

In search of...

Truth & Right

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Spiritual Troubleshooting

Have you ever run into problems with computers or electronics? With how prevalent they are in our world today, and how often errors tend to occur, I am sure that you have at least a few times. When bugs & glitches rear their ugly heads, we might react in some different ways, ranging from smacking the device to just getting up and walking away, but generally, at some point we end up consulting the "Help" tab or the user manual to see how we can fix the problem. What comes next is referred to as "troubleshooting" and takes us through various methods to determine the source of the problem and then getting things working properly again.

First, we probably check to make sure the machine is plugged in to a power source or has batteries. Then, once that is known, we need to see if it has been turned on or not (leading to much embarrassment in a lot of cases). Then the questions get more varied. "Is there paper in the tray?" "Are there paper jams in any of the compartments?" "Is the toner or

ink empty or installed improperly?" "Do you have the correct device driver installed?" The list goes on and on from there. Hopefully after a few minutes you find the trouble, hit the right buttons, and everything is running smoothly once more. It seems very tedious, but we have to make sure to ask all the pertinent questions to know for sure that we've fixed what was wrong rather than just cover up a symptom.

Let's apply that same line of thinking to our lives. Likely the way in which we go through a similar line of questions is when we are getting ready to head out the door, either to work or to worship services or anywhere. Mentally we go down the list, checking to see that we have our keys, our wallets/purses, any tickets or papers we might need for the day, our Bibles, and also verifying that we have turned the stove off and locked the door. You have probably done the same thing at work, whether it is an accounting error like a typo, or a

miscommunication between a driver and a foreman. You need to find where things got mixed up and set it right in order for the workday to continue. Otherwise, everything will be off-kilter.

But rather than talk about troubleshooting various areas of one's life in general, I want to focus on spiritual things. For example, say that lately you have not felt very close to God. You believe in Him, and know what the Bible says, but just feel distant and even helpless. In order to do something about it, first you must determine why you feel that way. Has your faith been shaken by something you went through in the last couple days? The Scriptures teach us that our faith will be tested: "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:2-4)

Next, consider your recent activities. How much time have you been setting aside for the Lord, so you can dwell on spiritual things? Perhaps the reason why you feel distant is that you have been distant, having been too busy with work and hobbies to focus your mind on God and His will. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." (James 4:7-8) When was the last time you prayed? Have you been resisting the devil? Do you study the Bible every day?

Every week? One more thing: it is possible for someone who is diligently serving God to still feel far from Him, because we get into our heads and create feelings not based on facts. Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, "This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him. So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory." (Eph. 3:11-13)

If you have closely examined your life, studied God's Word, are active in obeying His commands, and yet STILL feel like you are not close to the Lord, remind yourself that His grace allows us to have fellowship with Him. Through the blood of Jesus we can have confidence to know we are His children and can count on Him always!

Another specific example might be this: you attend worship services and Bible studies regularly, and yet you find yourself sitting in the pew on a Sunday morning not able to focus on what is being said and really getting nothing out of the service. You leave without being encouraged or any different than when you came in. There are a lot of ways to describe such a situation, like being stuck in a rut, but ultimately it is up to you to do the "spiritual troubleshooting" and figure out why you are not growing as you should. So, why could it be that you are not getting much if anything out of worship? The most obvious theory is that you are too distracted by the things of this world. Are you thinking about what you had for

breakfast or what you might have for lunch? Do not let any plans you made for later take away from what you need to be doing in worshipping the Lord. Pay attention to the words of the songs; be certain that you are not just going through the motions. Put your heart into it! "Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name." (Heb. 13:15)

However there could be another reason why it is hard for you to focus during services and feel like you are not being spiritually fed like you want to be. Consider the people around you; yes, while salvation is on an individual basis, we have brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we must assemble and share in fellowship toward God. How are your relationships with them? "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matt. 5:23-24)

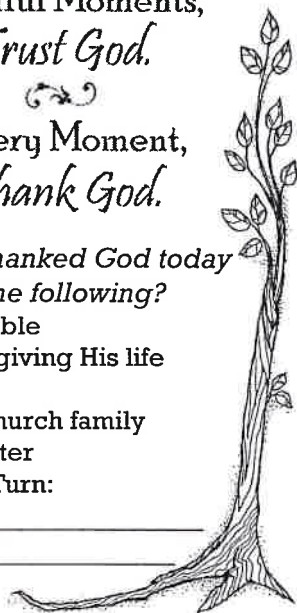
A similar warning is given in 1 Pet. 3:7; "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." The simple message is this: if we are not taking care of our lives and relationships then it will affect us spiritually. Our prayers will be hindered. Troubleshoot yourself and find out what is going wrong, so that it can be fixed!

Jarred Currence

Happy Moments,
Praise God.
Difficult Moments,
Seek God.
Quiet Moments,
Worship God.
Painful Moments,
Trust God.
Every Moment,
Thank God.

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Laughter
- Your Turn:



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BIBLE Trivia!

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. According to the Law, what two types of birds comprise the category of unclean fowl?

- a) water fowl and doves
- b) flightless birds and long-billed birds
- c) Mostly scavengers and birds of prey
- d) crows and pelicans

2. How many of each species of bird was Noah supposed to take into the ark?

- a) seven
- b) five
- c) two
- d) ten

3. What Old Testament book speaks of life as a "chasing after the wind"?

- a) James
- b) Acts
- c) Job
- d) Ecclesiastes

4. Whom did God address from a whirlwind?

- a) Job
- b) Moses
- c) John
- d) Abraham

5. What was King Saul's home town?

- a) Jericho
- b) Gibeah
- c) Ramah
- d) Bethlehem

6. Who healed a lame man at the temple's Beautiful Gate?

- a) Simeon
- b) Judas
- c) Philip
- d) Peter

7. In John's vision of the new Jerusalem, how many gates does the city have, and what are they made of?

- a) seven, made of gold
- b) twelve, made of pearl
- c) ten, made of silver
- d) twenty, made of pearl

8. Who said, "Behold, the lamb of God"?

- a) Pontius Pilate
- b) Simon Peter
- c) Simon the Zealot
- d) John the Baptist

9. What is the greatest number of lepers Jesus healed at any one time?

- a) ten
- b) forty
- c) twenty
- d) thirty-six

10. Where was Jesus when a handicapped man's friends lowered him through the roof?

- a) Cana
- b) Caesarea
- c) Capernaum
- d) Corinth

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS & VERSES:

- 1) C, Reference: 2 Kings 2:19-22; 4:38-41
- 2) B, Reference: Luke 17:12
- 3) D, Reference: Judges 16:31
- 4) C, Reference: 1 Corinthians 6:19
- 5) A, Reference: Deuteronomy 24:16

- 6) A, Reference: Judges 8:33
- 7) D, Reference: John 4:46-54
- 8) B, Reference: Acts 19:14
- 9) C, Reference: Genesis 1:9-13
- 10) A, Reference: Luke 15:8