

# Overcoming Problems

*Move On*



# Class Section 1: Recognize the lessons and grow

Life is a constant learning process. Receiving Jesus as your Savior is just the beginning of becoming what God wants you to be.

The learning process is a marvelous thing! Nobody's perfect, and that's what life is all about! — It's about not being perfect. It's about learning and growing.

Perhaps one of the best ways to understand this is to look at the illustration that Jesus gave in John 15. It is the fruit-bearing branch that is pruned.



*John 15:1-2,4-5 - I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ...Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be*

*fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.*

## **Experience to your spiritual development is like exercise to the body!**

What does exercise do for your body?—It strengthens you. So every experience you go through, every test, every trial, every new thing, everything that you learn along the way, causes you to gain experience, and experience is to your mind and your spirit what exercise is to your body. Every experience you go through, God designs to make you stronger!

## **Burdens can be a bridge**

A biologist tells how he watched an ant carrying a piece of straw which seemed a big burden for it. The ant came to a crack in the earth which was too wide for it to cross. It stood for a time as though pondering the situation, then put the straw across the crack and walked over upon it. Here is a lesson for all mankind! A man's burden can be made a bridge for his progress.

## **Finish the race**

We can find inspiration from the life of John Stephen Akhwari, as told in Bud Greenspan's book *100 Greatest Moments in Olympic History*.

When the winner crossed the finish line in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic marathon, officials thought the race was over. Then, an hour later, John Stephen Akhwari, a runner from Tanzania, entered the stadium. Bloodied and bandaged from a fall, he limped painfully with every step.

As Akhwari made his way around the track, the crowd began to

cheer loudly. When he crossed the finish line, you would have thought by the roar of the crowd that Akhwari had been the victor. Later, when asked why he had not dropped out, Akhwari replied, "I don't think you understand. My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race. They sent me to finish the race."

When you're bruised and bloodied by life, press on; your Creator did not send you here to start the race, but to finish it!

Keep going, no matter what the cost. Keep fighting, no matter what bruises you get. Keep running, no matter how many times you stumble and fall. Your cuts and bruises and scrapes and scars are medals of honor in the Lord's sight, signs that you had the faith, courage, determination, and commitment to keep going, even though it was tough! You may have fallen, but you refused to quit.

At the end of the race, you'll then be able to say like Paul of old did:

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).*

**\* Keep your eyes on Jesus, not yourself.**

*Romans 7:18a— For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells.*

*Galatians 2:20—It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.*

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

Get your eyes on Jesus. Think about the Lord! Jesus is your best friend and He is the One who can help you get the victory, whether over your personal problems or whatever obstacles you face.

## **Peter walks on the water—and almost sinks when he takes his eyes off the Lord!**

*Matthew 14:28-32—And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.*

## **Above the storm**

A story is told that once the passengers of a vessel steaming along the St. Lawrence River in the US were very angry because, in spite of the fact that heavy fog was encircling the boat, full speed ahead was maintained. At last they went to the first mate, and complained.



"Oh, don't be afraid!" the mate replied, with a smile. "The fog lies low, and the captain is high above it, and can see where we are going."

Are you tempted to complain about the way your Great Captain is leading you? Believe that He can see the end of the way. Then, declare, "You, Lord ... make me dwell in safety." (Psalm 4:8)

## **\* Trust the Lord that He knows best**

*Romans 8:28—And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

Something that can help you to learn to exercise your spiritual muscles is developing the awareness that everything that happens in our lives has a reason! The Lord has a reason for it, and we should always look for that reason.

When you see your life in that light and things that happen to you as being the Lord's voice speaking to you and trying to show you something, it opens up a whole new way of looking at things, and it brings the Lord so close. If you'll stop and look and listen and ask Him what He is trying to show you, you'll become so much more aware of His presence and you can see all of the concrete ways in which He guides you.

Sometimes it's not so easy to figure out what He is trying to show us, but if we keep persisting and looking for the answers, the Lord will be faithful to show us that He always has a reason for the things He allows us to go through.

