

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

July 30, 2017

Difficult Verses (4)

by Frank Himmel

Occasionally a Bible verse is difficult in the sense of understanding what it means. This is certainly the exception, not the rule. For the most part, the Bible is written in plain, straightforward, easy-to-grasp language. "For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand" (2 Corinthians 1:13a).

While the Bible is easy enough to understand, it is not always easy to apply. God's standards are high, an expression of His holiness. He accepts nothing less than whole-hearted devotion to Him. That devotion is expressed in obedience. God gives us commandments, not suggestions. The world may look at God's commandments as burdensome, but they are not (1 John 5:3-4). God is infinitely wiser than we; He knows what is best. Yet sometimes there are challenges.



God's commandments are difficult when obeying them separates friends or families. Jesus said it would be that way at times (Matthew 10:34-39). Actually, the problem is caused by those who do not obey: if everyone obeyed there would be no conflict.

God's commandments are difficult when obeying them brings about social rejection or persecution. Again, we are forewarned about this (2 Timothy 3:12).

God's commandments may be difficult to obey when they do not allow us to do what we want at the moment. It is not always easy to say no to sexual desires or greed or vengeance.

God's commandments may be difficult to obey when they take away our options. Jesus' teaching about marriage is an example. He said that marriage is permanent. He added that remarriage following divorce is allowed only for one who divorced his mate for fornication (Matthew 19:6-9). Some first-century disciples found that hard. Some twenty-first-century disciples do, too!

God's commandments may be difficult to obey when they restrict our service. Not everyone meets His criteria to be an overseer, a deacon, or a preacher (1 Timothy 3:1-13; 2 Timothy 2:24-26). Not every talent one has may be utilized in worship (John 4:24.)

Some of the difficulty in obeying God's commandments is directly linked to our involvement in sin. The more sin that is in our lives, the more change ▶

Good News About the Kingdom

by Frank Himmel



When Paul went to the synagogue at Thessalonica, he “reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ’” (Acts 17:2-3).

When Paul went to the synagogue at Corinth, he was “solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ” (Acts 18:5).

When Paul went to the synagogue at Ephesus, he “continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8).

Was the message at Ephesus different? Not at all! *Christ* corresponds to the Hebrew word *Messiah*; it means “the anointed one.” It is a kingly term. Paul explained at each stop that God’s plan was for His king to first suffer (see Isaiah 53), then reign, that Jesus was that king, and that despite the suffering He now reigns.

Paul’s sermon at the synagogue at Antioch is recorded in greater detail (Acts 13:13-41). He made the same points there. “And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled

this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten you’” (vv. 32-33). Psalm 2 is about the Messiah’s coronation. Paul plainly said that has occurred. (Read the psalm: it depicts the world’s rejection of the Messiah and shows God laughing at the notion that somehow they could derail His plan.)

The “good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12) was not what is popularly taught today—that because Jesus was rejected His kingdom was postponed until some future time; the good news was that despite His rejection, Jesus was nevertheless enthroned just as God promised, and that salvation is available to those who believe in Him. ■

Difficult Verses (4) - continued from p. 1

repentance demands of us. When these things have become habit, they can be hard to break.

Despite its challenges, godliness is the way to live. It “is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:8).

The next time you are tempted to complain because obeying God means doing something difficult, stop and think about Jesus. “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all who obey Him the source of eternal salvation” (Hebrews 5:8-9). Aren’t you glad Jesus obeyed, even when it was difficult? “... Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps” (1 Peter 3:21). ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Greg Winget	David Gray	Adam Gibson
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Bruce Williams	Albert Harrison Sr
OPENING PRAYER	Greg Winget	Steven Turner	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Adam Gibson	Adam Gibson	
CUP	Kerry Gray	Kerry Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Josh Baucom		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Mark Clifton	Albert Lee Harrison
CLOSING PRAYER	Albert Lee Harrison	Josh Baucom	Bruce Williams