



## I Can't Do It Alone

It is natural to want to be in control of our life and our circumstances. We don't want pain and sadness from our past to overwhelm us. We want to be prepared for events in the future so we are not surprised in a harmful way. We want to feel good, be happy, and live free at all times. However, there comes a time in many of our lives when we realize that instead of getting closer to the good life, no matter how hard we try, we are falling further and further away from it.



1. What do I long for? What would make life good for me today?
2. What seems to make living the good life not possible for me today?

Realizing the difficulties we face, both in us and in our circumstances, can lead us to self-pity and bitterness, or it can be an opportunity for hope and a new beginning. We can give in to despair, or admit we need help and new direction from someone outside of ourself. Here's one such call for help:

***Have compassion on me, Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, Lord, for my body is in agony. I am sick at heart ... Return, O Lord, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love ... I am worn out from sobbing. Every night tears drench my bed; my pillow is wet from weeping.*** (King David -- In Psalm 6)



1. What feelings does King David seem to be experiencing?
2. What emotions do I experience when life seems to be falling apart?

Solomon, known as one of the wisest men who ever lived, accomplished much in life. But even he had to come to a point of realizing all of his efforts to get meaning and purpose in his life were just not working.



***I said to myself, "Come now, let's give pleasure a try. Let's look for the 'good things' in life." ... After much thought, I decided to cheer myself with wine ... I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards ... I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire! But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless.*** (King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 2)



1. What kind of things did Solomon try to use to find pleasure and satisfaction?
2. What do I and others turn to, in the hope of finding satisfaction and meaning in life?

Many of us do not have the opportunities Solomon had. For us, it's problems like no money, addiction, broken relationships, and illness that keep us from a good and meaningful life. Regardless of how we get there, for all of us, there comes a moment where we can no longer avoid the horrible realization that our lives are just empty and often a mess.



When we come to these moments of brokenness and helplessness, we have a choice to make. We can try even harder to avoid the pain and hopelessness or we can admit that all is not well. We can pretend “it’s all good” or own up to the reality that our way of handling things is not solving our problems and might even be creating more. We can get honest about the fact that we can’t do things on our own. We need help.

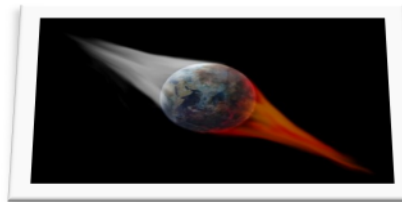


1. Where do I see this in my life today – this trying my best but it’s just not working?

The good news is that our helpless condition is not a surprise to God. God knows that we fall short when we try to do things on our own and God stands ready to help us chart a new course and find a new life.

***Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.*** (John 16:33)

When we clear the lie out of the way that our own efforts are enough to help us, God is able to show us that there are two powers active in our world, seeking to influence us: the devil who is seeking to bring us to harm, and God who is seeking to bring us to life.



***Jesus said, “The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.”*** (John 10:10).

Thankfully, we are not left dangling helplessly between the two powers. We have been given the ability to choose whose power to embrace as the controlling influence for us – destructive habits and behaviours, or God’s loving power and control. There is no neutral ground. We have a choice to make. We are powerless on our own.



1. Where do I see evidence of these two forces at work in my world?
2. What does it mean that there is no neutral ground?
3. Do I believe I have a choice? Do I believe I have to make a choice?

The option God makes available to us, in love, is powerful, available, and totally effective in leading us to the good life. We find help by admitting the emptiness and meaninglessness we see inside ourselves, and making ourselves available to the help and the full life God is giving. Are we actually done trying to figure things out on our own? Are we finally finished trying to cover up our pain with short term activities? Are we willing today to look in a new direction, let God show us something different, and embrace it with everything we have?

***For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. I will be found by you,” says the LORD. “I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes.”*** (From Jeremiah 29 NIV)



1. What does it mean to me to say before God, “I can’t do it alone”?
2. What promises does God make to me today?
3. What’s God’s part in helping me actually find this new life? What’s my part?
4. What makes God’s offer appealing to me?