
John Osteen

WHAT TO DO

when nothing
seems to work

What to Do When Nothing Seems to Work

John Osteen

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Lakewood Church
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What to Do When Nothing Seems to Work

How many of you have ever been in a place where you were tempted to say, "It just does not look like anything is going to work"?

There is an incident in the Bible where nothing seemed to work when a needy man approached Jesus' disciples for help.

Matthew 17:14-20 says, *"And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: For he is lunatic, and sore vexed: For oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water."*

"And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him."

"Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me."

"And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: And the child was cured from that very hour.

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Here is a man with a great need. His son is a lunatic. He is demon-possessed and sick. He has all types of seizures.

He brought his son to the best deliverance evangelists of that day—the ones who followed Jesus and were directly trained under the ministry of Jesus.

If you were going to take somebody to be healed, you would want to take them to the best—someone like these disciples who were close to Jesus.

That man took his son to nine of the twelve disciples (three were on a praying mission with

Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration).

Those disciples rebuked the devil. They cast out demons. They probably shook that fellow until he nearly went into another seizure. They did everything they could do. Every one of them failed. Possibly they each had a turn with this young man, doing all they knew to do.

Have you ever been in the valley while everybody else seems to be on the mountain top? Did sickness linger? Did nothing seem to work?

Let me tell you, there is always hope when you are in trouble. The Psalmist David said, *"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help"* (Psalm 121:1). If you will lift your eyes and look there is somebody coming down the mountain—His Name is Jesus!

His face is still shining as He comes down the mountain. When He comes on the scene, every failure, every sickness and every demon leaves.

All we need to do is get Jesus on the scene!

Jesus is the Living Word. There is the written Word and He is that Word personified. John 1:14 says, *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as*

of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." If we can activate the Word of God in the midst of our failures, then we can find help from God.

Jesus came down into this valley and asked the man what he was seeking from the disciples. The man told Him about his son. He told Jesus that the disciples had not been able to help his son. Jesus told the man to bring the boy to Him. *"And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour"* (Matthew 17:18).

This man found his answer in the Lord Jesus. He brought the Living Word to his situation.

Jesus is wonderful! We need to preach Jesus. This generation needs to see Jesus. If we can just let suffering, crying, dying humanity get a glimpse of Jesus, Who is ever the same and Who has the power to perform whatever we need, people will run to find Him. They will run to Him because He is still the marvelous Son of God as pictured in the Bible.

"Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday, and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Jesus is with you wherever you go. He said, "*... Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*" (Matthew 28:20).

"... He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

We need to know what to do when we find ourselves in a valley. **WHAT SHALL WE DO WHEN NOTHING SEEMS TO WORK?**

Have you ever been in a situation when it just seemed like all you had learned did not bring results? It was not working. It was not doing for you what it should?

People pray and seek God for prosperity, healing and deliverance. They seek to move in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and for doors of ministry to be opened unto them. They want so many things. They pray and pray and pray. They try every formula that they have ever heard of; yet nothing seems to work.

They know it is in the Bible, but, but, but, but... (Remember this: Sheep follow—goats "but"!)

Are you in a valley? You need Jesus in your valley. Get His Word down in that valley. He will

reveal the way because He *is* the Way! He said, "*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*" (John 14:6).

One time I had a new car. I was so proud of that car. It was so fancy and one of the best. I drove it everywhere. One day as I drove it down the road and approached the highway, it abruptly stopped. It would not budge. It would not turn on. It would not run. It was a brand new car!

I was SO disappointed. That was an expensive car! Now I could have gotten out of that car and said, "This car looks like the same ones that are running on the highway. Every one of those is working but mine will not work."

I could decide to just walk off and leave my car and say, "Well, it may work for others, but it will not work for me!"

Some people are that way. I did not act that way.

I said, "I know this car is built to run. It has four wheels and it's supposed to run. I see others like it running and mine is going to run also!"

