

# Overcoming Problems

*Steps to Victory*



**12 Foundation Stones Class 11A**

# Class Section 1: The Ups and Downs of Life

Even though the Lord wants us to be happy, there are times when it isn't so easy. Some people think that as soon as they receive Jesus they're never going to have any more problems and things are going to go real smoothly.—But getting saved doesn't bring complete relief from all problems and struggles.

*2 Timothy 2:3-4—You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

*Hebrews 12:1-4 - Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.*



## \* Types of problems

We could divide our troubles or difficulties into three groups:

- 1) Physical problems,
- 2) Difficulties caused by our own mistakes or by intentional or unintentional actions of others,
- 3) spiritual attacks

## \* 1. Physical problems

Most of us face some physical weaknesses or limitations or sickness at some time or other, or maybe we are short of money or have some other material lack.

*Philippians 4:12—I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

The apostle Paul wrote this, so he obviously experienced physical difficulties.

## \* 2. Human weaknesses

*Romans 7:18-19—For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.*

The Lord made each of us differently, and has allowed each of us our own particular imperfections—plain old human weaknesses, frailties and lacks like selfishness, pride, laziness and envy—"every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up," against which we must daily battle.

We can also suffer problems because of the actions of others, whether intentional or unintentional. Maybe a scheduled bus doesn't show up and you're late for an important interview. Maybe someone has borrowed some item but failed to return it. The examples are endless.

### \* 3. Spiritual attacks

The Devil tries to defeat you personally, to hinder you, and discourage you. Thank God we know the answer: Faith! We'll be talking more about how to defeat the Devil's devices later in the class but for now, remember we are already victors.

*1 Corinthians 15:57—Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*1 John 5:4 - Whatever is born of God overcomes the world.*

### \* **No trial greater than you can bear**

Troubles are common to all! Whether we face trials from spiritual attacks, or battles with our human weaknesses or physical problems, we all have troubles! Not to speak of the mistakes that we make, or suffering from the effects of the mistakes of others, and so on.

No matter what problems you face, always remember that the Lord is with you and can help you get victories! The trials of life can be overcome by trusting in Him and looking to Him for help.

### \* **How will you respond?**

Dr. Hubert Davidson visited the noted poetess, Myra Brooks Welch, who perhaps is best known for her masterpiece, "The Touch of the Master's Hand." As he turned to leave her home, Myra Welch patted the arm of her wheelchair and said, "And I thank God for this." Imagine being grateful for a wheelchair! But her talent lay undiscovered prior to her wheelchair days. Rather than becoming bitter, she chose a better way, and a wonderful ministry opened new doors of blessings for her. Her poems have blessed many.

## \* Closer to Jesus

*Psalm 55:22—Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.*



Remember that whatever troubles you face, the ultimate result can be a closer and better relationship with the Lord. When you're in trouble and call out for help, He answers!—And His presence will be so precious and real to you when you let Him encourage, guide and lead you. No matter what you go through, He

is there to help, comfort and bring meaning to it all.

*Hebrews 13:5—Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

## **Class Section 2: Step One - Identify the Problem**

### **\* Ask the Lord about your problem**

When any of us face any kind of a crisis or dilemma, test or privation—whatever the trouble or problem—what is the first thing we should do?—Complain? Get upset and angry that things aren't going just the way we would like them to?—Of course not!

When things go wrong in your life, whatever your emotions at the time, it is beneficial to take the time to pray about why things happen.—It's good to always keep the Lord in mind, asking Him about

things.

*Psalm 143:10—Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.*

### **\* Read the Word**

Look in God's Word and find the counsel and guidance you need about your problem! Ask the Lord to speak to you through His Word.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17—All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for*

*reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*Psalm 119:105—Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*



Look for similar situations or problems in the Word. Draw your encouragement from the Word.

