

When Difficulties Arise

1 THESSALONIANS

2:13-18

QUESTION:

When is the last time
your commitment to
follow Jesus cost you
something?

BACKGROUND: ACTS 17





WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

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- “hindered, **blocked**, or prevented” (v18): used to describe a road so broken up that travel is blocked.

THE BIG QUESTION

How do followers of
Jesus respond when
faith is put to the test?

WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

1. Focus on God's
word

FOCUS ON GOD'S WORD

“And we also thank God continually because, when you received **the word of God**, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, **the word of God**, which is indeed at work in you who believe.”

(1 Thes. 2:13, NIV)







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WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

2. Recognize there
are struggles

RECOGNIZE THERE ARE STRUGGLES

“For you, ...became imitators of God’s churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews...”

(1 Thes. 2:14, NIV)

RECOGNIZE THERE ARE STRUGGLES

“...so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted.”

(1 Thes. 3:3,4, NIV)

RECOGNIZE THERE ARE STRUGGLES

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first... If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”

(John 15:18,20, NIV)

WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

3. Rest in God's sovereignty

REST IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

“In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.”

(1 Thes. 2:16b, NIV)

REST IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Sovereign: **GOD RULES**

A black and white portrait of Elisabeth Elliot. She is an older woman with short, wavy, light-colored hair. She is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a gentle expression. Her right hand is raised, with her index finger pointing upwards near her temple and her other fingers curled. She is wearing a ring on her ring finger. She is wearing a dark, textured sweater. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Elisabeth Elliot

WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

“I had to face up to the fact in those stunning losses that God was indeed sovereign; therefore, He was my Lord, my Master, the One in charge of my life, the One who deserved my worship and my service.”

—*Elisabeth Elliot*



WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

“A Christian doesn’t “plug-in” to God... a Christian surrenders to God.”

— *Elisabeth Elliot*

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REST IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

“He’ll wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good — tears gone, crying gone, pain gone — all the first order of things gone. The Enthroned continued, ‘Look! I’m making everything new.’”

(Revelation 21:4,5, MSG)

WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

4. Welcome support

WELCOME SUPPORT

“But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you.” *(1 Thes. 2:17, 18, NIV)*

WELCOME SUPPORT

“For we wanted to come to you — certainly I, Paul, did, again and again — but Satan blocked our way.” *(1 Thes. 2:17, 18, NIV)*

WELCOME SUPPORT

“So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, ...to **strengthen** and **encourage** you in your faith...”

(1 Thes. 3:1,2, NIV)

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- 1. Focus on God's word**
- 2. Recognize there are struggles**
- 3. Rest in God's sovereignty**
- 4. Welcome support**

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