





HAVE YOU EVER hit 'rock bottom'?



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If so, this booklet has some good news for you!

Guess which book includes these questions:

- Why do you abandon me God?
- Where is your love?
- Why do you allow injustice on the earth?
- Why do the evil prosper, while the good suffer?

Believe it or not, it's the Bible. God includes the sayings of depressed people in the Bible, but why?



**Why include
expressions
of doubt and
depression?**



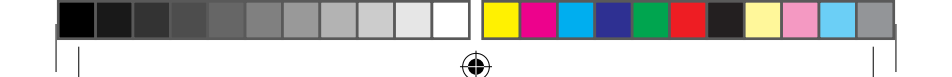
It's because the Bible is a book about real life,
and God is in the business of offering real hope
to real people caught in real circumstances!

God isn't afraid of our complaints or doubts,
and doesn't get angry when we express them,
**because honesty is the only place from
which we can start a journey toward real
hope!**



**About a privileged
group who God
always
listens to.**





You might be surprised to discover that the people God listens to are those who feel a bit 'beaten down' by life.

For example Jesus explained that the most blessed people on this planet are those...

- (1) ...who are 'poor in spirit' (which is similar to being broken-hearted).
- (2) ...who mourn (as opposed to those who are happy and prosperous)
- (3) ...who are persecuted and rejected because they do good works (see Matthew 5 in the Bible for these and more).

God singles them out for favour - but why?



**Why are
oppressed
people
blessed?**



Jesus told story about a religious man and a dishonest man (Luke 18:9 -14). The religious man boasted in loud prayer, thanking God he was not a 'sinner' like the other man. But the man who had been dishonest '...would not even look up to heaven, but beat his chest and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Then Jesus asked, which man's prayer did God hear?

It turned out that God favours HUMBLE people over 'good' but self-righteous people!



**So, why are
people with
troubles**

blessed?





It's because troubles bring **humility**, and humility is the real key to finding God. Without it we only find 'religion' with its routine and rules.

You see, Adam and Eve (our original ancestors) were tempted to eat forbidden fruit because an evil spiritual being told them it would make them like God. It was **pride** that made it attractive!

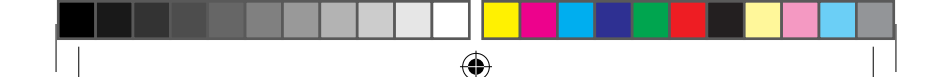
The high point of evil in the Bible is the 'Tower of Babel' account (Genesis 11) where all humanity gathered with one language to build a tower for their own glory. **The greatest evil was a world pridefully united in the thought that it didn't need God!**





**What
is the
greatest
human
problem?**





Could it be death?

What about suffering - because that greatly affects many lives?

What about the quest for purpose and significance - as doubts about these things can take the joy out of our lives?

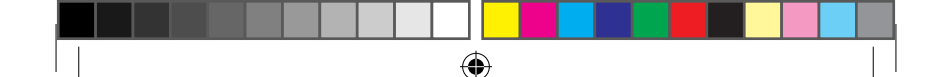
The Bible agrees these are problems - but there is one that tops them all. And it's pride in the heart!

Check this out...



**A Bible verse that
seems crazy
(at first)**





"It is better to go to a house of mourning (like at a funeral) than to go to a house of feasting (like at a wedding), for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart" (Ecclesiastes 7:2)


At first this verse sounds crazy - but then we consider what is suggested.

God wants **everyone** to know His blessings in life and eternity, **but the Bible tells us that many people miss out on them.** Why?



**Why do some
people miss out?**





Because, when life is good we forget about God. The 'pride of life' (which we are full of in the good times) blinds us. It's (usually) only when things turn bad that our perspective changes.

For example, we're sitting at a funeral, being reminded of our mortality, and find ourselves thinking more clearly than ever about what matters in life.

No matter how successful we are - or famous or rich or even loved - death awaits us all. Knowing this should rearrange our priorities.

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT?



A good answer is found in the following question Jesus once asked.

"What good is it for a man to gain the whole world but lose his soul?" (Mark 8:36)

The most important things are **the things that last**. So a house is more important than a holiday (in the sense that it lasts longer), and family more important than the house.

...but could getting right with God be even more important than family?



**Is what
God
offers
really
that good?**





Consider that some people search for a lifetime for true, **enduring love** - and God offers it freely.

An Indian man once crawled the width of India on his knees to find **forgiveness** - yet God offers it freely (forgiveness for any and all wrongs being available as a free gift because of what Jesus did, that we celebrate at Easter).

Consider that many people feel depressed by life's trials and uncertainties, and struggle to find life's real purpose - yet God offers us a **hope** greater than all of these, and a **purpose** worth living for!

**Specifically
what is on
offer?**

**1: FORGIVENESS
FOR EVERY WRONG
WE'VE EVER DONE.**





This is the biggie, even though it can seem small to us. Because God is perfect, even if we've done only a few wrongs things, He can't let us into heaven (we'd wreck it). But He does want us in heaven, which is what Jesus, Christmas and Easter are all about - Jesus died to take the punishment we deserved for our wrongdoing!

