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“Hearts Up” is the official e-publication of keystounderstandinglife.com (“Keys” website). When we want to alert one another to something important or perhaps even to a potential danger, we usually say, “Heads Up!” To assist us in being alert to spiritual dynamics behind our real-life experiences, we offer “Hearts Up”! This monthly e-publication works to inform, but mainly to help lift our hearts up during trials! The articles are intended to be substantial, giving you much to reflect on and work to experience with God; as such, the articles are “meaty.” The articles may build on the Scriptural concepts discussed in the [spiritual warfare materials](#) we offer, as well as in other “Hearts Up” editions and on the *Keys* website. The articles are intended to support readers who seek the spiritual growth in Christ which comes from interacting well with the Lord during trials and real-life difficulties. Our materials often talk about interacting with the Holy Spirit with the heart; this interaction is not about speaking in tongues, but about hearing, understanding and embracing the counsel of the Lord with our hearts. We trust “Hearts Up” will challenge you to desire more in your relationship with Jesus Christ in terms of interacting with Him in real-life decision-making and problem-solving. If there is a particular discipleship topic, issue, or sentiment for which you’d like to see an article, [Contact Us](#).



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KEY IN-SIGHTS

Warranty on Our Word

This month my AC went out! Wow! It got really hot in the house. As I tossed and turned in a hot bedroom, it occurred to me that maybe AC doesn't really refer to Air that is Conditioned. Maybe it refers to the fact that All of us are Conditioned, and really need it. A far cry from the pioneers of old!

Anyway, fortunately, I have an extended warranty on the unit and the repairs. So, while extensive, they were to be completed at no cost. I was talking with someone about my sweaty trial and they were pretty surprised at the fact that the repairs were going to be free, and they asked why that was. I said that basically the company was making good on its warranty.

It dawned on me that in many ways a warranty is a company's word to do something when certain conditions arise. Of course some companies don't do well with that, so a few of our laws make it illegal to fail to fulfill a warranty that a company issues.

How does this apply to us? Do we make good on our word even when the outcome is not what we might want? Do we make good on our word even when it might not be to our personal advantage? As believers, do we even recognize each time we are, in effect, giving our word? Do we sometimes give our word without giving due thought and consideration to the matter in question; in other words, unintentionally? How do we handle it when later we discover we didn't give due thought and consideration prior to giving our word?

When I was doing some research on unintentional sins, I came upon the following:

Leviticus 5:4-5 ‘Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever matter a man may speak thoughtlessly with an oath, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know *it*, he will be guilty in one of these. ‘So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned. (*Italics are part of translation.*)

In this passage, the Hebrew word for *swears* is תִּשְׁבַּע and it refers to *swearing* as in making an oath or promise. I found it interesting that in the Old Testament law, even making a promise without thinking about it was often viewed as binding. Leviticus 4:27 (as well as other verses) also mention that though we may unintentionally sin against someone, when it is brought to our attention, we are responsible for it at that point.

While these things are found in the Law, which Jesus fulfilled, it's still important to give consideration to how we fulfill our word as ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16-20).

THE BIBLE’S BIGGER PICTURES

Trusting God In Trials Typically Involves Not Knowing Some Outcome

One of the issues that comes up, whenever we are trying to discern God’s will for us in a trial, is that we may have some questions and concerns about some aspect of the outcome of the trial. While this is completely normal, it can raise fear within us right away, which makes it especially hard to correctly discern God’s will for us. What’s more is that even when we do correctly discern God’s will, Satan can raise fear in our hearts later by using normal questions and concerns about the outcome of the trial. Satan does this in an effort to take away God’s peace in our hearts, replacing it with uncertainty and doubt.

In this article we want to look at examples from God’s written Word, which demonstrate that discerning God’s will for us in a trial does NOT mean we will always have answers to all our questions. Before we look at those, let’s touch on a few points about discerning God’s guidance.

A Bit About Discerning God’s Guidance

When we know God’s will for us concerning a trial and we believe it in our hearts, then our faith will be strong and we will be at peace. In these trial situations, we have the answers to what we realize, in that moment, are answers to the most important questions, in terms of our relationship with God. By comparison, we can figure that when our hearts aren’t firmly at peace, it is because we are missing something concerning God’s will and guidance (1 John 3:18-24). The key is to discern that.

