

# GROWING IN FAITH



## Scripture

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

- Deuteronomy 30:19-20

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

- Romans 8:28

## GOING DEEPER

1. Has anyone ever said to you, "Everything happens for a reason."

Have you ever said that to someone else?

How did it make you feel?

Did it comfort you or cause you frustration?

2. One of our state legislators recently seemed to imply that rape and incest were a part of God's will while discussing a bill to limit abortions.

Does God "ordain" terrible things to happen in our world?

If not, what causes bad things to happen?

3. In the Deuteronomy 30 scripture in this lesson Moses tells God's people they have a choice to make about their lives. They can choose life or death.

Do we have free will to make choices or does God's plan override that?

How does God intervene in this world?

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## Scripture

I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.

- Psalm 121:1-2

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me. Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick?' 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

- Matthew 25:35-40

## GOING DEEPER

1. Have you heard the phrase, "Pray like all depends on God and work like all depends on you?"

What does it mean to you?

What do you depend on God for?

2. Paul told early Christians in Thessalonians that if "you don't work you don't eat."

Was he being harsh?

What did the belief that Jesus was coming back soon have to do with his attitude?

3. The Gospels are pretty clear about helping those less fortunate than us.

Who are those in our society today who need God's help?

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## Scripture

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

- I Corinthians 10:13

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.

- Psalm 46:1-2

## GOING DEEPER

1. Think back upon a time of grief in your life.

How did you handle it?

Did you ever feel that the grief was more than you could handle?

2. I Corinthians says God will not tempt you more than can deal with.

In your experience is that a true statement?

What are one or things that you are seriously tempted by?

3. The suggestion was made a better statement for handling difficult times might be "God will help you handle all that you've been given".

Have you found that to be true?

How does God support you in hard times?

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## Scripture

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

- Matthew 7:1-5

## GOING DEEPER

1. Jesus never actually said, “love the sinner”. He did say, “love your neighbor”.

What is the difference?

How does loving our neighbor affect our perspective of a person as opposed to loving the sinner?

2. In the story told in Luke 7 Jesus looks at the woman who is called a sinner in a very different way than Simon the Pharisee.

How does Jesus see people differently?

How can we deal with our biases and value judgments to view those different from us in a new way?

3. Jesus in Matthew 7 said it is often easier for us to see the speck in our neighbor’s eye but never notice the log in our own eye.

Why do we have such difficulty seeing people’s faults but tend to overlook our own?

Do you agree with Billy Graham who said it is God’s job to judge but as Christians it is our job to love?