

## LESSON 13

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# Overcoming Obstacles

In 1992, a young man, his wife, and their young son packed a few of their belongings in cardboard boxes, sold everything else they owned, and moved from the United States to the country of Turkey. The Turks are one of the largest unreached people groups in the world. At the time, there were fewer than 300 Turkish Christians in a country of over 50,000,000. (That is less than 0.001 percent.) The couple had dreamed of this move and had prepared for it for years. They had extensive experience in full-time Christian work, had strong support from their mission agency and sending church, and they were joining another couple who had been “missionary kids” and now had a growing mission of their own. Everyone prayed and expected that by working together this new team would be used mightily by God to reach the Turks. Their plan was to spend at least ten years in Turkey, serving and ministering to the lost of that country.

Within weeks, however, obstacles to the work appeared. Great tension developed between the young man and his wife. As the months progressed, depression and discouragement became the daily norm. While language learning progressed steadily, the new couple felt useless and sidetracked from their goals of evangelism and church planting. The birth of their second son was a wonderful experience, but the demands of raising two small boys in a foreign country drained their energy. After a year and a half, misunderstandings between other members of the team surfaced repeatedly, and there were deep feelings of frustration and judgment. Cultural differences continued to worsen the couple's isolation. At the end of two and a half years—facing a third pregnancy and with no hope of reconciling the differences with their teammates—the

young man brought his family back to the United States. At the airport in Turkey, they said tearful farewells to their friends and teammates. When they arrived in America, their home church greeted them with cheers and love. But deep inside, they were dying. Their marriage was a wreck, and their hearts were broken. The mission had failed.

In this lesson, we will look at the obstacles faced by Christians as they serve God. Our study will be an introduction to many topics that deserve deeper investigation. We will survey what Scripture says and seek out practical solutions to common problems. This discussion is not necessarily intended to help you avoid obstacles. Rather, it is intended to give you hope and perspective when you face obstacles. Difficult times will come, and these difficulties can be intensely personal. I should know. I am the young man who went to Turkey with high hopes and came home feeling like a total failure.

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## LESSON OUTLINE

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Satan, the World, the Flesh, and Broken Relationships  
Who Is Really Behind This?  
Facing Difficulties

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## LESSON OBJECTIVES

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- 1: Identify the four sources of obstacles typically faced by believers.*
- 2: Discuss God's purposes in obstacles.*
- 3: State biblical principles for dealing with obstacles.*

## Satan, the World, the Flesh, and Broken Relationships

### *Objective 1:*

*Identify the four sources of  
obstacles typically faced by believers.*

One of the most difficult things about obstacles is not the obstacles themselves, but the fact that we have to face them at all. Obstacles reveal our expectations about life and God, and often these do not match up. Particularly in the western church, obstacles often take us by surprise. Perhaps you know what I mean. You gave your life to Christ, trusting that everything would go smoothly. You stepped out in faith to serve Him, you have a vision for the ministry God is calling you to, and you pursue it, sometimes at great sacrifice. Then trouble starts. Everything feels as though it is coming apart, and even the things that seem intact take so much work. Shouldn't God be making things smoother? Here you are giving your all for God, and nothing seems to be going right. Sometimes it is just tough. Sometimes it is absolutely tragic.

It just does not make sense. Why doesn't God keep His part of the deal? Well, because there is no deal. God never promised that life would be easy or predictable. In fact, Scripture makes it clear that obstacles and difficulties are normal. Peter encourages believers, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:12–13).

The obstacles you are facing are not unusual; God did not go on vacation or decide to punish you for some unknown reason. Obstacles are simply an opportunity for you to rejoice and bring glory to God. What obstacles are you facing? Why not rejoice to the degree that you feel you are suffering? (You may have to do this by faith if you are unable to make sense of the challenges you face.)

Following is a discussion of four specific sources of obstacles: Satan, the world, the flesh, and broken relationships.

## Satan

Behind all evil is the Evil One, Satan. Directly or indirectly, every obstacle we face is a consequence of his existence. Peter writes, “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). The apostle Paul also writes about Satan’s role in creating obstacles. “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

The Bible reveals much more information about Satan. Below are a few key passages.

