

How to Cope with Life's Struggles: Practical Advice for Victorious Christian Living

Sherman Stevens

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Sherman Stevens maintains that Christians should follow biblically based directives when navigating life's difficulties.

Bahamian theologian Sherman Stevens posits, “at every age and stage human beings experience struggle of some kind!” If this idea is accepted, the question that prefaces each chapter in *How to Cope with Life's Struggles* is apt: “What must we do?” Stevens offers help to Christians seeking guidance about how to live a life that pleases God, even in the midst of overwhelming adversity, such as in addiction, depression, and more.

The chapters are organized by commands that cover a range of lived experience, from spiritual and personal growth (“Seek God’s Truth!” and “Speak Effectively!”) and relationships (“Honor Marriage!”) to health-related issues (“Avoid Alcoholism!” and “Avoid Drug Abuse!”), punctuated with relevant Bible verses distinguished by bold print. Some biblical passages are lengthy, though explanations are offered to highlight their significance. For example, thirteen verses of Luke 14 are presented to emphasize how Jesus resisted the devil, before Christians are reminded that, like Jesus, they are also equipped with the Holy Spirit.

Repetitive words, phrases, and ideas along with awkward sentence structure and wording interfere with mostly well-written prose: “The second critical issue for conclusion focus and so for decision will be brought into focus pointedly, even though not for the first time in this book.” While the Bible is the author’s primary source, he also skillfully uses poetry, song lyrics, biographical details of well-known people like Benjamin Franklin and C. S. Lewis, and Western worldviews to illustrate some of the “great big lessons to be learned” about living, such as being cognizant of God-given power to defend against travails.

Although much of the information throughout the book—such as positive thinking, resisting the devil, expressing gratitude, and finding purpose—can be found in numerous texts about Christian living, the “Honor Marriage!” chapter addresses the current same-sex marriage debate, while another section argues creationism deserves a place in the school curriculum. Same-sex marriage and creationism are controversial topics, but the book gives unwavering traditional views.

Generally, the book is written as if a minister is leading an adult flock, but the audience changes in “Rise above Peer Pressure!” where teens move from being talked about to being addressed directly: “with the aid of an adult, see a psychologist” or “Have confidence in yourself.”

The book’s encouraging tone supports its premise of hope, perseverance, and ultimate reward. Today, many are plagued with despair for various reasons. Stories about typical individuals, including the author, would have been illuminating. Stevens’s premise is clear and well supported: a closer relationship with God and an adherence to Christian principles will lead believers victoriously through difficulties once they understand that the solution to every problem is plain and easily accessible through the Bible and prayer.

KAAVONIA HINTON (June 23, 2014)

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