If you can learn to see the good in things that happen to you, your life will be richer, your lessons greater and your mind more tranquil, and you will more easily recognize the Lord's hand in the events of your life. It makes all the difference in the world whether you look at a flood of problems, trials, battles, and tribulations just waiting to see the worst happen, or if you look at them with the excitement and challenge that comes from waiting to discover all the good you know the Lord will bring out of them.

## The parking fine

For years, I had been parking my car in an alley near my Chicago home. Neither I nor others doing likewise had ever been ticketed, as there was no regulation against parking there. Going out one morning, I found a ticket on the car. I paid the fine and thereafter had to find another place to park. For a while, I was hesitant to include the unpleasant experience among the "all things" which work together for good to God's children. Not until some days later did I see the hand of God in the experience. During a wind storm a mammoth oak went down and fell right across the place where I had been parking my car for years. Had my car been in its accustomed



place, it would have been smashed right in the middle! I humbly thanked God for the fact that nothing of a chance nature can ever befall His children who are "the called according to His purpose."

## **The end of a bitter trial**

*As told by Corrie Ten Boom in her book, Father Ten Boom*

It happened around the year 1640. A group of Spaniards was traveling through the jungles of South America when one member of the party fell seriously ill with malaria. In a short time, the fever weakened him so much that he was unable to walk.

His friends were at their wits' end. They improvised a stretcher from branches and tried to carry him on it. The condition of the sick man and the difficulties in transporting him became such that they finally decided to lay him down at the side of a pool of water, in the shadow of a tree with thick foliage. There they left him.

His situation seemed desperate. His fellow travelers had left him some food, but he paid no attention to it. Water! That was his only thought. Tormented by a burning thirst, he bent down to the water, only to fall back in despair. The water had a loathsome and bitter taste.

But as time went on, and the fever continued to burn and consume his body, he drank again and again. Then a strange thing happened. After every drink of water, the fever seemed to subside and the pain to become less severe. Strength returned to his weak body.

Healing had come to him through the bitterness of the water. You see, the tree under which his companions had laid him was the Cinchona, or quinine tree. Leaves and pieces of bark had fallen into the water, and the quinine had dissolved. Not only was the exhausted traveler completely restored, but a wonderful remedy was discovered, through which countless lives have since been saved.

This is way it often goes with those of us who have to pass through dark and bitter trials. How easily we rebel against the circumstances that cause us to suffer and which we cannot change. How-ever, the Lord sometimes sends troubles our way in order to heal us. We must believe in His love and wisdom. Soon we discover that the bitterness of the medicine was necessary in order to heal us.



### **\* Forget yourself and help others.**

The Lord lets us go through difficult experiences to comfort others and help them! The best way to forget your own problems is to help someone else solve theirs.

Get your mind on helping others! Seek their happiness before your own. Ask the Lord to help you love Him so much that you'll love others so much that you'll forget your own self, and live for Jesus and for others!

Remember also that the lessons you learn, the comfort you receive from the Lord and others, equips you to comfort others. We can sympathize more with others when we ourselves have gone through hard times.

*2 Corinthians 1:4—[Jesus] comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

## **Saving himself by saving another**

The story is told of Sundar Singh (a Christian from India, 1889-1933) who was traveling with a Tibetan companion on a bitterly cold day. Snow was falling heavily, and both men were almost too frozen to go forward; they felt they would never survive the terrible experience. They reached a steep precipice, and there they saw that a man had slipped over the edge, and was lying, almost dead, on the ledge of rock below. Sundar suggested that they should carry the poor fellow to safety. The Tibetan refused to help, saying it was all they could do to save themselves; and he went on, leaving Sundar behind. With great difficulty Sundar managed to get the dying man up the slope and on to his back, and then he struggled on with his heavy burden. Before long he came upon the body of his former companion, the Tibetan. He was dead, frozen to death. On struggled Sundar, and gradually the dying man, receiving warmth from the friction of his own body against that of his rescuer, began to revive, while Sundar himself grew warm through his labor. At last they reached a village and were safe. With a full heart, Sundar thought of the words of his Master: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25).

## **\* Patiently wait on the Lord**

You've prayed for help. You've followed the preceding steps. You are trusting, believing, fighting, trying to change.—And yet still you are beset with the same trial!