<u>Satan’s Actions</u>	<u>Scripture References</u>
Satan torments.	1 Samuel 16:14
Sin began in Satan’s heart.	Isaiah 14:13
Satan was a model of perfection until he sinned. Pride caused his rebellion.	Ezekiel 28:12, 15, 17
Satan is the prince of this world.	Matthew 4:8–9; John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11
He is a murderer and a liar.	John 8:44
He blinds the minds of unbelievers.	2 Corinthians 4:4
He is the ruler of the kingdom of the air.	Ephesians 2:2
He ensnares.	1 Timothy 3:7
He deceives.	Revelation 20:7–8

Satan hates God, and because Christ is in you, he abhors you, too. Were it not for God’s continual

protection, Satan would have already destroyed us. As God allows, Satan directly attacks us or places challenging obstacles in our way as we seek to worship and serve God. Sometimes Satan's obstacles are direct. Demonic oppression and possession bring us face to face with such evil. The lies that bombard us from the world are part of an intentional strategy to deceive and destroy us. Often the obstacles we face are an indirect consequence of his work. The sinful inclination we are born with is an indirect result of the original temptations Satan presented to Adam and Eve.

When we were in Turkey, it was easy to see the direct influences of the devil. Blood sacrifices took place daily. Fortune tellers made profitable business. Curses could be bought and cast on anyone. The indirect influences were always tougher to see, just as they are in America.

### The World

God created a perfect world in which humans, nature, and God existed peacefully and harmoniously. But this changed when Satan tempted Adam and Eve and they disobeyed God (Genesis 3). Though humanity has longed for a perfect world since then, sin has introduced to this world difficulty, deceit, disease, and death.

### Difficulty

To Eve, God said,

"I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:16–17, 19)

## Deceit

Satan introduced lies into the world, and now the world is filled with deception. What seems right is not; what is right seems wrong. The world promises to offer meaning and fulfillment through power, possessions, and popularity—but the promise does not hold. Millions of human beings have accepted the world's lies as truth and have “exchanged the truth of God for a lie” (Romans 1:25).

## Disease

When Adam and Eve left Eden and were cut off from the tree of life, an irreversible process of decay began in their bodies. Sickness is a direct result of that original sin. Specific illness can also be caused by individual sin (2 Kings 5:27, 2 Chronicles 21:12–19), by God (John 9:1–3), and by Satan (Job 2:7).

## Death

Romans 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death.” Because we live in a sinful, fallen world, each of us will die a physical death (unless God intervenes in our lifetime). Death is the final obstacle we will face after a lifetime filled with struggles. Hebrews 9:27 notes, “Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.” However, while we live on this earth, Jesus assures us, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!” (John 16:33).

## The Flesh

Even though our spirits have been made new and we are born again, we still struggle with the desires of the flesh. Paul describes this battle: “We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do” (Romans 7:14–15).

So many of the obstacles we face are a direct consequence of our own sinful flesh. These fleshly tendencies cause specific acts and attitudes of sin that make our lives difficult. We can blame Adam and Eve for

this heritage, but every sin comes from a choice of our own individual will.

### **Broken Relationships**

Difficulties with fellow workers and those we love are perhaps the most painful of all obstacles. God designed us to work together as a body, with each individual doing his or her part for the greater good of the mission. God also designed us for relationship. While our primary needs are to be met in our relationship with Jesus, we naturally seek love, respect, and admiration of other humans. This need for community makes us vulnerable as unfulfilled expectations and broken promises cause pain, anger, and division.

Disagreements also cause broken relationships. In Acts, we read of a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas who had been partners in ministry.

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (Acts 15:36–41)

Paul, the man who would pen so much of the New Testament, and Barnabas, a dedicated servant of God, had a “sharp disagreement.” Unable to agree on a ministry-related issue, the two separated.

On a personal note, when my wife and I left for Turkey, we knew that we had differences with our team leaders. Because we were all Spirit-filled believers focused on the same goals, we thought that we could

work out those differences on the field. Instead, the stress and demands of cross-cultural living amplified our differences. When we parted from our team and came home, I felt devastated and disillusioned. The pain was almost more than we could bear.

