



# HIDDEN ASSUMPTIONS

*Subtle Assumptions That Can Affect Your Faith*

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## Assumption No. 1

### "Mature Christians never struggle with doubt or temptation"

Many believers quietly assume that spiritual maturity eliminates deep emotional or spiritual struggles. This myth suggests that if someone has walked with Christ for many years, they should no longer experience seasons of discouragement, doubt, frustration, or temptation. When mature Christians struggle, they often feel ashamed—as if something must be spiritually wrong with them.

#### Case Study: "The Long Year" — Ed's Struggle with God's Timing

Ed had been a Christian for over thirty years. He came to Christ in his mid-twenties and grew steadily in faith. By his late fifties, he was the kind of believer others leaned on—teaching an adult Bible class, mentoring younger men, and rarely missing church. People described him as steady and grounded.



At fifty-eight, after twenty-two years with the same company, Ed was unexpectedly called into Human Resources and told his position was being eliminated due to downsizing. He received a modest severance and left that afternoon stunned. Driving home in silence, he struggled to process how something so stable could vanish so quickly.

Initially, Ed responded with confidence. He assured his wife that the Lord would provide, quoted Romans 8:28, updated his résumé, and began applying for jobs. Each morning he prayed for direction. Outwardly he appeared calm, yet underneath, anxiety grew. Tuition bills loomed, retirement projections shifted, and his professional identity felt shaken. Still, he expected a quick resolution.

By the fourth month, promising opportunities had fallen through. By the fifth, severance funds were shrinking. A younger coworker quickly secured a job, intensifying Ed's discouragement. Church friends asked for updates, and although he celebrated others' successes, he felt private comparison and embarrassment. He began lingering less after services to avoid repeating discouraging news.

His prayers grew shorter and strained. He still believed in God but began questioning whether God was attentive. Scripture felt distant. He did not doubt God's existence, but he doubted His immediacy. Why was this lasting so long? Was this discipline? Had he done something wrong? Questions he once helped others answer now felt personal.

By the sixth month, discouragement deepened. Sleep became irregular; his patience thinned. After another rejection email, he whispered, "What's the point?" He was not tempted toward unbelief, but toward quiet resignation. Outwardly faithful, inwardly hope felt fragile.

Around the eighth month, a friend asked, "What if God is not only working on your employment situation, but on your heart?" The question unsettled him. In prayer, Ed began to see how much of his identity had rested in stability, productivity, and reputation. He had trusted God's sovereignty—but perhaps only when circumstances resolved efficiently.



His prayers shifted. Instead of asking only for relief, he asked what God was forming within him. He confessed fear, pride, and entitlement after years of service. Scripture regained warmth as he saw himself in the Psalms of lament. He resumed mentoring with greater transparency, admitting mature believers still struggle. His faith became quieter but deeper.

Nearly a year after losing his job, Ed received an offer. It was less prestigious and lower paying. Initially he wrestled with pride, but the environment proved healthier and less consuming. He gained more time with his wife and greater emotional margin. His teaching carried new authenticity because it flowed from lived dependence.

Looking back, Ed realized God's primary work had not been rearranging his circumstances but refining his character. The delay that once felt like neglect had actually been formation.



## **Key Lessons and Applications**

*(To be filled in during class).*

1. Trust God's \_\_\_\_\_ even when you cannot understand His timing.
2. Remember that your spiritual growth often develops through \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Emotional struggle does not mean God's \_\_\_\_\_ has withdrawn from you.
4. Waiting is not wasted; it is part of God's \_\_\_\_\_ process.
5. Maturity is not the absence of struggle but the \_\_\_\_\_ to persevere through it.

## **The Bottom Line**

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Mature Christians do struggle. It's not about trying to avoid hardship, but that over time they learn to trust God not only for outcomes—but for timing. Spiritual and emotional struggles are not signs of failure; they are often instruments of growth in the hands of a wise and faithful God.