

GRACE AND HOWARD: CHRISTIAN AND HUMANIST THOUGHTS ABOUT DIFFICULT TIMES

I believe that difficult times are part of God's plan. Everyone faces difficult times. Even Jesus had some.

Sometimes difficult times are my fault because I worry about getting things right, like when I arranged a party. I wanted it to be fun and it was hard work, and then I worried if people liked it. Once I was mean to someone and this made life difficult. I knew it was wrong. Jesus said, 'Love your neighbour', but I still chose to be mean. Christians call this bad choice 'sinning'.

Sometimes, difficult times are not my fault. I have an illness that will be with me all my life. Sometimes I am in pain or very tired, so this can make things difficult for me and my family. I don't believe God sends these times to punish me, but I don't always know why I have this illness. When I am facing difficult times, I pray more, read the Bible more carefully and go to church more too, so I feel the difficult times actually bring me closer to God and help me to be a better Christian. It also means I can help other people going through difficult times. Our church does lots of that.



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Difficult times are part of life for everyone. Maybe it helps us notice the good times. I don't believe there is a god. So, when times are difficult, I think this is because of how people choose to behave or the way that the world works. If you're having a difficult time because you are being bullied, that's because a bully is being nasty to you. If you are having a difficult time because your house was wrecked in a storm, this is because of the way the world works – sometimes nature can be dangerous and scary! It's all very simple, and there is no need to think about a god being part of it all.

Sometimes, going through difficulties can be a good thing because we can learn from them, and they can help us to be better people. In my town, we have a 'Sunday Assembly'. Humanists get together for an hour and listen to speakers, sing songs and talk about important issues. Not all Humanists do this, but we do. For some people, being part of a community really helps them get through difficult times. It's like going to a church every week but without religion or a god.

If someone is experiencing difficult times, Humanists believe it is important to help them in practical ways. We run a food bank as part of our group. Humanists trust in what they can actually see in the world around them. We know that the food we donate will help stop someone from going hungry. While Christians see difficult times as a time for prayer, Humanists would not agree. This is because most Humanists don't believe in a god (so who would they be praying to?) and they don't believe praying works.