## Who Is Really Behind This?

### *Objective 2:*

*Discuss God's purposes in obstacles.*

Satan, the world, the flesh, and broken relationships—these are clear sources of obstacles, and each of them is responsible for interfering with the work of God. But at the same time, we must consider an issue that has perplexed believers in Christ for hundreds of years: If God is really God, isn't He ultimately responsible for everything that happens, even the obstacles we face?

This is a tough issue that has been debated over and over. On one level, we see that the choices of Satan and humanity have caused the difficulties we face. On a higher level, however, we must admit that an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present God is in complete control of everything that happens. The prophet Isaiah recorded these words of God:

"I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things." (Isaiah 45:5–7)

In the book of Job, God permitted Satan to test Job. Job was "blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1), yet God willingly placed Job in the power of Satan. In this case, God did not directly cause Job's obstacles, but He certainly allowed them.

However, Job himself saw the adversity as coming from God. He asked, “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” (Job 2:10). This scenario shows how debatable is God’s role in obstacles. Nevertheless, the apostle Paul writes, “we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

### Recognizing God’s Purposes

When we serve God and obstacles appear, it is very easy to get frustrated. We want to see things happen in a certain way in a certain time, but something gets in the way. If we are not careful, our frustration can lead to anger and stress. Many believers who deeply desire to serve God are very goal focused. They want to get things done for Him. They want to make a difference in their families and in the world. They want . . . they want . . . they want.

Often, the motives behind these desires are not at all pure. In my case, I had a powerful need to perform for God in order to feel accepted by Him. Understand this: My theology was correct. I knew in my head that Ephesians 2:8–9 was true: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” The problem was that I did not really believe this in my heart.

Because of the world’s influence on my soul, I believed that my true value and purpose came from my works. I felt accepted by God only when I had given everything I had for Him. On the outside, I was a devoted young missionary. Inside, however, I needed to be a missionary in order to be valuable and accepted by God and others. I never would have admitted to this at the time, but my life was not driven by compassion or a desire to see God glorified. I was driven to prove myself to God and to my church. This was very selfish.

When we started to face obstacles in the work, I panicked and tried everything I could to control the situation and fix it. But I made things worse. Then, when everything came apart, my life was shattered. I could not perform for God

anymore. I had lost my identity as a missionary. I did not know who I was any longer. I was absolutely devastated and disillusioned. Nothing had worked out the way I expected.

Looking back at it all right now, though, I recognize God's purpose in the obstacles we faced. God was stripping away at the lies that had imprisoned me. He cared so much about me that He was willing to break me and then rebuild me so that I could be free in the truth about who I really was. I believe that obstacles are gifts from God that He uses to make us more like His Son. When obstacles come, we are more likely to be concerned about our goals, but God is more concerned about us. When we learn to discern what He is doing in our lives and how He desires to change us, then we can clearly see at least part of His purposes in the obstacles and how He will use them to our good.

James writes, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance" (James 1:2-3). When trials come, we tend to focus on how they affect our work, but God intends for them to give us endurance, making us perfect and complete. Trials also break us of our fleshly desire to serve God in our own strength rather than depending on His presence in our lives and His power working through us to His glory (see 1 Timothy 6:16, John 9:1-3). This was certainly Paul's realization. He recognized God's purposes in the obstacles that he faced with his own health:

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake,

I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7–10)

God has a personal purpose for you in every obstacle you face. He is diligently using circumstances to reshape you so that you can enjoy a closer relationship with Him. God also uses obstacles to direct His work. We may have a plan, a way that we think things should be done. The plan might seem obvious to us, but God knows best. Proverbs 16:9 observes, “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.”

The broken relationship that Paul and Barnabas suffered is a good example of God's direction through obstacles. Paul had planned for everyone to revisit the established churches. After their separation, however, God used them to reach new territory, sharing the Gospel with thousands who would not have heard. This is the bottom line: No matter what obstacles you face, God is using them for good.

