

# WHAT TO DO WHEN TROUBLE STRIKES

(Selected Scriptures)

**Opening Song:** Sing to the King

**Intro:** Story about elderly black man in Chicago who lost his entire family in an apartment fire. When asked about his loss, with the flames of the building in the background, he replied: “God ain’t never made no mistakes.”

**Title:** What to Do When Trouble Strikes

What you choose to think about has greater influence on your life than anything else than you can possibly imagine.

If you’re serious about changing something in your life, you have to start by changing the way that you think. **The Bible tells us in Romans 12:2:** “*Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think..*”

The way you think, or your perspective about life, makes all the difference in the world (e.g., man in Chicago I just spoke of).

**When you have** the *right* perspective on problems you can handle almost *anything*. When you have the *wrong* perspective on problems you can handle almost *nothing*.

Job had the right perspective (**The Lord gave...taken away**...blessed be the name of the Lord!)

**Song:** Blessed Be Your Name

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One thing all of us know is that we do not know what is going to happen to us on any given day. We don’t know if a day will be full of trouble or not. But we all do know one thing, trouble is something that will happen to all of us from time to time throughout the course of our lives.

What should we do when trouble comes?? What kind of outlook should we have about it when it happens? When trouble comes, should we immediately say, “Oh no...why is this happening?” or should we have a different perspective about trouble?

**1. When your situation is depressing, you must think about God’s goodness**

Depression is like a warning light on your dashboard.

(focusing on - vs. + = depression)

On December 1, 1997, Missy Jenkins was one of seven students gunned down at Heath High School in Paducah, Kentucky.

A bullet damaged her spinal cord, leaving Missy dependent upon braces and a walker in order to move around.

At the time of the shooting, Jenkins was 15-years-old and described herself as "without direction." During her convalescence, she not only found the will to stay alive, but the determination to go forward in a positive direction with her life.

"I realized I did not die that morning. I'm all here. I'm alive," said Missy in a recent interview.

On December 18, 2004, carried by that resolve, Missy received a bachelor's degree in social work from Murray State University. Her future plans include a master's degree, marriage, children, and a job.

Missy said, "I just don't think God is going to give me anything I can't handle."

Missy Jenkins thought about God's goodness and it changed her life.

In the Bible, King David went through all kinds of trouble. But look at his outlook about God and life:

**Psalm 31:19** ----- How great is the goodness you have stored up for those who fear you. You lavish it on those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world

Folks, when trouble comes upon you, don't focus on the problem—you'll get depressed. Don't say, **"If God is so good, why did He allow thus and such to happen?"** No! Focus on God's goodness and say: "God ain't never made no mistake." He has never given His children anything they cannot handle.

**Offertory Prayer** ---

**Song** after Offertory: Good, Good Father

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**1. When your situation is depressing, you must think about God's goodness**

**2. When your situation looks defeating, you must think about God's greatness**

In Psalm 77, the writer is crying out to God in the midst of his problems and yet, he doesn't seem to get any relief. He's troubled and overwhelmed:

**Psalm 77:1-3**-----I cry out to God; yes, I shout. Oh, that God would listen to me! When I was in deep trouble, I searched for the Lord. All night long I prayed, with hands lifted toward heaven, but my soul was not comforted. I think of God, and I moan, overwhelmed with longing for his help.

Sometimes, troubles come upon us that seem impossible to solve—marriage problems, financial problems, family problems.

What I love about Psalm 77 is that the writer doesn't focus on **how impossible everything seems**, he focuses on the greatness of God—how God is mighty and able to do anything.

**Psalm 77:10-14a** -----And I said, "This is my fate; the Most High has turned his hand against me." But then I recall all you have done, O LORD; **I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago.** They are constantly in my thoughts. **I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works.** O God, your ways are holy. **Is there any god as mighty as you? You are the God of great wonders!**

If your problems seem overwhelming and you feel like you are in quicksand and that there is no way out, you need to think about this: there is a hand reaching down to you from heaven and that hand is so powerful that it has done wonders and miracles for centuries. And with His hand, Jesus can pull you out of the problems you are in if you will listen carefully to His voice and follow His directions. **He is mighty to save.**

God specializes in the impossible. He wants to help you. Trust him to help you. And remember, "God ain't never made no mistakes."

**Song:** *Shout to the Lord*

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1. **When your situation is depressing, you must think about God's goodness**
  2. **When your situation looks defeating, you must think about God's greatness**
  3. **When your situation looks dark, you need to think about God's closeness**

What is a dark day? It is a day when all hope seems gone. It is a day when you can't see any light at the end of the tunnel and you feel like God has abandoned you.

There will be times in life when God seems a million miles away and it seems as if He doesn't care about you.

It is at those times when you need to think about how close to you he really is.

**Story:** My stay in hospital—with face toward the wall and in excruciating pain: “Bob, I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

The antidote to dark days is to settle in your mind that God is near and that He WILL take care of you:

**Psalm 34:18** ----- The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

**Joni Eareckson Tada** was an athletic teenager who jumped into a lake one summer over 50 years ago in 1967 and broke her neck at the age of 17. She became paralyzed from the neck down.

In spite of the difficulties **these past 52 years, Joni said:** “You can endure almost anything if you know God is right next to you.”

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Author Richard Exley wrote the following:

I know one minister who returned to his pulpit ten days after his son committed suicide. Under duress he read his text: “**And we know that all things** work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.”

Visibly struggling, he said, "I cannot make my son's suicide fit into this passage. It's impossible for me to see how anything good can come out of it. Yet I realize that I only see in part. I only know in part.

"It's like the miracle of the shipyard. Almost every part of our great oceangoing vessels are made of steel. If you take any single part—be it a steel plate out of the hull or the huge rudder—and throw it into the ocean, it will sink. Steel doesn't float! But when the shipbuilders are finished, when the last plate has been riveted in place, then that massive steel ship is virtually unsinkable.

"Taken by itself, my son's suicide is senseless ... Still, I believe that when the Eternal Shipbuilder has finally finished, when God has worked out his perfect design, even this senseless tragedy will somehow work to our eternal good."

And folks, the reason that we, as God's people, can think that way...

---even when the days are **depressing**,

---and even when the days are **defeating**,

---and even when the days are **dark ...**

...the reason that we can think that way, is this:

**"God ain't never** made no mistakes."

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**Song:** (This is) Holy Ground/ We Are Standing on Holy Ground

**(Lord's Supper)**