Obviously one question that we’ll always need to have answered is, “What does God want me to do or not do in response to this situation?” We often want the answer to that right away! However, another significant question deals with “Why does God want me to do this or that.” We often overlook *that* particular “why.” To discern God’s answers for these questions we have to realize that in many situations God may not be trying to communicate the entire bigger picture that He sees. Often times God may only be seeking to get us to see part of the picture. That part always involves why the faith and trust we must demonstrate in doing His will is causing us to change more from our old ways. Remember, trials are a huge part of God’s “on-the-job-training” for spiritual growth; it’s where we may be disciplined. It’s where we must put Scriptural concepts and knowledge into practice. So in the end, God’s will for how we respond to a trial is always going to deal with causing us to change and grow. Our response to the trial is always to be a demonstration of that.

“What does God want me to do... in response to this situation?’ We often want the answer to that question right away!”

There is another challenging aspect of discerning the specifics of how God wants us to respond to a

trial. In some of our trials it is harder to get to a place of peace than it is in others. In these trials one of the most important questions we need an answer for is, “How is Satan tempting or baiting me through this trial?” Doing our part to recognize temptation within us is part of submitting to the Spirit’s leadership. Sometimes it is hard to admit the ways in which we are being tempted. Therefore, discerning God’s guidance often requires us to introspect.

A useful question to ask in introspection is, “What is Satan causing me to fear?” Remember though, God wants us to have a godly fear. God wants us to fear sin and acting in our old ways in response to trials. Introspecting in ways that help us discern which part of our fear is of Satan, versus which part is of God, can take practice. It requires continually seeking out a Spirit-led objectivity with which we see old-self, worldly patterns in terms of being part of our temptations as Christians.

As we prepare to look at some examples of questions and issues that could come up in the face of someone else’s trials, it is important to remember to try to put ourselves into that person’s shoes while doing so. This can help us see how we might struggle in certain trials. While our trials may not be exactly the same as the ones we read about in the Bible, the heart disturbances and fears we experience, by putting ourselves in a Bible person’s shoes, can help us learn how Satan can attack us spiritually in our hearts and minds. With that, let’s consider one more thing...

Scriptural Examples of Trials and Normal Questions That Could Come Up

In presenting these examples, we struggled with how to label columns 2 and 3. Most of that struggle came up because when we read the Bible’s examples about trials, *we* are reading *about* someone else. Again, to really appreciate their challenge in their trial, we have to use our God-given imagination to put ourselves in their shoes, so to speak.

Another part of our struggle to label the columns came up because there are differences in the situations that we listed as examples. In some of the examples, the Bible records God telling the person His will and guidance. But, while we chose to label part of column 2 as “God’s Will,” in some cases the Bible doesn’t record God specifically telling a person what to do or not do. However, we can deduce that God had to be working to speak to the person’s heart, because the temptation Satan was presenting was leading them toward sin. Therefore, even though the person may have actually messed up in their trial, we can also deduce that it was because they did not do a very good job of discerning God’s guidance to them. In these cases, the person(s) did not discern “God’s Will,” and the main reason we know they didn’t is because *we* have the written Word that tells us the story. The lesson is that when it is our trial, we too may miss the mark if we fail to do a good job in discerning God’s guidance to our hearts, and that doesn’t mean we won’t have questions!

Another note about column 2. In this column two things are presented: first, the person(s) we want to try to relate to in the trial; second, “God’s will” for that person. In some cases we can surmise God’s will based on other things we know about Him, His purpose for having the stories in the Bible, or other general things the Bible tells us about God’s intentions for how we are to live for Him.

A final note we want to make is about column 3. We listed questions the person *could* have had. Just because we listed them doesn’t mean that person actually had them. However, when we put ourselves in the person’s shoes, it isn’t hard to see that a normal person could have such questions.

What we can learn is that discerning, or hearing, God’s guidance with the heart is often more about looking internally. Discernment will always include doing something externally, but it doesn’t always involve knowing answers to the many possible questions we may have about the external outcome of the trial. Keeping these things in mind, we trust that the chart will help to open our spiritual eyes as we work to look within during our trials. We trust the chart will give you insights into some of the normal challenges that come with having faith and trust in God during our trials.