It is a fact that we don't always get answers to our prayers right away. This doesn't mean we're doing something wrong, but the Lord is expecting us to have patience. When the Lord delays in answering prayer, it tests our faith. Patience takes faith, to trust in God for the outcome.

*Psalm 40:1—I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.*

*Lamentations 3:26—It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.*

*Hebrews 10:36—For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.*

*James 1:3-5—The testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

Learning patience seems to be one of God's most frequent lessons, yet one of our own rarest virtues, as it really tests our faith and drives us to the Lord and His Word, to Whom and which we might not otherwise give so much time and attention. Testing our patience is one way God has of getting our attention while we're waiting for His answers!

*Isaiah 40:31—But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

*James 5:10-11—My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.*

There is a beautiful and wise saying: "Anything wonderful can happen in that little margin of time when you do not give up, but keep on believing and keep on praying."

### **Have patience for the answer**

"Have you, perchance found a diamond pendant? I feel sure I lost it last night in your theater," asked a woman who did not identify herself to the manager of the theater.

"Not yet, madam," said the manager, "but we will search diligently for it. Please hold the line for a minute while I make inquiry."

Returning a few moments later to the telephone, the manager said, "I have good news for you! The diamond pendant has been found!"

There was no reply, however.

"Hello! Hello! Hello!" said the manager, but the woman who made the inquiry about the lost diamond pendant had failed to wait. The manager endeavored to trace the call, but without success.



Many of God's children are like that woman. They fail to wait on the Lord. His answer to our prayers will come in His good time. The promise is sure: "Call to Me, and I will answer you" (Jeremiah 33:3).

## Quick Review: Move On!

- Recognize your lessons and grow. The Christian life is a growing process. Recognize what you should learn from the problem. Even if the problem is not your fault, there still may be lessons to be learned.
- Keep your eyes on Jesus, not yourself. Trust Jesus to bring the victories that you need.
- Trust the Lord that He knows best. "All things work together for good to them that love God." You will enjoy greater peace in your life if you can trust that the Lord loves you and will not allow anything in your life that will not turn out to be for good, even though you can't understand it right away.
- Forget yourself and help others. Getting busy helping somebody else may in itself solve your own problems. Also remember that the Lord allows us to go through things so we can comfort and help others.
- Patiently wait on the Lord. The Lord always answers, but His timetable often isn't the same as ours! "Anything wonderful can happen in that little margin of time when you do not give up, but keep on believing and keep on praying."

## Class Section 2: Quiet Time—Refuge from the Storm

### \* Quiet time with Jesus

The storms of life come upon all of us in different ways—personal trials, spiritual battles, physical difficulties. It's wonderful to know that there is a shelter where we can find solace, rest, comfort, and

guidance, and that is in the presence of the Lord. Remember that Jesus tells us:

*Matthew 11:28-30—Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

One of the best ways that you can implement these steps to solving your problems, as well as preventing some problems before they even start, is to set aside a little time each day to come into the Lord's presence. Spend regular time in quiet prayer, praise, and reading the Word. The more time you can devote to this, the more victories you'll obtain and the closer you'll get to the Lord.

*Isaiah 30:15—For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."*

*Hebrews 4:9-10—There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.*

Jesus can solve all your problems in one little glimpse! He can refresh your whole spirit with one deep breath. He can clarify all your thoughts with just one sweet strain of Heavenly music. And He can wipe away all your fears and tears with just one little restful moment in that perfect peace He gives when your mind is stayed on Him and Him alone, because you trust in Him.





## The Climb to Victory

*From Jesus with love*

The rugged climb doesn't dissuade the determined mountain climber; he revels in the challenge. Nothing can stop him from pressing on until he

reaches his goal. No adversity can cause him to turn back. When he looks at the steep cliffs ahead, he doesn't focus on the danger but on the toeholds and narrow rock ledges that will take him to the peak. He isn't held back by the harshness of his surroundings or the toll the climb is taking on his body; he is propelled onward and upward by the thought of triumph.

There are many obstacles to surmount in life, but each one you conquer is another one behind you. When the going gets tough, lean on Me. Let Me lead the way and guide you up the rugged cliffs. I know all the danger spots and how to get past them. Together we will surmount each obstacle, together we will reach the summit, and together we will plant the flag of victory!