### **\* Recognize the spiritual warfare**

God, Jesus, the good angels and departed saints, are not the only inhabitants of the spiritual world! There is also a dark side, headed up by the Devil, who is our arch-enemy, and is assisted in his evil

tasks by his minions, lesser devils and demons. The Devil (Greek: diabolos) is the fallen angelic being who is the supreme enemy of God and man. He is in direct opposition to everything God is or all He wishes to do. Starting in the Garden of Eden, the Devil has attempted to deceive every living soul.

*Ephesians 6:11-12—Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. 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 (spiritual) places.*

That's why the Lord promises:

*Isaiah 59:19b—When the Enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.*

*Luke 10:19—Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the Enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

He also cautions us:

*Ephesians 4:27—Nor give place to the Devil.*

*1 Peter 5:8-9a—Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith.*

## **The temptation of Jesus**

Jesus was carried out into the desert and tempted by the Devil. Even His physical body was allowed to be put under the power of the Devil for a short time. But under the attack He never yielded but resisted

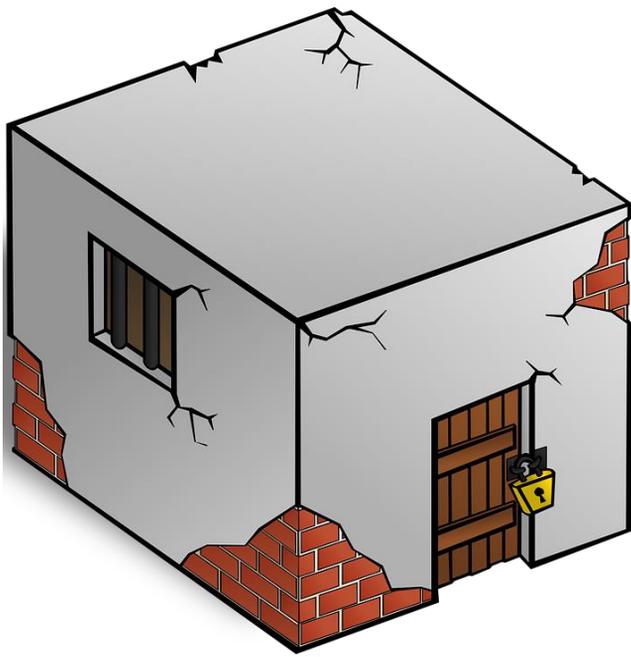
the Enemy with the Word of God, until the Enemy saw Jesus wasn't going to give up, and then he quit.

*Matthew 4:1-11—Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the Tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Then the Devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" Again, the Devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the Devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.*

Take note of how Jesus fought back with the Word, "it is written"!

## **Don't let the Devil trick you!**

Needy miners and settlers in British Columbia, Canada, engaged in stripping abandoned Fort Alcan of lumber, electrical appliances, and plumbing, made an amazing discovery. While dismantling the jail they found that the mighty locks were attached to the heavy doors, and two-inch steel bars covered the windows, but the walls of the



prison were only wallboard made of clay and paper, painted to resemble iron. A good old heave against the walls by a man not as strong as a football tackle would have burst the wall out. Nobody ever tried it because nobody thought it possible.

Many Christians are prisoners of fears that are nothing when

pushed against. Satan cannot do anything against a child of God, but he loves to put barriers of papier-mâché in the path of a believer to make him think that there is no progress in the direction of the will of the Lord. When by faith we push against it, we will be free.

### **\* Accept your responsibility**

Even if you were not directly to blame for something, you still need to take responsibility for your situation and work toward a solution. No matter who caused the problem, blaming others will not resolve it. Concentrate not on placing blame but on finding solutions. Don't be too quick to judge and blame others!

*Matthew 7:3-5—And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.*

Nobody who continues to blame other people for their problems is

going to be able to progress and grow spiritually! You've got to take the responsibility yourself.

Even if you feel you have not been in the wrong, progress is not going to be made until you forgive the other person.