Chart – Trusting God In Trials Typically Involves Not Knowing Some Outcome

Scripture Reference	Person’s Perspective To Look At/ “God’s Will” For That Person	Questions About Outcomes
Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6	Adam – don’t eat the fruit	Eve already ate the fruit. If I don’t eat, will I be alone? Eve ate but didn’t drop dead; is it possible that I won’t actually die either?
Genesis 6:12-14	Noah’s family – trust in the vision I gave Noah; follow your husband/father’s direction	What if Noah got it wrong? How will we know if Noah is right? Why does my life have to be so different from others’? What about my plans and dreams? Did God really tell my dad (Noah) to build an ark?
Genesis 12:1-5 Genesis 16:1-4	Abraham – I will make a great nation from your line (implies he will have a son)	When? How long will I have to wait? If I have to wait more than a year or two, does that mean I misunderstood God’s will? If I have the power to have a son through the maidservant, does God want me to use that power?
Genesis 19:29-36	Lot’s daughters – conduct yourselves morally	What if we don’t find husbands? How do we deal with being alone? What if we never have children?
Genesis 22:1-10	Abraham – sacrifice your son	How will my family line continue? What will my wife think of me? What will others think of me? Why would God have me act in a self-defeating and destructive way (by killing Isaac)? Isn’t this act a form of child abuse? Why would God have me do something that could traumatize my son?

Scripture Reference	Person’s Perspective To Look At/ “God’s Will” For That Person	Questions About Outcomes
Genesis 34:1-31	Dinah’s brothers (after she is raped) – don’t exact revenge on the perpetrators	What if, by doing nothing, others think we are weak and attack us? How can we do nothing in response? What if there is no justice?
Exodus 2:1-3	Moses’ Mom – put your baby in a basket in the river	What will happen to him? Am I a bad mom? What if someone bad gets my baby?
Deuteronomy 34:1-5	Moses – you are not allowed to enter into the Promised Land	Have I failed in my mission to serve God? Don’t I deserve to enter the Promised Land? Would God really punish a follower of His in this way? What will my family or others accuse me of acting in a self-destructive way?
Daniel 3:13-18	Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – don’t pray to the king as God; don’t stop praying to Me	What if the king kills us? Is it right to violate the laws of the land?
Jonah 3-4	Jonah – you are to rejoice for those upon whom I (God) have compassion, even if they are the enemies of Israel	Will Israel be equal with everyone else in the world? What will happen to Israel if her enemies are spared and they prosper? Why should I forgive Israel’s enemies after all we have been through?
Matthew 1:18-19	Joseph – you are to marry Mary and she is already pregnant	Will I bring shame on my family? Is this really appropriate? What if others say bad things about her or me because Mary is pregnant without being married?
Luke 1:26-33	Mary – you will see My angel who is telling you that you will be the mother of Jesus	Will people believe I saw an angel? Why would God put me in a situation where my integrity is so questionable? What will Joseph think? What will my family think?
Luke 22:47-51	Peter – don’t fight the people that come to arrest Jesus	How can I let them take Jesus? If I don’t defend Jesus, it means I don’t care about Him.

Scripture Reference	Person’s Perspective To Look At/ “God’s Will” For That Person	Questions About Outcomes
John 5:1-14	Healed man – you’ve been healed, accept My warning	This person (Jesus) healed me, but does that give Him the right to judge me and threaten me about how I choose to live? God is about love; criticizing someone isn’t very godly is it? Will God really punish me for receiving a blessing and not being perfect?
Acts 2:5-15	The apostles – be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak to the people in their native languages to demonstrate My power in you	What if the people think we are crazy? What if we submit to the Spirit’s influence and people accuse us of being a cult or say other untrue things about us?
Acts 4:34-5:2	Ananias and Sapphira – sell the land and give the money to the Apostles to distribute	What about our future? What about making sure we are financially well off? What if we experience financial difficulties in the future? What about our plans and dreams? Wouldn’t God want me to be wise about my money? Wouldn’t God want me to be taken care of by keeping just some of the money?
Acts 4:34-5:2	Apostles – call Ananias and Sapphira on the fact that they withheld money for themselves	What might Ananias and Sapphira’s family say about us if they die as a result of this sin? Will we be accused of slandering them? What right do we have to tell someone how they should spend their money?
Acts 10:1-38	Peter – this Roman officer has seen my angel, so go into his home and minister to him	Did the Gentile really see an angel? What will the Jewish leaders say about me going into a Gentile’s home? Isn’t doing that contrary to God’s written Word (the Torah)? Why would God have me do something that is so contrary to Israel’s culture and religious background? Would God do that?

