

Application Guide: “How to Handle Problems”

July 25, 2004: Joe Bartemus, Pastor of Adult Education, delivered a heart-convicting message on Lamentations 3:1-24. In a world where all of us are looking for stability and solace amidst all the horrors & evils of life, Joe’s message provided a timeless message in providing a Biblical viewpoint to our problems. His message was organized around two primary points: 1) Our Problem – how *not* to handle problems (v 1-18) and 2) The Solution (v. 19-24).

1. What are some areas in your life in which you are desperately craving stability and yet finding none?
 - a. What are the reasons for this lack of stability?
 - b. What are some indicators in your life that reveal you are not handling these areas of your life appropriately?
2. Are there any parts of your life in which you are focusing on your self, relying on your own strength, complaining, give Satan a foothold, forgetting to focus on God, etc?
 - a. What do you need to do to refocus? What do you need to confess before God?
3. What are some practical measures you have found that help you get your mind off your self and look to God, rejoicing in his lovingkindness, compassion, and faithfulness?
 - a. What does it mean to “look to God”? How do you know you are doing that?
 - b. How are you going to use these practical methods this week?
 - c. As a group, memorize Lam. 3:22-24 this week.
4. Pastor Bartemus’ message swung full circle. Essentially, he showed us that, while we live in a world where everything is changing and 100% confidence cannot be placed in anything, there is one thing that remains the same – and that is God Himself. He is always faithful, always merciful, always just, always compassionate. Spend time rejoicing together in song and prayer about our Great God!
5. **Leaders:** Perhaps, you may want to comment as well on what Eric has been doing over the past couple weeks during the “worship” time. Perhaps a discussion on the Spiritual Disciplines would be helpful for your group. So far he has spoken about Bible reading, Prayer, and Worship.
 - a. For devotions this week, do a study on one of the above 3 disciplines (or all three if you want). Do a word search of the Scriptures and study different passages in order to obtain a rounded understanding of the topic.
 - i. What does the whole of Scripture say about Worship? What all fits under the heading of “worship”? What does a life of worship look like?
 - ii. What other types of disciplines fall under the head of “Bible Reading?”
 - iii. Make a list of all the different types of prayer one can pray. What is the purpose of prayer? What does it mean to “pray without ceasing?”

Suggested Reading: Foster, Richard. Celebration of Discipline. San Francisco: HarperSanfranciso, 1988.
Foster, Richard. Prayer. San Francisco: HarperSanfranciso, 1992.
Wiersbe, Warren. Real Worship. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986.
Yancey, Philip. Where is God when it hurts? Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
Warren, Rick. The Purpose Driven Life. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002