*Matthew 6:14 - If you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, then your Father in heaven will also forgive your wrongs. But if you don't forgive others, then your Father in heaven will not forgive the wrongs you do.*

**\* Seek godly counsel. Ask others to pray with you.**

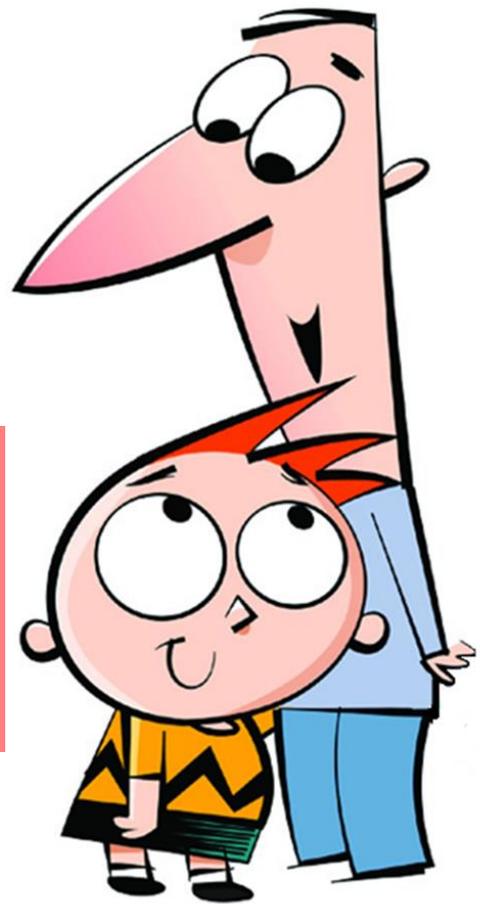
People often have the attitude, "I wanted to get my problem all straightened out and worked out by myself." But sometimes it can be difficult to resolve some issues on your own.—The more you worry about them and think about them, the more confused you're likely to become. Whereas if you do what the Scriptures say and let someone help you bear those burdens, you may be able to get help and resolve the problem much sooner.

*Proverbs 11:14—Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.*

*Proverbs 19:20—Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days.*

*Proverbs 20:5—Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.*

*Proverbs 27:9b—The sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel.*



## Quick Summary of Step 1: Identify the Problem

We've gone through the first step. Let's quickly review how we can diagnose our problems and find out what is actually wrong.

1. Ask the Lord about your problem.
2. Read the Word. Look for similar situations or problems in the Word and see how the solution was brought about. Let the Word guide you; also let it encourage you.
3. Recognize the spiritual warfare. Remember always that the Lord's power is much greater than the Enemy's.—Resist the Devil and he will flee.
4. Accepting the responsibility for your own actions is essential if you want to make progress! Don't blame others. Concentrate not on placing blame but on finding solutions.
5. Seek Godly counsel. Ask others to pray with you.

## Class Section 3: Step Two - Find the Solution

One of the first things to do when facing a problem of any kind is to ask the Lord for His help!

*2 Samuel 22:7—In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry entered His ears.*

*Psalms 34:4—I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

*Psalms 50:15—Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.*

*Hebrews 4:16—Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

## Use His strength!

A small boy was trying very hard to lift a heavy object. His father coming into the room and noting the son's struggle asked him. "Are you using all your strength?"

"Yes, of course I am," the boy impatiently exclaimed.

"You are not," the father answered. "You haven't asked me to help you."

### **\* Take a stand against your problems. Don't give up!**

Once you've recognized that you have a problem, then you've got to take a stand against it.