## Facing Difficulties

### *Objective 3:*

*State biblical principles for dealing with obstacles.*

In this short lesson, we do not have the space to address all aspects of dealing with obstacles. However, the following guidelines should help you get started in the right direction.

### Dealing with Satan

The first step for dealing with the obstacles of Satan is recognizing that he exists and is at work. First Peter 5:6–10 gives insight in approaching obstacles from this perspective:

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around

like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Two other passages are applicable. Matthew 4 records Jesus' direct confrontation with Satan. Satan tempted Jesus with food, power, and all the possessions of the world. But in each situation, Jesus relied on the truth of the written Word of God to defend himself.

Wise Christians will arm themselves with Scripture and use it to combat the lies that Satan uses to tempt and deceive. Study the Bible, and memorize its truths. "The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Learn to use the Scriptures as a powerful weapon against the evil one.

Start by studying the passages from Matthew 4. You can use Jesus' words to combat temptations. Next, study and apply Ephesians 6:10–18. This passage describes the battles Christians face and tells of the weapons and armor that God has given us. Always prioritize your personal relationship with Christ. Without Him, you can do nothing (John 15:5), but through Him all things are possible (Philippians 4:13). "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you" (James 4:6–8).

### Dealing with the World

The Bible offers dozens of suggestions for dealing with the obstacles in this fallen, sinful world. Here are a few:

*Difficulty:* Accept it and be at peace! In John 16:33, Jesus says, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Jesus does not promise to remove the difficulty. Instead, He promises

to give rest and peace for those who bring their heavy burdens and concerns to Him (see Matthew 11:28–29).

*Deceit:* Recognize it and replace it! The world is filled with false hope and false promises. In many situations, the Gospel has been veiled. People have been blinded by Satan and can no longer see truth (2 Corinthians 4:4). We are called to speak the truth in love to others and to renew our minds (Ephesians 4:25). Paul urges, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2).

*Disease:* Pray for healing, but do not be afraid to seek help! James 5:14–15 offers a plan for dealing with sickness. This plan calls for prayer. How often do we rush to the doctor or pop medicine into our mouths without first asking God to heal us? While it is not a part of God’s original design, disease is a normal part of life in this fallen world. God knows this, and He wants us to call upon Him when we have health problems. At the same time, we must also be open to the possibility that the healing process may involve consulting medical experts and undergoing treatment. God has allowed humans to develop procedures and medicines that bring relief. We should take advantage of these gifts.

*Death:* Embrace it and look forward to it! God uses even the worst possible obstacle, death, to fulfill eternal purposes. Unless Christ comes back in this generation, each of us will die, so it is vital that we live each day for Him. If God leads you into martyrdom, your death could be the ultimate act of service. In the eternal sense, death is really no obstacle, for death ushers us into the everlasting presence of God.

### Dealing with the Flesh

When dealing with sinful desires of the flesh, common sense and accountability are important. Second Timothy 2:22 instructs us to “flee the evil desires of youth.” Also, James writes, “Confess your sins to each other and

pray for each other so that you may be healed" (5:17). When you gather with people you trust and share your struggles and obstacles, the bondage of sinful flesh can be broken. Many obstacles we face come from a lack of understanding of who we are now as born-again Christians. Too often we face defeat and discouragement because we buy into the lies of Satan and the world. Replace those lies with God's truth.

- You are God's child (John 1:12).
- You are God's friend (John 15:15).
- You are united with God in one spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17).
- You are a saint (Ephesians 1:1).
- You have direct access to God (Ephesians 2:18).
- You have been forgiven of all your sin (Colossians 2:13).
- You are free from condemnation (Romans 8:1–2, 31).
- You have a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7).
- You have been crucified, and now Christ lives in you (Galatians 2:20).
- You are a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16–20).

### Dealing with Broken Relationships

When relationships become strained or broken, your response is the only thing you can monitor. What other people do is out of your control. Therefore, the only changes that you can make are the changes in your own attitudes and actions. Following are suggestions for dealing with broken relationships.

