



Series: Hard Truths | Big Helps

INTRODUCTION

Many believers – especially early in the Christian life – operate with an unspoken equation:

$$\text{OBEDIENCE} + \text{PRAYER} + \text{RIGHT DECISIONS} = \text{LIFE GOES WELL}$$

Then life happens:

- A loved one passes away... the marriage has struggles... the diagnosis comes... the job ends... the child rebels... the finances collapse...

Tonight's hard truth is one every older believer eventually learns...

You can do everything right – and still walk a hard road.

1. TRUTH – the Bible does not teach obedience is without pain.

Key Verse

Psalm 34:19 – “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”

Notice what the verse does NOT say:

- ✓ It does not say *few* afflictions. It does not say *avoidable* afflictions.
- ✓ It does not say of the *really bad* people.

It says **MANY** and **RIGHTEOUS**.

Key Truth

- ✓ Affliction is not evidence of disobedience; often, it is the cost of living and doing right.

2. OT EXAMPLE: Habakkuk – a right man in a hard season.

Habakkuk 3:17-18 – “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls.”

Context:

- ✓ Habakkuk was not rebellious: he prayed, he listened, and he believed God.
- ✓ Summary: the nation may suffer, economy may collapse, injustice may continue for a time.
- ✓ It describes total loss – no crops, no income, no food, no livestock, no visible blessing.
- ✓ The point: God may remove every visible sign of blessing, yet He remains worthy of trust!

The Hopeful Response:

Habakkuk 3:18 – Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

3. THE EMOTIONAL CONFLICT

Younger believers often assume:

- “If I do right, God will protect me.”
- “If I suffer, I must have failed.”
- “If life is hard, God must be distant.”

Isaiah 55:8

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,
saith the LORD.*

Truth: Spiritual maturity is learning to trust God’s character when you cannot see His plan.

4. OT EXAMPLE: Job – righteous and still afflicted.

Job 1:22 – “*In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*”

Context:

- ✓ Job was upright, God-fearing, and eschewed or avoided evil at all costs.
- ✓ Yet he lost: wealth, children, health, and reputation.
- ✓ God Himself testified of Job’s righteousness – **BEFORE** the suffering even began!

Hard Truth: *Hard seasons are not always for discipline; God trusted Job completely.*

5. THE OLDER GENERATION: Seasoned saints can testify to this truth.

Testimonies:

- ✓ “I obeyed God – and still buried someone I loved.”
- ✓ “I stayed faithful – and still faced financial ruin.”
- ✓ I prayed in the storm – and the answer was silence.”

Job 13:15

*Though he slay me,
yet will I trust in him...*

- ✓ YOUR TESTIMONY:

6. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- ✓ Do not interpret hardship as God’s displeasure. **Romans 8:1**
- ✓ Learn to separate faithfulness from life outcomes.
- ✓ Decide in advance how you will respond to life difficulties.
 - Habakkuk chose joy **BEFORE** God’s relief came.

Romans 5:3-5

*...we glory in tribulations also:
knowing that tribulation
worketh patience; And
patience, experience; and
experience, hope: And hope
maketh not ashamed...*

So, the next time you are tempted to ask, “Why did this happen if I did everything right?”

Remember: Right living does not prevent hard roads. God’s purposes are often larger than personal comfort. We should rejoice because we trust God completely!