I called a mechanic. He came and checked the car. Finally he found something disconnected. It was just a little wire. I thought it was something

major, but it was just minor. I thought maybe I would have to send the car back to the factory. But, he just connected the severed wire and I turned the key. It worked! Down the road I went in my fancy new car!

You may get some wonderful teaching and truth from one of God's anointed teachers. You may jump at the opportunity to try it.

You say, "It is so wonderful." If you "drive" excitedly down the road about a mile, you may hit a problem. When you try to apply what you have learned, the whole operation fails!

You say, "He said it would work, but I turned the key and nothing happened!"

You say, "I know it is in the Bible, but it is not working for me."

Sometimes these principles do not work as easily as some preachers say they do. You must learn to cooperate with God's principles.

They **will** work for you!

When nothing seems to work, you need Jesus to show you your loose connections. It isn't that the Bible does not work. GOD'S WORD WORKS!

You must realize that if there is something wrong, it is not with God nor His Word, but it is with you. You have a loose connection somewhere.

If you are determined to get something from God, you need to investigate and discover your loose connections.

"God watches over His Word to perform it"
(Jeremiah 1:12).

Some people want to do things wrong and never get corrected. They wonder why

God will not work for them.

When you are seeking God, and you are believing faithfully and trying to apply God's Word to a situation and nothing seems to work, here are some check-points to help you find your loose connection.

#1—FIRST OF ALL CHECK UP ON YOUR OWN LIFE.

It was long ago that a group of doctors examining me announced to me that I needed open heart surgery. If I wanted to live long and be healthy, they told me that I would have to submit

to this surgery. That is not the best news you can get in a day! It was a very serious thing. It was a shock to me and my family.

What did I do? The first thing I did was to turn God's great searchlight on in my heart to check up on myself and on my own life. I wanted to find out if I had overlooked anything that needed to be made right *"Jesus said, And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses"* (Mark 11:25).

If I had any envy, jealousy, strife, wrath or anything against anybody, I wanted to know it. I said, "Lord, search me and try me. If you find any wicked way in me I am glad to bring it out." (See Psalm 139:23.)

I knew that if I did not close up every gap, that satan would have an opportunity to enter in. He has no place unless we give him that place. The Bible says, *"Give no place to the devil"* (Ephesians 4:27).

Job had a hedge about him. The devil had to admit the truth to God in saying, *"Hast thou not made an hedge about him?"* (Job 1:10).

A hedge is a wall that the devil cannot get through.

In the Book of Job, we find out God permitted satan to trespass the hedge because Job, although being hedged in by the Lord, being in perfect safety, allowed fear to come into his life. There was a gap. He said, *"The thing which I greatly feared has come upon me"* (Job 3:25).

No doubt, Job, in the midst of all that security, let fear come into his life. Fear opened the door for satan to come in and try to destroy him in the way that we see written in the Book of Job.

Check your own life. You have a hedge about you. Over you is the blood of Jesus Christ. Around you encamp the angels of the Lord. The Lord goes before you. Goodness and mercy are following you all the days of your life. Underneath are the Everlasting Arms.

That hedge about you can be broken by an unforgiving spirit, jealousy, envy, strife, stinginess, covetousness, lasciviousness, evil desire, or unforgiven sin. Many times the hedge is broken down because of unresolved anger. *"Be ye angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your*

wrath" (Ephesians 4:26).

If God's Word is not working for you, check up on your own life first.

Judge yourself, lest God judge you. Examine yourself (1 Corinthians 11:31).

"If it be possible, as much as lieth within you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

Forgive your wife. Forgive your husband. The Word says, *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"* (Ephesians 4:32).

Keep contention out of your life. God will not work for you while you live in open rebellion against God's Word. Check up on yourself.

#2—SECONDLY, CHECK UP ON YOUR PROMISES.

