

DISCOVERING THE BIBLE

LESSON 30

DEALING WITH RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

1 Timothy 1:12-17

- 1. Paul was appointed for service—Acts 9:15
- 2. Paul had once been a violent man, 'the worst of sinners'.
- 3. God gave Paul love and faith-Ephesians 2:8
- 4. God's aim is to save sinners-Luke 5:30
- 5. As a result Paul gives God glory.
- 6. Why does God want to save sinners?-1 Timothy 1:16
- 7. Does God set out to save only good people?
- 8. Does this mean there is no chance of falling away from a relationship with God?

“Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”

2 Timothy 2:11-13

- Assurance of salvation is promised ‘if we die with Him’
- If we disown Jesus He will disown us
- Jesus will remain faithful to us
- Does this suggest that if we fall away from a relationship with God through Jesus that we can be forgiven?

“ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.”

2 Peter 1:5-9

- A Christian lifestyle means growth in Christian graces.
- The result of this will be increasing effectiveness
- A lack of growth indicates that a person has forgotten that his sins have been cleansed
- Does this suggest that people who are struggling with their faith are carrying sins in their lives which are halting their progress?.
- If this is so—how can the situation be dealt with?

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that `every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

Matthew 18:15-17

- Things do go wrong in relationships between people—including Christian relationships
- This shows how to resolve problems when things go wrong
- Try to speak to the person directly
- Try harder if this fails, try and take others with you
- If that does not work the church should be involved
- If there still can be no resolution then the person should be treated as a pagan
- In the context of the Gospels the aim is resolution of the problem.
- How did Jesus treat pagans and tax collectors? Jesus included a tax collector as an apostle and ate with pagans