

MAKING GOOD DECISIONS DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

Difficult times have a lot of stress. We often cannot think clearly unless we have a strong understanding of how God desires what is best in the big picture and is willing to help us through the tough times. Consider Job, Joseph and Paul: their reactions and those about them.

See how you would rate each of these typical responses such as a serious illness or other problem. Right (R) or Wrong (W) from a Christian viewpoint. Discuss why.

1. Denial
2. Withdrawal
3. Fear
4. Temporary Anger
5. Ask “why” and seek answers. Where and how would you look for answers and solutions?
6. Possible answers: Sin or stupidity was involved, patience or faith was asked for, I am in training for personal need or ministry or as a comforter, I am an illustration for others.
7. If no answers or solutions are forthcoming, should one curse God and reject Him?
8. Should we accept both the blessings as well as the hard times, simply acknowledging we don’t know the answers, but trust God is in control and we trust His decisions?
9. Should one not consider God and seek only human explanations & solutions?
10. Be encouraged: Good always come out of bad situations.
11. Be encouraged: God bears all our burdens.
12. Cry awhile!
13. Talk with a caring Christian friend
14. Make a firm choice to overcome with God’s help.
15. Praise God!

Answers:

1. Wrong: Denial only postpones dealing with the issue with no hope of solution.
2. Wrong: Withdrawal from people and God who can help offers no help and leaves one without a support group that can encourage and help with a solution.
3. Wrong: God does not give a spirit of fear, but love and a sound mind to help with a solution. Fear only paralyzes the mind with no hope of thinking clearly of finding a way out of the problem. (Luke 8:50)
4. Right: A short time of anger is normal for some and if channeled into physical exercise, not at people or God, can be a healthy release of tension. Anger directed at people or God would only result in eventual alienation. Continued anger is not healthy and can lead to sin. God says to be angry and not sin. (Eph.4:26)
5. Right: Asking “why” is a good start. (Matt.7:7-8, Luke 11:9-10) When we seek answers in prayer or from scripture or from medical knowledge it is possible that we will find something that will explain the cause of the problem and perhaps a solution. God says “Ask and ye shall receive.” However, in some cases, since God’s ways and thoughts are above ours, we may not comprehend God’s ultimate purposes. (Isa.55:9) “Why” implies a real desire to know the truth even though the truth may be painful. Truth can lead to spiritual and mental growth if accepted and acted upon, even if it involves correction. (John 8:32)
6. Right: Sin in our life or in the life of someone else can result in a problem or need for correction. (Exodus 34:7, Daniel 9:16, Lev.26:39, Proverbs 3:11) We also sometimes bring on our own problems by dumb mistakes or decisions. Some sins are passed down generation to generation just as Adam’s sin was. At times the sins of a nation also require judgement by God. Bad company eventually will corrupt good habits. (1st Cor.15:33) However, as in Lots case, God took note of his morality and provided a way of escape. Many people on 9/11 also told stories of a prompting not to go to the twin towers that day.
7. Wrong: Cursing God and rejecting Him separates us from God, who is the only real solution to our problems. Job refused to curse God and eventually, God gave Job two times that which was lost. (Job 42:10)
8. Right: If we turn our lives over to God, He may use us as needed for our eventual gain or His. (1st Cor.6:20, James 4:7, 1st Peter 5:9) Joseph saved a nation and his family from starvation after his struggles. Trusting God and loving Him in hard times will lead toward greater faith.

9. Wrong: It is good to seek all God approved avenues of help. God wants us to do what we can to help with problems, but He is also available when invited to help. He wants us to seek Him in all areas of life and His love is boundless when we have a strong relationship with Him.
10. Wrong: Finish the scripture. We must love God for things to always work to good. (Romans 8:28)
11. Wrong: God will bear our burdens only if we are willing to give them to Him. Call on the name of the Lord to be saved. (Acts 2:21) (by grace in Spirit and body.)
12. Right: Some crying is a God given way to release tension and pave the way for healing. However, continued crying over time produces a defeatist attitude that is not helpful to healing or problem solving.
13. Right: Sharing our burden can help relieve it. Two, or more, agreed in prayer and faith are also powerful to cause God to act. (Matt.18:19, James 5:13-16) Two of sound mind are also better to explore possible solutions and build up each other in spirit and faith.
14. Right: A strong desire to seek and agree with God in faith is sufficient to cause God to act on our behalf. (Joshua 1:9, Matt.18:18-20, 1st Cor. 16:13)
15. Right: Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Rejoice. (Phil.4:4) God is good and Christ our only savior. (John 14:6, Phil.4:19) Satan can do nothing to separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8:39) Paul endured much, but even sang while in prison. His rejoicing caused his release and many to be saved.