If you do not have some definite promise from the Word of God that has been whispered to your heart and which you have embraced; if you do not have any real, definite, pointed promise that God has quickened to you in your present situation,

then you have a loose connection.

Get into God's Word. Meditate on the scriptures until God speaks to your heart. *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:16).

You cannot have faith for something unless you have a promise from God's Word.

Check your Promise Book!

I remember the story of a grandmother and her granddaughter who lived together. One night in a church service they were both saved while a preacher was speaking on John 5:24: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."*

Both were filled with the joy of salvation every day. In the morning they would wake up happy and every night they would go to bed happy. This went on for weeks and weeks.

Then one morning the grandmother got up on "the wrong side of the bed." She was aggravated and ill-tempered all that day. The little

granddaughter watched her being so mean and hateful. She was still that way when evening came.

Finally the little girl burst into tears and cried out to her grandmother, "Has the verse changed? Let me see the Bible. Has the verse changed? It still says, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.'"

That grandmother just smiled. The promise of God remained real in her heart. She said, "God forgive me. Yes, thank God, I do have eternal life!"

Their joy was restored and so was their fellowship.

This story gives you an example of what you should do. You should check your promises. Read your Bible and see if the devil has erased one of them. See if he dares invade the Word of God or change even one promise of God!

If you are believing for prosperity, check up on your prosperity verses. God's Word says, *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul*

prospereth" (3 John 2).

If you are believing for healing, check up on your healing scriptures. First Peter 2:24 says Jesus *"bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."*

Whatever you are believing for, check your promises!

GOD'S WORD WILL NEVER CHANGE! IT WILL NEVER FAIL!

This is a true story. I had a friend who was a missionary in Mexico. He picked up a hitch-hiker in Mexico. He began to talk with him about the Lord. Then this hitch-hiker pulled a gun on him. He pointed the gun at him and told him to pull off onto a country road. He planned to take the car and everything in it and leave my friend in a deserted place.

My friend turned to this fellow and said, "You cannot do this to me. I have more power than you have. 'Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.' I have power over the devil in you."

The convict said, "Drive."

My friend just kept driving. He felt that gun jabbing in his side but he said, "You cannot do this to me. The Bible says that I have all power over all the power of the devil. It is the devil making you do this and I have power over the devil. You cannot do this to me."

That convict made him drive down a deserted road and stop.

He got out of the car.

My friend persisted, "You cannot do this to me! I have Jesus in me. In the Name of Jesus, you cannot do this to me. I have power over you and the devil in you."

That convict ushered him into a field and told him to take off his clothes.

My friend said, "You cannot do this to me. The Bible says 'Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.' And the Bible says that in Jesus' Name I can cast out devils. I have more power than you and you are not going to do this to me. I command satan to go!"

The convict said, "Take off your clothes."

He stood there in his underwear... God's man

of faith and power!

It looked like it was not working! It really looked like it was not working. It looked like everything had failed.

Do you think you have a bad situation? What about this man!

As that man walked away to the car, my friend lifted his voice one more time and shouted, "In the Name of Jesus you cannot do this. I command you in Jesus' Name to come back! Satan you are defeated in Jesus' Name!"

In just a few moments, that convict came back, handed him his clothes and said, "Hombre, I like you!"

Do you know what happened?

The devil went out of him. It may look like the devil is stripping you down to nothing, but if you will check on your promises and put your whole confidence in the Word of God, you will always have victory.

When once you get the Word of God settled in you, there will be no sickness, no poverty, no disease, no defeat, and no calamities because the

Word of God is forever settled in YOU! *You* must settle it.

The Word of God will lift you into a higher realm of faith. *"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"* (Romans 10:17).

Check up on your promises. Find out what God says. See if He has told you the truth. See if He still says what you think He says.

Did you put your confidence in His Word in the beginning? Did you have faith in Jesus before you were going through this valley? God's Word will not change. Check your promises.

Remind God, remind the devil, remind yourself of what God says.