The Lord will be faithful to answer prayer and do His part. But then you've got to do your part by exerting the effort to forsake and "put off" the old negative patterns and bad habits. His Word says:

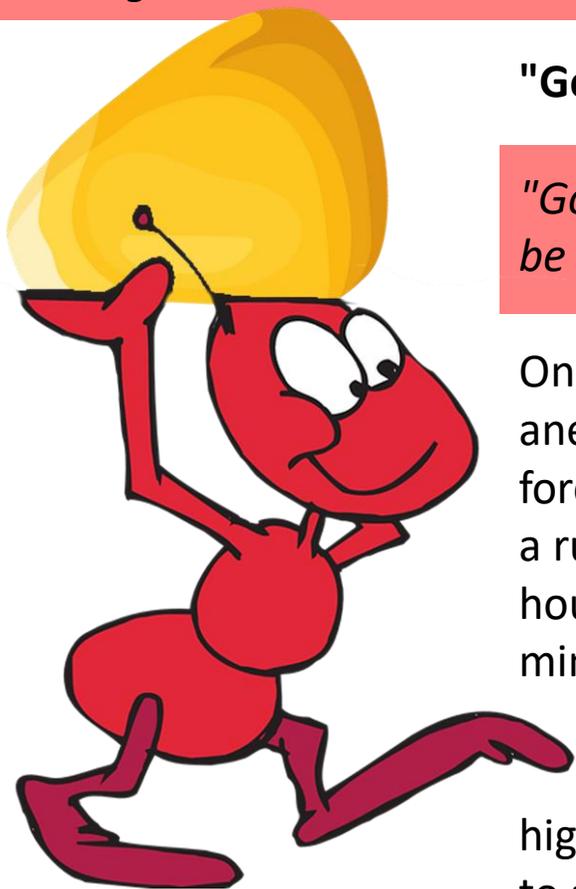
*Ephesians 4:22-24—That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, (24) and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

*2 Corinthians 10:3-5—For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 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.*

You don't always necessarily get over this sort of thing in a day, it often takes a while. It can be a struggle, but if you do your part, the Lord will certainly do His, and you will win!—So don't give up!

*Galatians 6:9—And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

*Proverbs 24:16a—For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again.*



## "Go to the ant!"

*"Go to the ant, ... consider her ways and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6).*

One king used to relate to his friends an anecdote of his early life. "I once was forced to take shelter from my enemies in a ruined building, where I sat alone many hours," he said. "Desiring to divert my mind from my hopeless condition, I fixed my eyes on an ant that was carrying a grain of corn larger than itself up a high wall. I numbered the efforts it made to accomplish this object. The grain fell 69

times to the ground; but the insect persevered, and the 70th time it reached the top! This sight gave me courage at the moment, and I never forgot the lesson."

## \* Be positive

*Philippians 4:8—Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever*

*things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.*

When a room is dark, you don't go around trying to chase the darkness out of the room.—You let the light in and the light chases out the dark! Fill your mind with the Light of God's Word and the darkness will flee. The way to get rid of temptations and negative thoughts is to think of good things, Godly things.

*Isaiah 26:3—You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*

## **A positive outlook**

Among the students at a well-known college there was a young man who had to get about on crutches. He had an unusual talent for friendliness and optimism and so won the deep respect of his classmates.

One day a student asked him what had caused his deformity. "Infantile paralysis," he replied briefly, not wishing to elaborate on his difficulties.

"With a misfortune like that, how can you face the world so cheerfully?" inquired his classmate.

"Oh," replied the young man, smiling, "the disease never touched my heart."



## **\* Praise the Lord. Keep cheerful!**

One of the greatest things in the world that anyone can learn is to be content in whatsoever state you're in, whether it's to be abounding or to be in want.

*Philippians 4:11—Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.*

*1 Timothy 6:6—Now godliness with contentment is great gain.*

We all need to learn to count our blessings! The Lord wants us to think on the positive things, and try not to set our minds on all the negative things.

