



SUPPOSE (SUPPOSITION)

Definition: To imagine; conjecture; to believe, especially on uncertain or tentative grounds.

– American Heritage Dictionary

It's easy to draw a conclusion based on suppositions. But the chances of it being wrong are great. Why? Suppositions are usually colored by personal bias and/or perception.

EXAMPLE

1 Samuel 1:10,12-14

She [Hannah], greatly distressed, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly ... Now it came about, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli was watching her mouth. As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk. Then Eli said to her, "How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine from you."

Eli's conclusion that Hannah was drunk was based on his perception (and possibly bias). He didn't know, so he supposed (erroneously).

LESSON

Be careful about drawing a conclusion by supplying the unknown fact(s). (Remember, the supplied 'unknown' is colored by personal bias and/or perception.) Such conclusions often become the basis for rumors. And they cause much mischief and harm. Even more so, when they are passed on. This is especially true when it involves members of a congregation.

He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.

Proverbs 18:13

IT HAPPENED

A teen-age girl had stolen something from the church's supply room. She was caught and returned the items. Feeling guilty, she came forward during a service to confess wrongdoing, but didn't specify what she had done. Afterwards, one was overheard saying, "I bet she's pregnant."

THE DEVIL'S SCHEMES

FACTS

Stop signs don't stop cars—people still fail to stop.
Laws don't stop crime—people still commit crimes.
God's commandments don't stop sin—people still disobey.

When something is prohibited by law or command, it doesn't prevent someone from doing it. Traffic signs only designate what is to be done. Laws against an activity only state that it is against the law to do it. God's prohibitions only state what is not acceptable. The "teeth" in a law or command is in the punishment (consequence).

The tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden was easily accessible. There was no fence or wall around it. No locked gate. Adam and Eve had the ability and opportunity to eat it's fruit at any time. God's command did not keep them from eating the fruit of that tree.

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GOD SAID

*The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **you shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat from it **you will surely die.**"*

Genesis 2:16-17

SERPENT SAID

*The serpent said to the woman, "**You surely will not die.** For **God knows** that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil."*

Genesis 3:4-5

SATAN'S STRATEGY

Deny the consequence. Won't die. (*Plant the seed of doubt.*)

Promote the benefits. Will gain knowledge, be like God. (*Plant the seed of desire.*)

Question God's motive. (*Plant the seed of distrust.*)

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

FIRST – Doubt the consequences. (Doubt either the possibility or the severity.)

Defense: Don't doubt or question the awesome power of God.

SECOND – Consider the benefits. (Savor the thought of having or doing.)

Defense: Look past it and focus on the consequences that will surely follow.

THIRD – Question the reason for the prohibition. (Why is it prohibited?)

Defense: Realize your wisdom is limited; trust God's infinite wisdom.

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Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

Ephesians 6:11

God's commands are given for our benefit: (1) to lead us in the right direction and, (2) to keep us from harm.

Removing Obstacles

In the children's section of a zoo is a display of eggs being incubated. Under the warm lights the fertilized eggs reach the hatching stage. Visitors can watch the chicks as they peck open the eggs, and struggle with all their might to free themselves. Many of them have to pause and rest part way. Afterwards, they are exhausted from the struggle.

If it weren't for the glass enclosure, the observers would surely try to help the struggling chicks. What a favor could be done by breaking open the shell and lifting the new born out. What an opportunity to help. But it would not be beneficial.

NECESSARY ACTIVITY

Pecking out of the egg is a necessary part of life for the chick. During this process the chick develops the stamina needed for what lies ahead. Scientists have discovered that chicks aided in extricating themselves from the shell are much weaker and have a higher mortality rate.

Similarly, people often seek to help others by removing obstacles and trials from their lives, believing that they are doing a favor. But frequently this makes the other person weaker and less able to handle what lies ahead.

HARD, BUT NOT TOO HARD

Our first reaction to trials is that they are hard, difficult and often painful and need to be avoided. But we must note that they serve a very useful purpose in our spiritual development.

James puts it this way, *"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."* James 1:2-4

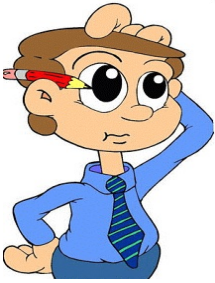
The Apostles didn't relish being arrested and threatened. However, the experience strengthened their faith. After their second encounter with authorities, wherein they were beaten and ordered not to preach any more, *"they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name."* Acts 5:41

Paul, given a 'thorn in the flesh,' surely would have been better off without it (according to what he thought, and what we might think). The Lord knew better. Paul's affliction was necessary to make him better equipped. Realizing this he concluded, *"Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."* 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

BRINGING IT HOME

The lessons we learn are: **[1]** Do not pray that all trials be removed from your life. **[2]** Do not attempt to remove all obstacles from the paths of others—they may well need the test to strengthen their faith. **[3]** Face each trial with determination, resolve, and much prayer. Meet it head-on, thereby gaining perfection (completeness).

There are many situations wherein God's wisdom is far above ours. This is especially true in the struggles of chicks and in our encountering various trials.



Ponder This

But, but, but

On the contrary; indicating an exception.

No doubt you have heard someone stammer those words as they try to rebut something that was said. And you probably have heard the word used to indicate an exception to something said. It is a conjunction that sometimes needs to be replaced by a period (.). Consider the following examples where the sentence needs to end with a period where the word "but" appears.

I shouldn't be telling you this, ~~but I just have to tell someone.~~

I know it's wrong to do it, ~~but it shouldn't hurt to do it just this one time.~~

I realize I need to be more regular in attending church, ~~but I have so much to do on the weekends.~~

Someone said to Jesus, "I will follow You wherever You go ... ~~but permit me first to go and bury my father.~~"

Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; ~~but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.~~"

Jesus' reply was: "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:61-62

I need to love God with all my heart, soul and mind; and love my neighbor as myself – no "buts."



When situations arise, sometimes unexpectedly, one is faced with making a decision. What is decided reveals much.

When Cephas came to Antioch, Paul opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

Galatians 2:11

CONFRONTATION

It never is pleasant, but sometimes it is necessary. Inappropriate conduct among church leaders and others who are in prominent positions can be devastating.

Paul had to confront Peter. His actions were being mirrored in the Jewish brethren to the extent that even Barnabas joined in their hypocrisy. Unchecked, it could easily spread to other churches that had both Jewish and Gentile converts.

Diotrephes loved to be preeminent. He accused John with wicked words. He refused to receive the brethren and he forbade those who desired to do so and put them out of the church. John said he would confront him when he arrives.

3 John 1:9-10

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.

1 Timothy 5:19-20

LESSON

It is futile to hope that, by putting off addressing a problem, it will go away in time. That line of reasoning only makes matters worse. "Nip it in the bud."

F.Y.C. is a monthly publication by Ron Adams.

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Bible references are from the NASB except where

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