Quit mumbling, murmuring, moaning, groaning, grumbling and complaining. CHECK YOUR PROMISES!

#3—THIRDLY, CHECK UP ON YOUR CONFESSION.

Jesus said, *"Verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall*

not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark 11:23).

You will never rise any higher than your confession. You will never sink any lower than your confession.

A lot of people have the idea that if they can just take God's Word in an emergency and quote it, then it will work.

It will not!

You will have whatsoever you say or whatsoever you have been saying continually. You cannot just talk any way you want to all the time and then suddenly quote God's Word and expect a miracle. It does not work that way.

You must train yourself to continually say God's Word and live that confession daily.

THE POWER OF LIFE AND DEATH IS IN THE TONGUE (Proverbs 18:21).

Check up on your confession. Usually when you are having a problem it is because you are not saying what God says about the situation. Instead, you are speculating, surmizing, reasoning, and

looking at the circumstances instead of God's Word. The Word of God says we are to "*cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Bring every thought into line with God's Word.

Check up on what you have been saying. If you need healing and someone asks you how you are feeling, do not complain for hours telling of all your maladies. Confess what God is doing for you.

Never allow any words to come out of your mouth that contradict that for which you are believing God. Whatever you think, if it is contrary to God's Word, do not speak it.

You can get God to work with faith in your heart and doubt in your head!

Protect your heart.

If there are all kinds of contrary thoughts in your mind, as long as you refuse to say those thoughts, they will die stillborn. Once you speak them you give them life! Replace negative thoughts with God's thoughts—the Bible.

Meditate on God's Word.

Say what God says about your situation.

Before you ever get out of bed pray in the Holy Spirit. Pray the prayers in Ephesians 1:17-23 and Ephesians 3:17-19. Confess what God's Word says about you. Know who you are in Christ!

#4—FOURTHLY, CHECK THE ARENA IN WHICH YOU ARE FIGHTING.

If the devil ever gets you in the arena of reasoning and looking at your symptoms, he will defeat you every time. Stay in the arena of faith and you will win every time.

Check up on the arena in which you are fighting.

Are you trying to battle satan in the arena of reason? Are you trying to intellectualize your problem? Are you battling symptoms and trying to reason why? STOP! Get into the realm of faith. Say this: "It does not matter what the situation looks like. It may look like these circumstances may never change, but God says..." and quote His Word.

BELIEVE GOD!

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1).

Faith in the Word of God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the evidence of what you do not yet see with your eyes and feel with your senses.

#5—FIFTHLY, CHECK UP ON YOUR COMPANIONS AND FELLOWSHIP.

Are you in constant fellowship with people of faith? Are your companions Bible-talking people? If you associate with people who cannot support you in faith, you may find yourself struggling to hold on to your promise.

You will become like the individuals with whom you associate. Fellowship with men and women of faith. Of course, open your heart to all people and share the love of Jesus, but where you counsel and fellowship and when you listen and are exhorted, be sure you have chosen those who are established in the Word of God and in faith.

Your ears are not garbage cans! Be careful what you listen to. Mark 4:24 in the Amplified Bible says: *"Be careful what you are hearing. The measure of thought and study you give to the truth*

you hear will be the measure of virtue and knowledge that comes back to you, and more besides will be given to you who hear."

Do not agree with unbelief and doubt. Do not counsel with people who bring reproach upon the Word of God.

TAKE YOUR STAND!

Do what is right Do not compromise God's Word. If somebody says something to you that will bring you down, retaliate with the Word of God.

When people ask you how you feel, give them God's answer: "Praise God, I am more than a conqueror. I have the Greater One in me. I am the light of the world and the salt of the earth. I am the righteousness of God. I can do all things through Christ. I am blessed!"

You will not have any trouble with people when you speak God's Word. They will either rally towards you or turn away from you.

Check up on your companions and fellowship.