### Receive Others As God's Loving Tools

We have already established that obstacles are tools of God to make you more like Jesus. This is absolutely true when it comes to relationships. Since God is in control of every circumstance, He has the power to cause or allow anything He wishes. He is also a loving, caring God. This means that you can receive any relational

difficulty as a gift from God. Even if it feels terrible or seems evil, God is using it to make you more like Him. So, if you are facing broken relationships now, stop here and praise God for this struggle. His purpose is greater than this present situation.

### Change Your Goals

Many broken relationships come from desires that we try to control. For instance, we want someone to be a certain way, but the person would not or cannot. So we try to manipulate situations to make it happen. If it is your goal to make others do your bidding, you are headed for disaster. But if you focus on wholesome goals, the desire for personal manipulation will be lost. So, pray for your desires and make it your personal goal to allow Jesus to love others through you. You may still have to deal with issues, but your anger and frustration will be defused.

### Become an Expert in Forgiveness

In his book *Rest Assured*, Bill Ewing wrote, "Forgiveness is the divine transaction, paid in full by the blood of Jesus, which frees both the offender and the offended from the bondage of sin. The act of forgiveness follows in the footsteps of Christ to the very shadows of the Cross, where healing, liberty and power find their genesis in His punishment and death." Broken relationships and anger are healed only by forgiveness. Forgiveness is essential for healthy marriages, friendships, churches, and ministries. According to Ewing,

- Forgiveness begins when you fully embrace the wrong that you have encountered.
- Forgiveness is built on the understanding that all sin is ultimately against God, not against us (Psalm 51:3–4; Romans 14:7–8; Acts 9:4).
- Forgiveness is empowered when we embrace the extent of God's forgiveness toward us (Psalm 103:3–4; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:13).
- To be willing to forgive, we must trust God with our feelings of anger.

- Forgiveness is something that God must do through us; it is not something we can do on our own (John 15:5).

### Steps to Forgiveness

1. Make a list of the specific hurts that were committed against you. List things the offender did or did not do that hurt you.
2. List all the ways this action has affected you. Your pain will help guide you to the consequences of the person's offense. (For example, if someone steals your car, you might be mad that you have to walk to work. If your spouse has left you, you might be depressed because of how it has caused other couples to avoid you.) The ramifications might be financial, social, mental, emotional, or physical.
3. Claim the truth that your life is Christ's and, as part of His body, you shared in His suffering. Thank God for His forgiveness toward you, and thank Him for forgiving the offender through you. Pass the sin on to the Cross. Since God has already paid the price for this offense, pass God's forgiveness on to the offender.
4. Release the responsibility for punishment to God. While you may still need to pursue legal recourse or church discipline, recognize that it is not your place to punish the offender. Also, forgiveness does not mean you have to forget. If someone has sinned against you, you do not have to be foolish and set yourself up for further pain or abuse. It does mean, however, that in God's power you free the offender from your condemnation and judgment, and choose to love him or her.

A prayer of forgiveness might be something like this: Heavenly Father, you are aware of the sins that have been committed and the effect they have had on me as Your child. (Give Him the specifics.) I know that my life is in Your hands and all I am and all I do is through You. So, thank You for forgiving them and me. Thanks for paying the cost for their

sin and mine when Your Son died on the Cross, and when I was crucified with Him. I will not punish my offender in any way. Free me from my feelings of anger. Make me a blessing to those that have hurt me.

5. Destroy the list. Destroying the list symbolizes that you are choosing to no longer carry the burden of the sin. You are letting it go; you are setting yourself free.
6. Give a blessing.

Peter sums this up: "All of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing" (1 Peter 3:8–9). An act of kindness toward someone who has done wrong unleashes the power of forgiveness and breaks the stronghold of emotion that Satan uses to control those who have been hurt.

There are also times when you will need to seek forgiveness when God shows that you are in the wrong. Again, Ewing outlines the steps to take:

- Clearly identify what you did and the impact it had on the other person.
- Thank God for forgiving you.
- Ask the person you sinned against to forgive you. Do not just say "I'm sorry." Be specific and ask "Will you forgive me for \_\_\_\_\_?"

