

Christian Maturity

Common Challenges faced by ^{NEW} Christians

Intro Verse:-Hebrews 6:1-2

Main Verse:-Proverbs 4:18

“The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn,
shining ever brighter till the full light of day.”

Scripture to Meditate:- Luke 8:4-15 (The Parable of the Sower)

Introduction – Spiritual Disappointments

Romans 5:1-5

“1Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. 2 Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory. 3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. 5 **And this hope will not lead to disappointment.** For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” (NLT)

- Christians face lot of disappointments which are Internal many times.
- Many People don’t come up open regarding it and hence go with it.
- If it is not addressed from a biblical point of view then it can create problems like self condemnation, self pity etc.
- People can be deceived by devil by not allowing them to overcome it or understand what is God’s will or way out of it.
- Some people burst out and try to solve it but many keep silent and carry it and ultimately one day it bursts itself. **Sometimes its too late!**

Spiritual Disappointments — What group of People can have this?

- **Not Necessary but these people can still have Spiritual Disappointments:-**
 - A New Believer (Maximum Cases)
 - An Old Believer (Who are not mature)
 - A Person who goes to church.
 - A Person who is very active in all things.
 - A Church Leader or someone whom others consider as mature.
 - A Preacher/Teacher/Worship Leader etc

1. Disappointed with themselves

SAME WEAKNESSES AS BEFORE

- A. Many becomes Christians with joyful anticipation & Expectation
 1. Excited about forgiveness of sins
 2. Excited about the chance to start over
 3. Excited about the help God is going to give them to change
- B. But then they soon discover that...
 1. That the temptations are just as strong as before (sometimes even stronger!)
 2. They can easily be discouraged and overcome - cf. Luke 8:13
- C. So what can we do?
 1. Understand that "transformation" is an "on-going process" - Rom 12:1-2; Col 3:5-11
 2. Remember that God is willing to forgive and provide strength - 1 John 1:9; 2:1; Ph 2:12-13 .
 3. [Hebrews 4:15](#)
For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.
 4. "My temptations have been my Masters in Divinity." Martin Luther

2. Disappointed by other Believers

IMPERFECT CHRISTIANS

- **A. We Witness Inconsistency in the lives of others...**
 1. We see those who do not practice what they preach
 2. It really hurts when seen in those they had looked up to
 3. But this problem is not a new one - Gal 2:11-14 (Paul says of Peter)
- **B. ILL Treatment by Christians...**
 1. May occur in Bible classes, business meetings, at work, at play etc
 2. Where harsh words can be devastating to those new in the faith
- **C. So what can we do?**
 1. First, set better examples! - cf. 1 Tim 4:12
 2. Confess wrong when it occurs
 3. New Christians must realize that older Christians are ALSO going through the process of "transformation" - cf. Ph 3:12-14

3. Disappointed by the World

TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

- **A. Such As Pleasures And Responsibilities Of The World...**
 1. Often drawing the new Christian away (e.g., job, family, hobbies, habits)
 2. Choking them to the point of unfruitfulness - **Luke 8:14**
- **B. And Discouragement By Unconverted Friends...**
 1. Who want them to come back to the things of the world (Pub, Smoking etc)
 2. As Paul warned in **1 Co 15:33-34** ("Bad company corrupts good character")
- **C. So what can we do?**
 1. Demonstrate what it means to "seek first the kingdom of God" - **Mt 6:33**
Make it clear by our own example who it is we love the most (i.e., not our jobs, hobbies, etc.) - **1 Jn 2:15-17**
 2. Develop close friendships with Christians **IN THE LORD**
 - a. Friendships centered around Christ and His work
 - b. Not just social interests

