

How To Grow as a Believer & Follower of Jesus

Wednesday Nights at 6:30 pm

Begins August 2



LESSON 10 – When You're In A "Rut"

Spiritual "ruts" are common. Growth isn't on a continually upward growth pattern. There are setbacks and obstacles and times of what feels like spiritual deadness. Anyone that has served God for any length of time has felt like they were in a rut:

- Sometimes, our prayers seem to go nowhere. We pray for something long and hard, and we receive no outward indication that God is answering.
- Sometimes, for reasons we don't understand, times of study and even public worship seem unusually dull and lifeless.
- Sometimes, during times of stress and physical exhaustion, we lose contact with God.
- Sometimes, our spiritual gifts seem to be fading. Teaching (or giving or evangelizing or serving) is a chore rather than a joy.
- Sometimes, problem-after-problem hits us with such rapidity that we lose all spiritual focus.
- Sometimes we can't even put our finger on "what is wrong" but we know something just doesn't feel right.

What do we do?

Tonight's Bible Verses – James 1

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

(James 1:2-4, NIV)

Teachings From Today's Verses

1. Understand r_____. A challenge—including a "rut"—is a "testing of our faith", and these come regularly.
2. Understand James' p_____: Trials are not a burden but a joy. They are indications that God is at work.
3. The overall teaching is that testing, obstacles, hindrances, ruts, and problems are p_____. They're like physical exercise. You don't get stronger without using your muscles—and using them is sometimes stressful and even painful. So DON'T give up.
4. Keep your eyes on the g_____: S_____!

Practical Steps to Take When You're In A Rut

Things You Can Do That Help!

1. Remind yourself that you are n_____.
2. D_____ doing what you're a_____.
3. Be h_____.
4. Be h_____.
5. Try s_____ d_____:
 - a. Try a m_____ in a d_____.
 - b. Take a short s_____.
 - c. Participate in a f_____. (The purpose is not self-deprivation. It's a recognition that spiritual things are more important than physical things—so you give up the physical for a time to focus on the spiritual.)
 - i. A fast from s_____.
 - ii. A fast from f_____.
 - iii. A fast from e_____.