

What is a “lying vanity”?

We begin with a definition of the phrase from Hebrew, a “lying vanity”. It speaks of a transitory, temporal, changing from day-to-day thing. The Old Testament speaks about idols, and the highest desires of non-Christian people, that are always changing and unstable always. There is nothing firm nor stabilizing in “these ways”. The rock that is God is the opposite of this transitory, or false firmness. He is always firm, without moving His principles, without changing His moral character, nor changing in the ways He deals with things.

The concept of “*in vain*” and “*vanity*” **are things that have no value in eternity**. Something vain is something empty of eternal value before the eyes of God.

Psalms 31:6 *I have hated them that regard **lying vanities**: but I trust in the LORD.*

A “lying vanity” is anything that presents itself against God and His principles. On one hand, **everything of God is true. It is “truthful” in the sense that it corresponds to reality**. But on the other hand, these lying vanities DO NOT CORRESPOND with the reality in our present world around us. They are lies which Satan asserts as true, but they don’t correspond to reality.

Commentary of Mathew Henry on Psalms 31:6

*Many think that life is perplexing, and its worries **are multiplying, which excuses (us) if we do not attend to our souls**; but we are very worried over these problems that cause this stress to our soul... They think that they will suffer no harm from this inattention of their souls. But the redemption of the soul is so precious that (man) has to prioritize his soul over his problems... **God sees our problems, but He wants to see if we humble ourselves in our sin and are better because of the affliction**. Each believer will deal with these problems and remedies, until he is set free in death, which is the ultimate enemy for unsaved men.* (paraphrased)

The Parable of the Sower in Mathew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8 has two types of soil that touch on our topic. **First, the seed that fell into the soil which had no depth, and when the sun came out**

(which represents oppression, tribulation, and hardness of life) the seed died. The plant could not use its root system (foundational to its survival) to endure the stress of life. It did not hold out until the fruit of salvation appeared. The second soil fell into thorns, and they choked the seed. **In some way, these people “accepted the Savior” but it was only words, and there was no sincerity in their supposed salvation nor was it truly “heart-felt,” and they were not really saved.**

Luke 8:14 *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares (they had problems) and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*

A person is not saved when they allow the things of this life to come between them and their Savior. Everybody has problems, this is true. But **because we have problems is no reason to leave the Savior, but because of our problems we run to the Refuge of our souls (God) to get a solution to these problems**.

The idea that what is happening to us has never happened to anybody else is wrong. We are not the only ones to ever have had these problems, and **there are a divine reasons we have these problems**: (1) God will resolve them (giving us faith in our God), (2) we will be better spiritually (stronger) for having had these problems and learn things spiritually, and (3) if God resolves them or not (as we see it) we will receive consolation from the Divine Comforters (Jesus and the Holy Spirit). In the last point, the divine help is to help us have hope, patience, and longsuffering which are spiritual traits which God wants us to have, and they won’t develop in us without problems.

The idea that by sticking our heads in the sand like an ostrich, our problems will get better somehow is ridiculous. We grow spiritually by having problems, dealing with them, taking them to our Savior, and He either resolves them for us or we learn to have patience, hope, and longsuffering from them. **But to ignore our problems or totally “stop our spiritual lives” as a SOLUTION TO A PROBLEMS is the opposite of what God wants in sending us problems**. Satan has won the day

if we do not learn from our problems and see them as God dealing with us, trying to find the lesson, and blessing of why God has sent them into our lives.

2 Kings 17:15 *And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.*

If it is **an attitude of a temper tantrum or to give yourself totally over to follow the world**, this makes the problem null and void as far as helping us spiritually. In that case, we didn’t learn God’s lesson in the problem. God will have to send another in its place.

Romans 1:21 *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

Paul condemned these people in Romans 1 because they rejected God and His ways. They are fools, and they are devoid of eternity and its affairs.

1 Samuel 12:21 *And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.*

Only God has truth. Only God has a full and deep understanding of our reality. He is the Creator. Finding out what God says about your problems and how to fix them is the only way to really solve them. Patiently waiting and enduring is an important point here when we look at problems from the point of view of God. **God is both the giver of problems and the solver of problems**. He does this exercise of giving us problems in our lives for us to learn. The question is not “*how do I fix my problem*” but should be “*what does God want me to learn from this problem*.”

Jeremiah 16:19 *O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, surely our fathers have*

inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. If only God truly understands our reality (“*what is truth*”), then He alone has the remedy to our problems both physical problems and spiritual problems. Everything else is lies and vanities that do not have a grasp on eternity. Satan sells his solution with the promise of making everything “better”, but he does not understand things eternally as God does. Everything he offers is deception and his solutions will make bad situations worse.

We should Worship God

Psalms 96:7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, **give unto the LORD glory and strength.** **8** Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering and come into his courts. **9** O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: **fear before him, all the earth.**

(How do you give the Lord glory and strength? Because his ways work correctly, with eternal benefits. Use his ways, not anything else. Look to God first and only.)

We should not have a poor perception of God in our tribulations and sufferings, but that God should be the person we seek for help in our troubles. God receives glory when we are living by His principles in our lives, especially during tribulations, suffering, persecution, etc. In these times, the Christian shines his brightest. Words and advice are foolish and easy to offer, but a life like Job’s shows “how” to always worship God correctly.

Our God is a Refuge in Tribulations

We want to take our problems and solve them ourselves, to **go into a closet in our house and pout because of them.** (And not come out because we are irritated with God, because He even permitted these problems to come into our lives.) But the only correct path before the eyes of God is to take our problems to Him, asking Him for help and rescue, remedy, and solution, and to listen to what He tells you **in order to learn from these problems and be benefitted from them.**

Nahum 1:7 The LORD is good, **a strong hold in the day of trouble;** and he knoweth them that trust in him.

Psalms 62:8 **Trust in him at all times;** ye people, pour out your heart before him: **God is a refuge for us.** Selah.

Psalms 46:1 **God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.**

The point in these verses is that the true Christian understands that God uses our problems to teach and correct the wrong in us, then we learn from our problems. **It is not that we “stop our spiritual lives” because of problems, but that the problems draw us nearer to God.**

Problems are for making us Draw Closer to God

2 Timothy 3:1 This know also, that **in the last days perilous times shall come.** If it is certain that Christians will have problems, then why forget about God with a pouty attitude when they come? Seek God for help!

Psalms 27:5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

Psalms 50:15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Psalms 138:7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

The Suffering Christian should Seek Help from his Savior.



By David Cox

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There was a news article that a submarine was sent to view the remains of the Titanic and did not return to the surface. They said, “*All hope is lost.*” We sometimes have the same attitude.

Jonah 2:7 **When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD:** and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. **8** **They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.** **9** But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. **Salvation is of the LORD.**

In Jonah’s day, there were people like in our day, believers in God supposedly, and **they entered Christianity, and later they abandoned their Christian faith.** But Jonah noted that they did not understand the true salvation of God. It is because they followed “*lying vanities*” which is the reason why they had no hope to see the mercy of God on them. In all of this, they had errors in their thinking. **They thought that because they had problems, it would be a good thing before God if they got away from Him and dealt with their problems in their own way, without His help. This is a great error.** **When in trouble, we should SEEK GOD, not run away from Him.**