4. Disappointed by lack of success

FALSE CONCEPTIONS ABOUT PROSPERITY

- **A. Thinking That Now All Our Problems Will Go Away...**
 1. An idea propagated by the "gospel of health and wealth" teachers
 2. Thinking that they will become rich.
 3. Giving with wrong motives (Seed Offerings, Faith Seed etc)
 4. But such is not always the case, even as it was in the days of the first century - 1 Peter 1:6-9; James 1:2-4
- **B. New Christians should be prepared for Possible Adversity...**
 1. Even as Paul did - Acts 14:21-22; 2 Tim 3:12
 2. This need is especially great because Satan often strikes hardest when one is new in the faith
- **C. So what can we do?**
 1. Focus more on Spiritual Blessing
 2. Seek first Kingdom of God and Righteousness (Mat. 6:33)

5. Disappointed by Preachers

TOO MUCH "NEGATIVE" TEACHING

- **A. Such As Constantly Exposing Denominational Errors...**
 1. Certainly there is a place for learning about those in error - 2 Ti 4:1-2; Ac 20:27
 2. But there can be dangers involved in doing so...
 - If it is done in an arrogant, self-righteous spirit
 - If it is done to make us feel good or superior
 - If it is done to the exclusion of learning what WE need to do If we are not careful, it can create carnal Christians, given to strife and envy
- **B. When "Negative" Teaching Is Called For...**
 1. It should be done:
 - For the purpose of trying to understand and teach those in error
 - Out of love for those in error
 2. It should be done as Paul did it...
 - With prayer for their souls - Ro 10:1
 - With recognition for their accomplishments - Ro 10:2-3
 3. It should be done with the qualities mentioned in 2 Ti 2:24-26

6. Disappointed that you are Ignored

YOU ARE NOT INCLUDED IN EVERYTHING OR ANYTHING

1. Some people think they are being Ignored.
 - This can lead them to think the Leadership is biased.
 - Taken out of things which they were doing. Ex. Worship, planning etc.
 - Ignored in spite of your dedication, commitment, outstanding performance etc.
2. What can we do?
 - Never get weary in doing good. Proper time God will reward. (Gal. 6:9)
 - What God wants to do through your life He will do and no one can stop it.
 - What God doesn't want you to do- don't try to do- you will be a failure.
 - Your First concern should be your relationship with God.
3. Other Reason
 - Sometimes God allows you to be ignored to test you or build you up in you spiritual characters. (Ex. Joseph, David, etc)
 - God may want to see what is in your heart.(Deut. 8:2)
 - People may do it intentionally but believe in God's sovereignty.

7. Disappointed by Lack of Opportunities

YOU CAN'T DO WHAT YOU WANT OR WHAT YOU USED TO DO.

A. What are the problems?

- You want to do something but you have no opportunities to do
- There are others who are already doing it and you don't get chance.
- You were doing something for a long time and now you are in a new place and no one is recognizing you. There are people who already do it.
- Parents are worried and argue/fight for getting opportunities for children.

B. What can we do?

- Believe in the Sovereignty of God.
- Understand that what you are is because of God and it is God who has anointed you. (Ex. David)
- You are a resource in the hands of God and he will use in what way He wants and not in the way you want.
- Humble and commit yourself to God. God will use you in a way and at the time he wants. (Jam 4:10. 1 Peter 5:6)
- Allow God to mould and build your children in His way.

Four Stages of Spiritual Growth

- Christians generally go through four stages of spiritual growth...
 1. The **"ball of fire" stage**, following their conversion to Christ
 2. The **"reality" stage**, when the disappointments start to come in
 3. The **"up and down" stage**...
 - Here, people either grow through it to the next stage...
 - Or they fall away, or become apathetic (i.e., "pew-warmers")
 4. Finally, those who persevere reach the stage of **"steady as they go"**, where growth is progressive and steady.
- "But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day." - Pro 4:18**

Conclusion-Disappointments

- There may be other disappointments new Christians face, but I have found these to be quite common
- To reach that stage where we will grow steadily...
 - a. We need to have **REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS** of problems to come
 - b. We need to be sure we are **CONVERTED TO CHRIST**, not the church, teacher, Pastor, worship leader or friend.
 - c. Primary focus of your life should be your relationship with God.
- **Lets Overcome Disappointments and become mature in Christ**