Scripture Reference	Person’s Perspective To Look At/ “God’s Will” For That Person	Questions About Outcomes
Acts 14:19-22	Paul – go into the town to preach the Gospel	What if they put me in jail? What if I am hurt? What if they try to stone me? What if they try to kill me?
1 Corinthians 1:14-15	Paul – be inspired by My Spirit to give correction to the believers in Corinth via a letter	Will the believers think I’m being too critical? Am I really being inspired by God, or am I letting my feelings get in the way? What gives me the right to correct other believers when I used to murder people? Is my letter going to come across as demonstrating the loving message of Christ?
1 Corinthians 1:14-15	Believers – receive this letter from Paul, who is inspired by My Spirit to give correction to you	Is Paul really being inspired by God, or is he letting his feelings get in the way? What gives Paul the right to judge us? Wasn’t Paul a murderer? Is Paul really demonstrating the loving message of Christ?
Galatians 2:11-13	Peter – do not show preferences for Christian Jews over Christian Gentiles	Am I denying my heritage? Are Jews and Gentiles really part of one Body? What will the Jews think of me if I side with the Gentiles on this issue?



There will always be questions one can have concerning how God would have one to respond to a trial. The point is that discerning God’s will means being able to be at peace with the questions we have, but for which God is not choosing to provide us information. This is a big, yet natural, part of having faith in trials. If you want to learn more about exercises and questions that challenge us to introspect, discern between old and new self motives, desires, etc. check out our spiritual training course, *Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*. This book offers training in identifying patterns in Satan’s attacks and temptations during trials, as well as in God’s guidance to you.

This training can help greatly when it comes to discerning which questions we have are coming up in us because of fear generated by Satan, and which questions are ones for which God really wants us to have answers.

HEARING THE HYMNS

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty¹

The words to this less familiar hymn were written by Joachim Neander (1650-1680). This hymn is a classic hymn of God’s love, grace and provision for us in all things. Once we get past “thee” “thy” and other words in the old Kings English, we find a really awesome message to our hearts! The theme reminds me of Romans 15:13 – “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” While our trials may often cause us to feel down and sad, you can’t help but feel uplifted when you connect with the sentiments expressed so well in this praise to God.

Verse 1 – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, Now to His temple draw near;
Praise Him in glad adoration.

Verse 2 – Praise to the Lord, who o’er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen How thy desire e’er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Verse 3 – Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.
Ponder anew What the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

Verse 4 – Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him.
Let the Amen sound from His people again,
Gladly for aye we adore Him.¹

Verse 1. Praising the Lord as the king and ruler of all creation is the theme. The writer sees himself as part of all creation and as such desires to praise the Lord from the depths of his soul. He is responsible for and gracious to give us our salvation and whatever health we may be blessed with. In short, from our almighty Lord comes our very existence in life!

I have to question myself. How often do I focus on allowing that extent of praise and gratitude come out of my own heart? The writer challenges us in line three of the first verse. He basically says, “Hey if you get the hugeness of this Truth, go to a place of worship and offer Him your praise! Be glad! Adore Him!” That word, adore, is growing on me more in terms of my relationship with God. I’ve

normally associated adoration with a love like in marriage. It's funny that my mind tends to forget the description of Jesus as the groom and the church as the bride! Perhaps I should learn to adore Him more for being my Savior. Oh that we would release the level of praise to the Lord more often, the level we see in verse one from Mr. Neander!

*...spend more
time seeing and
valuing what the
Lord has done...*

Verse 2. This verse makes total sense to me. It's like Mr. Neander is saying to me, "Ok, if you aren't feeling the vibe I described in the first verse, then maybe you need to spend a bit more time contemplating how the Lord has looked after you." I get that. When I first sang this hymn, the words and themes didn't stand out to me as much as they did when I stopped to read the words later. When I was introspecting about how much I praise and adore the Lord, I was wondering how I find that intense love in my own heart more often. What's really cool is that Mr. Neander laid out the answer in this second verse. I need to spend more time seeing and valuing what the Lord has done for me.

I find that sometimes I get wrapped up in seeing so many trials in my life that I may forget to deeply appreciate and express gratitude for how the Lord has guided me, given me certainty in the face of doubt, and has sustained my own growth. We can tend to zoom in on what we aren't getting in life such that we don't dwell more on what the Lord has provided to our lives. That comes from the dark forces in this world that fight against the Light of the Lord within us! Life can always be worse. I suppose that if I believe the Lord has a plan for me personally, then that plan includes what He considers as appropriate abundance and lack. He is the source of provision for abundance in my life, and He is the source of His own ever-wise discretion in having me to lack other things so I lean on Him more!

Verse 3. I love the challenge of introspection! There is so much wisdom in evaluating ourselves and our hearts. Accordingly, Mr. Neander carries his advice for introspection into this verse as well. Do we have work? Does anything good come from our work, whether great or small? These things are of the Lord, so the writer says, "Praise to the Lord!"

