

Mar 20, 2016



# Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks  
Baptist Church  
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:**  
God allows trials in our lives not to impair us but to improve us

**POEM FOR THE WEEK:**  
To make us good ambassadors  
God sends us trials along the way,  
But we become true conquerors  
When in life's struggles we obey  
— Hess

**SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:**  
*But know this, that in the last days  
perilous times will come*  
(2 Tim 3:1 NKJV)

*(from "Our Daily Bread", July 22, 2006)*

Series: The Gift of Faith

UNIT: Tests of Faith

NEXT WEEK

Resurrection Faith  
(Mark 14:26-31, 66-72)

## Struggling Faith Mark 14:26-31, 66-72

### Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson admonishes us that all Christians can suffer from **Struggling Faith**. The **study's aim** is to learn how to follow the Lord Jesus no matter what the cost or risks may be. The **study's application** is to act in faith to identify ourselves as followers of Jesus Christ in any situation.

*(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

### Lesson Introduction and Background

Peter's world was shattered. In the cold, Judean night, his Saviour had been arrested. His friends—the other apostles—were in hiding. Peter himself was in danger because he was one of twelve men closest to this Rabbi from Nazareth. Dreams of a kingdom and overthrowing the Romans were far away. Life seemed dark and hopeless. Only hours before, he had celebrated Passover with his beloved Saviour and the other disciples. Still buoyed up by Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Peter had been full of confidence that this Rabbi, this Jesus of Nazareth, was the One who would reconcile the Jews to God. So when Jesus spoke again of death, Peter had immediately sworn that he would never forsake his Messiah. He had exclaimed, "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise" (Mark 14:31). That is why, as he stood in the high priest's courtyard, the agony he felt was acute. Even though Jesus had warned that it would happen, Peter could not believe what he had done. He had denied his Saviour not just once but three different times. Just as Jesus had said, Peter had forsaken the One who was his beloved Lord, as if the three years he spent following Jesus meant nothing. Modern believers know the rest of the story. We know that Christ forgave Peter and restored him to his charge (John 21:15-19). We also know that this impulsive disciple, the one Jesus renamed "Rock" (Matt. 16:18), would become one of the early church's founding fathers and a mighty pillar of the faith. He would add two letters to the New Testament (1 and 2 Peter) and become one of the greatest spreaders of the gospel. He would even go to martyrdom for his Lord. Peter could not foresee any of this. He may have believed that he had wasted three years of his life. He had given up family, a lucrative profession—his entire existence. That life was falling apart, and he succumbed to the fear that was welling up inside. There are times when all of us struggle with our faith walk. God allows circumstances that, at times, make us wonder whether He really is who He says He is. Is He there, and does He care? Is He truly in control of things? When this happens, we can choose our response. Do we choose to fear the situation, or do we take it before God? Do we still believe that, despite what surrounds us, God is a loving God? Or do we turn away, thinking Him indifferent and cruel? Paul wrote in 2 Timothy, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (1:7). God tells us in Isaiah that we are His and that He will preserve us (43:1-2). We need to love God no matter what, for that love is what drives away our fear (I John 4:18). We do not know what God has planned for us. We can be sure that we will struggle in our walk at some point. Someday life is going to throw us a curveball that will shake us to our core, it will cause us to question God's goodness. The great news is that even when we falter, fear does not have to paralyze us or break our faith. We have a loving Saviour who understands and is willing to forgive and restore—just as He did with Peter.

*(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### **STRUGGLING WITH LOYALTY (MARK 14:26-27)**

*Loyalty strong when with others (26)*

Strong when with others because not quickly broken  
(Eccl 4:9-12)

Strong when with others because of courage (Dan 3:16-18)

Strong when with others because of not being alone and defenseless (Luke 15:4)

*Loyalty weak when leaders are away (27)*

Weak when leaders are away because of impatience (Exodus 32:1-4)

Weak when leaders are away because of being protected (John 17:12)

Weak when leaders are away because of not knowing when they are coming back (Matt 24:42-44)

Weak when leaders are away because of scoffers (2 Peter 3:3-5)

### **STRUGGLING WITH PRIDE (MARK 14:28-31)**

*Pride of own abilities (28-29)*

Pride in own abilities causes arrogance (Isa 2:11)

Pride in own abilities causes a false sense of power (Dan 4:28-34)

Pride in own abilities causes false wisdom (Ezek 28:6-8)

Pride in own abilities, but can do nothing without abiding in Jesus (John 15:5)

*Pride that does not accept truth (30-31)*

Not accepting truth because pride never makes sense (Isa 10:15-16)

Not accepting truth because of thinking too highly of oneself (Rom 12:3)

Not accepting truth because pride that keeps one from seeking God (Ps 10:4)

Not accepting truth because pride makes one a fool (Prov 26:12)

### **STRUGGLING WITH DENIALS (MARK 14:66-71)**

*Denial of knowledge (66-68)*

Denying knowledge due to being darkened in understanding (Eph 4:18)

Denying knowledge because of not having open spiritual eyes (Acts 26:17-18)

Denying knowledge because of futile thinking (Rom 1:21-25)

Denying knowledge because of minds being veiled  
(2 Cor 4:2-4)

*Denial because of fear (69-71)*

Fear of what man will do or think (Ps 56:11)

Fear that keeps us from obeying God (Acts 5:29)

Fear of people's rejection (1 Sam 15:24)

Fear because of following man's teaching and rules (Mark 7:7)

Fear because of trying to please man (Gal 1:10)

### **STRUGGLING WITH GUILT (MARK 14:72)**

*Guilt that is remembered (72)*

Guilt remembered because evil causes war in the mind (Rom 7:23-25)

Guilt remembered because it brings remorse at the knowledge of our weakness (Matt 26:75)

Guilt remembered because it leaves us unworthy and seeking mercy from God (Luke 18:13)

Guilt remembered because of the accountability and responsibility (Matt 27:3-5)

*Guilt that leads to repentance (72)*

Repent through godly sorrow (2 Cor 7:10-11)

Repent to please God (Ezek 18:23)

Repent to escape from the trap of Satan (2 Tim 2:25-26)

Repent because the Kingdom of Heaven is near (Matt 4:17)

Repent so that the times of refreshing can come (Acts 3:19)