#6—SIXTHLY, CHECK UP ON YOURSELF TO SEE IF YOU ARE OBEYING THE SCRIPTURES THAT WILL BRING VICTORY TO YOU.

Many people live very worldly lives. They disregard the commandments of God. When they try to appropriate God's promises, they fail.

The Bible says, *"Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"* (Philippians 4:6).

"Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

You must put on the armour of God in order for His Word to work for you.

"Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

"For if any be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

"For he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty (that is the mirror), and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the Word, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22-25).

You must DO the Word of God. It will not do you any good unless you are a doer of the Word.

Jesus told this story in Matthew 7:24-27: *"Whosoever is a doer of the Word I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded on a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

The house stood because this man was a doer of the Word.

When the Lord says, *"Do not let the sun go*

down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26), you must obey. When the Lord says, *"Be ye kind to one another"* (Ephesians 4:32), you must obey. When the Lord says, *"forgive"* (Luke 6:37), you must forgive.

James 4:7 tells us, *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."*

If you are in a battle and need help, you should obey this scripture and it will help you. Submit yourself to God. Some people want to resist the devil, but they do not first submit to God.

"Submit yourself to the Word of God, then resist the devil."

Suppose the devil whispers, "You are not healed. You are going to die."

Open your Bible to Exodus 23:25 and read aloud for the devil to hear, "I shall serve the Lord, He will bless my bread. He will bless my water. He will take sickness out of the midst of me . . . the number of my days He will fulfill."

Read Isaiah 53:5, "By his stripes I am healed."

Turn to that devil and say, "I resist you in

Jesus' Name. Leave me!" He will have to leave.

**#7—FINALLY, CHECK UP ON YOUR PRAISE
LIFE TO SEE IF YOU ARE PRAISING GOD
BEFORE YOU SEE THE ANSWER.**

Are you showing your faith by praising God before you see the answer? The Word of God tells us: *"I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth."*

Check to see if you are praising God as if you already had your answer. If you will act like you have it, talk like you have it, praise God like you have it, **YOU WILL HAVE IT!**

Jesus praised God that Lazarus was raised from the dead before He ever raised him. He stood before that grave and said, *"Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. (I thank You that You have already raised him as far as I am concerned.)"* (John 11:41)

Somebody said, "I would be afraid to say that He might not come out!" Certainly he would not come out with that attitude of doubt!

Jesus praised God before He raised Lazarus.

Joshua and the children of Israel shouted triumphantly before the walls fell down (Joshua 6:5).

Abraham praised God before he ever saw Isaac (Romans 4:17).

When nothing seems to work, look over your spiritual check-list for loose connections.

1. Check up on your own life.

2. Check up on your promises.

3. Check up on your confession.

4. Check up on the arena in which you are fighting.

5. Check up on your companions and fellowship.

6. Check to see if you are obeying the scriptures that tell you the way to victory.

7. Check up on your praise life.

If you will do the checking, you will find where there has been a loose connection. With a minor adjustment, you will be on the road again!

GOD'S WORD NEVER FAILS.

The Lord Jesus will never fail you. Put your

confidence in Him. You will have victory every time!

All scriptures are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible, author's translation.

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About the Author

John Osteen

has served as pastor, evangelist, author, and teacher for over fifty-five years. Ordained as a Southern Baptist, he received the baptism in the Holy Ghost in 1958, an experience which revolutionized his ministry into a worldwide outreach for Jesus Christ. He has traveled extensively throughout the world, taking the message of God's love, healing, and power to people of all nations.

Today, John Osteen pastors Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, widely known as *The Oasis of Love in a Troubled World*. His weekly television program reaches millions in the U.S. and in many other countries. His numerous books, cassettes, and videotapes are widely distributed throughout the Body of Christ.

John Osteen holds a Bachelor's Degree from John Brown University, a Master's Degree from Northern Baptist Seminary, a Doctor of Letters from Indiana Christian University, and a Doctor of Divinity from Oral Roberts University.

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