Freedom always comes with a price. Forgiveness comes with humility and awkwardness that the flesh would just as soon avoid. But it is worth it.

If the person extends forgiveness, you are free from the sin, and so is your forgiver. If the other person does not forgive you, you are still free. The offended will have to carry the weight of your sin. Asking for forgiveness does not, however, release you from earthly consequences of your actions. You may still face serious ramifications because of what you did. One of those consequences may be living with a broken relationship.

(There is no guarantee that the person you have hurt is going to forgive you.) The relational implications of your actions could be severing and severe. There may be legal, financial, and physical implications as well. But no matter what you have done or continue to do, it is never too late to do the right thing. Seeking forgiveness is the right thing. Embracing the forgiveness of God, forgiving others, and forgiving yourself—these are the privileges, rights, and responsibilities of those who walk in the shadow of the Cross.

## SELF-TEST

After studying the lesson, please read each study question carefully and circle the correct response. There is only one correct response for each question.

1. *Which of the following is not true about obstacles?*
  - a) *Obstacles are normal in a fallen world.*
  - b) *Obstacles are an opportunity to bring glory to God.*
  - c) *All obstacles are God's punishment for your sin.*
2. *According to Ephesians 6:12, our enemies are*
  - a) *the politicians of world governments.*
  - b) *Satan and his fallen angels.*
  - c) *the leaders of false religions.*
3. *Every obstacle we face is*
  - a) *a result of our own sin.*
  - b) *a disappointment to God.*
  - c) *directly or indirectly a consequence of Satan's existence.*
4. *The account of Paul and Barnabas teaches us that*
  - a) *broken relationships are to be expected, even among Christians.*
  - b) *disagreement causes God's mission to be discontinued.*
  - c) *Christians with the same goals will always work together for the same purposes.*
5. *God's purpose in our facing obstacles is to*
  - a) *show us that He is not always in control.*
  - b) *help us develop a closer relationship with Him.*
  - c) *help us stick to our own plans.*
6. *The first step in dealing with obstacles from Satan is*
  - a) *standing strong in our own strength against him.*
  - b) *recognizing that he exists and is always at work.*
  - c) *rebuking those under his influence.*
7. *Although Job was blameless and upright,*
  - a) *he cursed God when he faced obstacles.*
  - b) *God directly caused Job's obstacles.*
  - c) *God permitted Satan to test him.*

8. *First Peter 4:12–13 says that*
  - a) *trials come as a result of our sin.*
  - b) *we should rejoice in our trials.*
  - c) *trials are unusual in the Christian faith.*
  
9. *In dealing with the obstacle of deceit, Christians must*
  - a) *embrace deceit as natural way of the world.*
  - b) *accept it peacefully.*
  - c) *recognize it and replace it with God's truth.*
  
10. *When you forgive people, you*
  - a) *must understand why they offended you.*
  - b) *no longer judge or condemn them.*
  - c) *automatically forget the wrong committed against you.*

## ANSWERS TO STUDY QUESTIONS

Note: If you answered a study question incorrectly, you can find the objective it was drawn from by looking at the reference in parenthesis.

1. *c* (13.1)
2. *b* (13.3)
3. *c* (13.1)
4. *a* (13.1)
5. *b* (13.2)
6. *b* (13.3)
7. *c* (13.2)
8. *b* (13.1)
9. *c* (13.3)
10. *b* (13.3)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS LESSON

Todd Hillard is an author and freelance writer from the Black Hills of South Dakota. He has seventeen years of full-time pastoral experience and was a missionary in Turkey for three years. He and his wife have five children.





## **Making a Difference**

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All Christians have gifts, talents, and a call to serve God. "Making a Difference" is the third of three courses belonging to Global University's 21st Century Discipleship series. It contains practical lessons that will enable you understand the role you play in serving God as well as give you biblical insights into leading others. Each lesson was written by an active pastor, Bible teacher, missionary, or Christian writer. If you are serious about serving God joyfully and faithfully, this course is for you.

**You can use this book for independent study, small groups, and Bible studies. After each lesson are 10 questions to help reinforce what you have learned.**

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