The result is that, if we ask for it, and trust Him for it, God will forgive us for all our wrongs as a gift, the result of which is that we become God's friends, and heaven becomes our assured destiny beyond this life. But there is more.





**...but wait,
there's more!**

**2: GOD
OFFERS US
A PURPOSE
WORTH
LIVING FOR!**



God has a 'calling' for our lives. He has a mission waiting for us. He wants us to make this world a better place **for Him** by using whatever gifts, abilities, experiences and opportunities we have to help people and our planet.

You see, **God really cares for people** (and because of this He also cares about the environment, justice, economics, family and health).

God cares so much that He motivates us to our mission by promising to reward us **100 times over** for any selfless thing we do for Him (Mark 10:29 -30).





**But, is there
a catch?**



In a way, there is. The catch is - as above - that God won't make this choice for us. He wants us to follow Him for the rest of our lives, but as much as He loves us, He won't overpower our **free will**.

Friendship with God, purpose for life, and hope for eternity **are** there for the taking - but God is waiting for us to ask first - but for that to happen we'd need the **humility** to believe we need His help, and to ask....

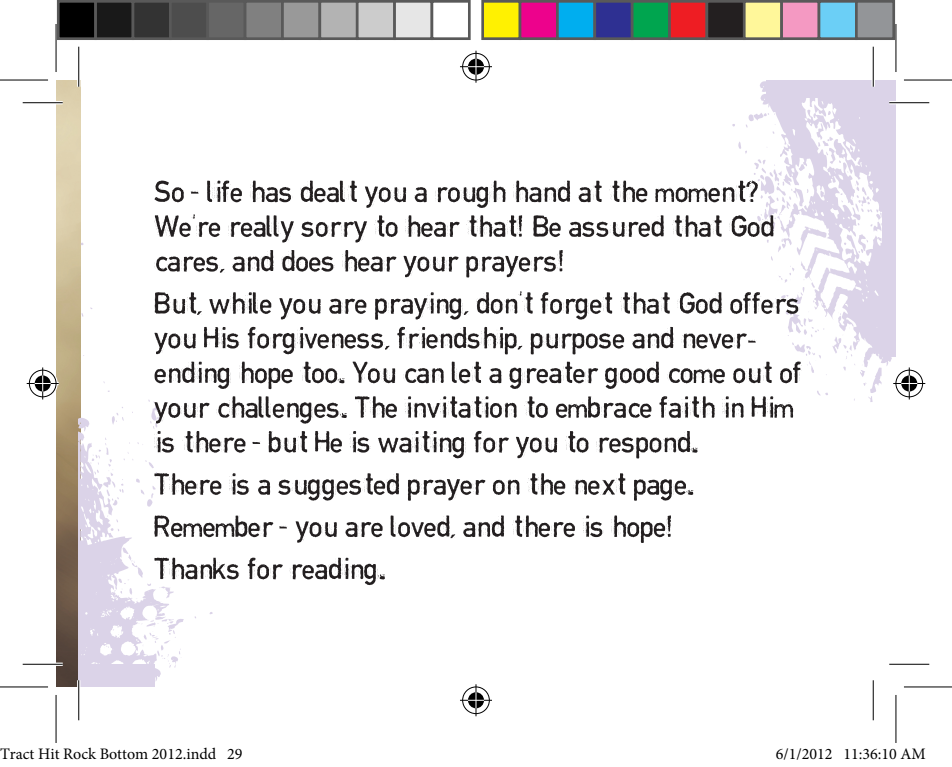
...which is why hitting 'rock bottom' can be a blessing in disguise, even though it stinks.

God offers us eternal friendship - but it's not friendship until it's working both ways.



The conclusion of hope!



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So - life has dealt you a rough hand at the moment?
We're really sorry to hear that! Be assured that God
cares, and does hear your prayers!

But, while you are praying, don't forget that God offers
you His forgiveness, friendship, purpose and never-
ending hope too. You can let a greater good come out of
your challenges. The invitation to embrace faith in Him
is there - but He is waiting for you to respond.

There is a suggested prayer on the next page.


Remember - you are loved, and there is hope!

Thanks for reading.



A prayer of faith





Dear God. Thank you for loving me and hearing my prayers. I know I'm far from perfect. Thank you for sending Jesus to die for my wrongdoing. I ask for the forgiveness He enabled through His sacrifice on the cross!

I now commit to follow you with your help, for the rest of my days. Help me find your peace, even when my circumstances are a mess. Help me live with courage and faith, following what you teach in the Bible. Help me bring joy, hope and help to those around me, showing love to them, just as you have first loved me. Thank you for your love. Amen.



**Next
steps for
new believers**





To strengthen faith, Christians practice three key habits:

1. They read the Bible to understand what Jesus was like and how God wants them to live.
2. They talk to God in prayer, asking His blessing for others and His help in their lives to live selflessly.
3. They attend a Church to learn about God from others and to have a few Christian friends, so that they can encourage each other in living God's ways.

These habits recognise that spiritual life is like physical life - it needs feeding if it's to stay strong.



Web links...





For more of what Christians believe see:
www.peacewithgod.net
www.lookingforgod.com





A 'Shining Lights' resource www.shininglights.co

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