Has the Lord ever defended you? Think of those times and praise the Lord! Does He attend to you in the times you wish you had been more greatly defended? Think of those times and praise the Lord who reigns over all! Then, take a fresh stab at contemplating what all the Lord can and will do, if we will let Him approach us as the greatest friend ever! We can keep our friends at arms distance when we misperceive things or when we harbor doubts. Let us not do this with our friend and Master, the Lord!

Verse 4. There's that word "adore" again! After offering some insightful nuggets on how to discover a similar longing to praise the Lord, Mr. Neander returns to calling out for all to find and give praise to the Lord. Let all God's people resound the call of "Amen" to the importance, value, and indeed the need to Praise the Lord! It's in our hearts. We love the Lord! Let's let praise come out of our hearts more often!

*We love the Lord!
Let's let praise
come out of our
hearts more often!*

KEYS WEBSITE ALERTS

RELIGIOUS ORIGINS OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. We have confirmed that *Keys To Understanding Life* will also be kicking off this year's Jesus Jam Fest (hosted by Freedom Outreach) with our presentation of RELIGIOUS ORIGINS OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. The event takes place on July 21 in Canyon Lake, Texas. This presentation was originally developed for servicemen in the US Army when things were really heating up in the Middle East. In the 90's the presentation was a mandatory event for many servicemen actually deploying to the Middle East. In conjunction with this latest presentation, we have added *Religious Origins Middle East Crisis* page under the *Keys* website navigation menu button shown below.



You can also easily get to the page describing this dynamic presentation by going to www.ReligiousOriginsMiddleEastCrisis.com.

The Religious Origins presentation is not a lecture. It is a dynamic, audience-involved presentation that is great for all ages! See the new page for more information. We are also providing info about this next presentation on *Keys To Understanding Life* Facebook page. Join us there and keep in touch!!



INTERACT WITH KEYS. We've added an APP on the *Keys* page on Facebook called “Interact With Keys.” Basically it's like a mini-version of the website. It's pretty straight forward and provides links to key pages (no pun intended) on the website straight from Facebook.

The APP has 4 tabs across the top. Click to see the mini-page on that tab. At the bottom of each of these pages are from 1-3 “Learn More” links that jump you to a page on the website. Some of these links are probably more for new visitors on the “Our Mission” and the “Spiritual Training Courses” tabs. Under the “Latest INTEL” tab are links to the last 3 “Hearts Up” e-Publications. The final tab, “Beans and Bullets” has a link to the full INDEX of topics, passages and articles from all the 30+ “Hearts Up” editions from the last 3½ years.

We hope you'll find this APP convenient to use when you are on Facebook and want to quickly get the latest highlights from the *Keys To Understanding Life* website. We'd like to ask you to pass the word along to your friends on Facebook – this APP is a great and quick way to get acquainted with *Keys*.

HEART TO HEART

If you write poems, psalms, lyrics or prose of faith, and would like to share one of them with others in a “Hearts Up” edition, you may submit it for consideration for the *Heart To Heart* feature. You may also submit a story or testimony of your own to share how you drew closer to God during a trial or in your life. You can email your submission through the [Contact Us](#) page or send it to the snail mail address provided on that webpage. Be sure to read the **Contribution Guidelines** before sending us your submission. You can view those guidelines by clicking the link provided on the Contact Us page itself.

Corrections to Previous “Hearts Up” Editions

ЛУЧЕ ПОСНА ЧЕМ НИКАГДА - Russian for “Better late than never!!” We received an email this month from one of our readers pointing out that in the April 2011 edition, we mentioned that the Torah consists of Genesis to Deuteronomy. We go on to say “The first four books of the Bible.” Our reader pointed out that the statement should read, “The first five books of the Bible.” We want to say thank you to our reader who pointed that out. Way to go!! We definitely welcome feedback on corrections, as well as on other thoughts you have! Again, thanks.

ENDNOTES

¹ “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”, Joachim Neander, (1650-1680) as quoted in The Baptist Hymnal, Convention Press, Nashville, TN, 1991, 14

Dear Reader,

If you find this e-publication beneficial to your walk with Christ and would like to give a financial gift to the *Keys To Understanding Life* ministry, you may do so by mailing your gift to our Snail Mail Address (our current Snail Mail Address can be found on the Contact Us page on our website).

Just so you know, our ministry is not yet a non-profit ministry. We are currently engaged in becoming a 501 C3 non-profit organization, with a goal of attaining that distinction toward the end of this year. As it is, any gift that is given is a “true gift” in the sense that it is not tax deductible right now. At this time, donations or gifts to *Keys To Understanding Life* may be made out to: William J. Clark.

God bless you.

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