



Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

It's *Still* All About Jesus — Even When Times are Tough

Setbacks!

We've all experienced them. Sometimes we see them coming; other times they show up unexpectedly. Sometimes they can be pretty consequential; other times they may be considered minor, but can still be annoying. Most of the time, however, they are not appreciated, although in the long-term, sometimes they prove helpful.

Within a family setting some of the following experiences can create setbacks in one form or another:

- 1) Financial uncertainty;
- 2) Suddenly being relocated far away from family;
- 3) Health concerns of close family members;
- 4) Difficulty at work;
- 5) Frustration regarding a family member or close friend;
- 6) Loss of the use of a car or other transportation difficulties;
- 7) Death of family member or close friend;
- 8) Impacts of natural catastrophes;
- 9) Run-in with the law, or other legal concerns; and
- 10) Significant change in job status.

That is not a fun list to consider by any means. It is likely that many of us have experienced one or more of these items. When these types of things occur in our life or in the context of our family, our goal is to move on, to get through it and to look forward to a new day. There are times, however, when we can wallow in some self-pity and choose to not move on, as we don't have the desire or

strength to push forward. There are times when a setback will paralyze us emotionally and keep us from resuming a normal day-to-day life.

So, what do you do when you experience a setback? What is your favorite go-to activity to get back on track? There are times when the activity we choose is not healthy for us emotionally, or financially, or physically and even spiritually. Yet we do those things as they can make us feel good — temporarily.



For longer term, balanced solutions, it is good to speak with your pastor, a trusted friend, a mentor or even a mental health professional. There is no shame in admitting that one needs help and then seeking support to address some of the larger concerns that face us in life.

While setbacks will appear in our lives in various ways and at various times, we as Christians can take assurance that the greatest concern we face — our natural sinful nature — has been addressed on the cross of Calvary by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. While Good Friday looked like a setback, Sunday soon came! Jesus rose from the dead, conquering sin, death and the power of the evil one, assuring that while there may be earthly setbacks, there would be no eternal setbacks for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we experience the ups and downs of this world, we can get absorbed in some pretty difficult situations. In spite of them all, for those who believe, it's still about Jesus!

FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible truths in the home.

Gather the family together in a comfortable place for study and discussion using the outline below.

OPENING PRAYER: Given by the person who has experienced a “tough day” lately.

FAMILY DISCUSSION TIME: *Ask the following questions and invite family members to respond as they are willing and capable.*

James 1:2–4 (See trials as opportunities to grow.)

Romans 8:28 (Things can work out for good, in spite of how bad they may seem.)

1 Peter 5:7 (We can cast our cares on God, knowing that He cares for us.)

FAMILY FUN ACTIVITY:

Casting our Cares on Him

Preparation: Give everyone in the family a blank piece of paper and provide pens or pencils, markers or crayons.

- Have each person write down several personal concerns or anxieties on the piece of paper (or draw a picture if they are unable to write).
- Share them as a family.
- Have each person add to that list any “wider” or more “global” worries or concerns not previously mentioned.
- Ask if there are any other items that anyone wants to add to their list.

Have someone in the family read: Matt. 6:33–34

Now proceed to a place where you can dispose of these lists of worries and concerns — a trash can, a public dumpster, a trash compactor, a paper shredder, fireplace/ outside fire pit, etc. Then, one at a time, have each family member dispose of his list, as another family member reads (and repeats) 1 Peter 5:7.

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER: Have an adult or older sibling read the following prayer, phrase by phrase, with other members of the family repeating as an echo.

Dear Jesus, thank You for sending Your Spirit, to protect us when times are tough. Thank You for going to the cross, to die for us, to save us from sin and to give us the gift of eternal life. Help us to always cast our cares on You. In Your Name we pray, *Amen*.



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