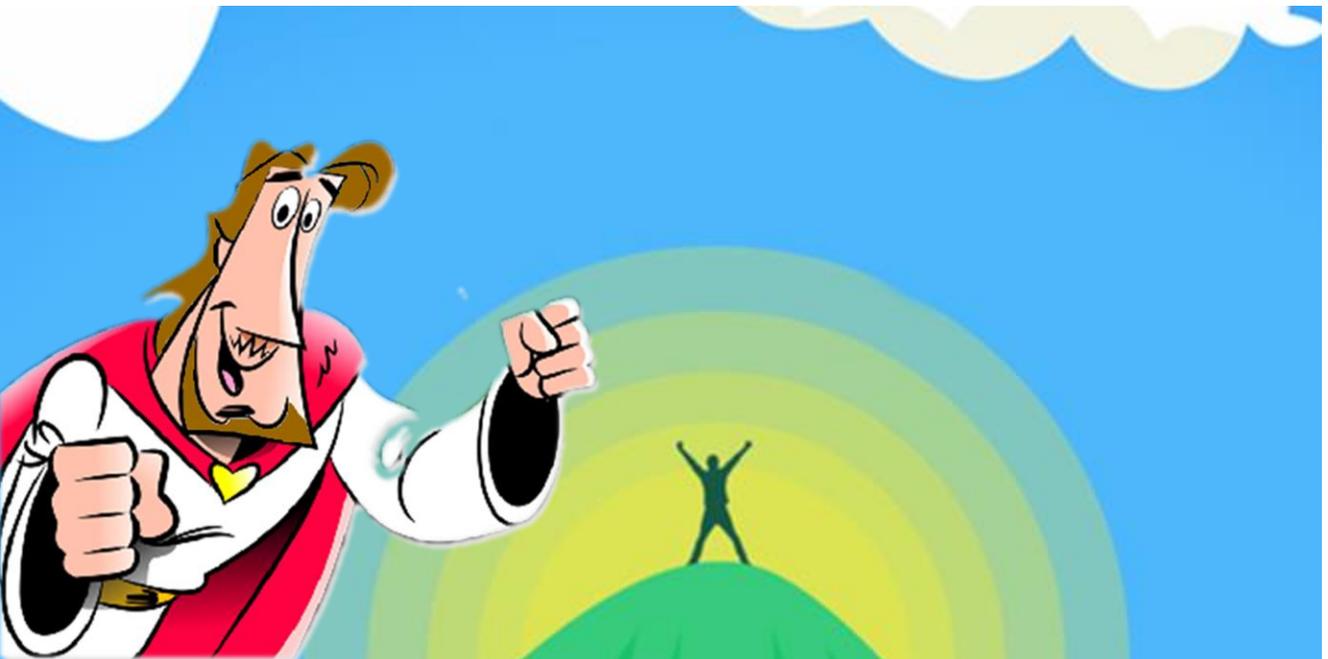
When Jonah finally shouted, "Salvation is of the Lord!" that old whale that had swallowed him just couldn't take it, and he spit him up!

*Jonah 2:9-10— "But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.*

## \* Quick summary of step 2: Find the solution

Let's review how to find the solution.

- Pray and ask the Lord for help. Ask Him to solve the problem. Sometimes we have not because we ask not!
- Take a stand against your problem. Then, don't give up! Sometimes if you are trying to overcome a bad habit, it can take awhile to establish a new, better habit in its place. You'll get tested along the way. But keep going! Victory belongs to those who persevere.
- Think positive thoughts. Fill your mind with good things, and there won't be room for doubts and discouragement.
- Praise the Lord. Keep cheerful! Victories are often found along the path of praise.



# Seasons of Life

*From Jesus with Love*

When you hit bottom, when dreams give way to disappointment, when all you've worked so hard for goes to pieces, you are tempted to despair. That's when you must remember that you were created for a purpose, and that purpose isn't a single, one-time thing; it's multifaceted and complex. As long as you live, there will be something more you can accomplish, something more you are meant to accomplish, and there is always more to learn in life.

The end of one path doesn't mean the end of all paths. Just as the seasons come and go in their cycle, so periods of success or setback, fulfillment or disappointment, and emotional highs and lows come and go. You may be on the down end of the cycle now, but that won't last forever.

The sooner you come to Me and share all your concerns and cares with Me, the sooner you will find new inspiration and purpose. The best may be just around the corner, but you'll never know if you stop here. Take My hand and let Me lead you into a new season of fruitfulness and fulfillment.