in. **Faith.**

**The Wise and Foolish Virgins:** Matthew 25. Virgins mean that they kept their sins cleansed before the Lord. The wisdom is hearing God speak, the Lamp would be the Word of God (Ps 119 & Proverb 6:23) and the Oil would be the Holy Spirit. When those are combined they know that their Lord is going to come to deliver them even if ALL HUMAN hope is gone. They are going to hang on to what Jesus said to them no matter what. **Hope.**

**To convert our problems into blessings takes time** and it takes our patience to hang on after all hope seems to be gone. It takes living all out for the Lord, and continually cleansing yourself from sin and the world as you go.

**Parable of the sheep and goats:** Matthew 25:31. While we are waiting for our Lord to come, we are to exercise the **love** of God. Jesus said in Matthew 24:45, “when I return who will I find with wisdom, love and faith, those will I reward.”

**We are to change our problems into profit.** We are to take the raw materials of problems and do business with them by mixing them with WISDOM to produce blessings. Another word is reconcile, which means to turn something from an enemy to a friend.

**Yes Jesus is returning to earth someday, but He will also return for you now, to turn your problem into a blessing.**

**If evil has been conquered, then our problems *have* to be a blessing!**

This doesn't seem fair to Satan; every time he throws his best punch, we pay him back seven times and hurt him real good.

**What is our guarantee that this will work?**

The Resurrection is our guarantee. If Jesus had not been resurrected, we would have not hope. But the fact that He was resurrected is conclusive evidence that your problems cannot hurt you if you are willing to be a change agent for God.

**Here is a simple way to remember this idea without a lot of trouble:**

Exodus chapter 4. Moses was not sure about his assignment that God gave to him. God told him to throw down the rod that was in his hand. When he did it turned into a serpent; then God told him to pick it up again and it turned back into a rod. This is the entire message in a nutshell.

**The Rod is the Word.** The Word is also Jesus who became sin for us on the Cross (the serpent). But when Moses picked up the evil serpent, it turned back into the Word or a blessing. Jesus absorbed the evil out of the serpent and made it a blessing.

**Because of the Cross of Jesus** we can be sure that whatever evil we touch will turn into a blessing. Mark 16:18 says, “and you shall pick up serpents it will not hurt you but turn you into a healer.”