

The Value of Trials



God uses trials to show us our insufficiencies and failures. They are His way of building character through spiritual excavation. We never know what graces and qualities we possess until a trial uncovers them. Then the faith and courage that seemed to stand as such pillars of enthusiasm waiver, and the soul collapses in helplessness upon Christ alone.

Jacob's trials brought him to the end of self. Job's afflictions destroyed his self-righteous confidence. Peter's fall broke his self-sufficiency and forced him to lean upon his Lord and find his strength in Him alone.

Trials Make Christ Real

This is why the Lord tries you: to convince you that your own strength is greatly exaggerated and to bring you to the place where you can say, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Trials make Christ real to us and communicate God's grace and blessing to our souls and to those around us. God allows trials in our lives until Christ becomes as real as our tears, sorrows and problems. In this way, the hard places

gain great value as they become stepping stones to heavenly blessings.

Trials Teach Us:

1. God's Resources

Trials help us discover the resources of God. We learn about His all-sufficiency in difficult circumstances. After their wilderness experience, God told Israel that He had exposed them to an environment where there were no natural provisions in order to teach them that He was adequate for every need, and that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4).

The more God meets our needs the more He becomes real to us. Every difficult situation is just another occasion for Him to show Himself in His infinite wisdom, power, and grace. Paul tells us that he was exposed to every sort of difficulty so that the power of Christ might rest upon him according to his needs. Each new trial was an opportunity for Christ to tell him, "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Are we finding Him equal to the trials of our lives?

2. *Faith*

Trials test our faith and develop trust. Difficulties are divine incentives which strengthen our confidence in God. The eagle teaches her young to fly by tearing up her nest and hurling them into mid-air, where they must either fly or fall. It is then that they quickly learn the undeveloped power in their little wings, and find the secret of a new life on the wind and in the face of the sun.

In this way God also teaches His children to test their wings of faith by stirring up their nests, taking away their props, and flinging them into an abyss of helplessness, where they must either fall or learn to trust that God is there beneath them.

It is so easy for us to lean upon the things we can see, rather than walk with the unseen God as Peter walked upon the sea. But we must learn this lesson if our souls are ever to dwell in God's eternal calm where faith must be the only sense, and God our all in all.

Very gently He matches each test to our feeble strength and leads us on as we are able to bear more and more. Are we trusting Him in life's hard places and growing stronger as

we endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ? (2 Tim. 2:3).

3. *Prayer Dependence*

Trials teach us to get alone with God. They drove Jacob to his knees at the fords of Jabbok (Gen. 32:23-30). They taught the Psalmist to find "the secret place of the most High" (Ps. 91:1). They made the life of Paul one of ceaseless dependence upon the Lord (Phil. 4:13).

It is humbling to think that God must use suffering and trials to draw His children to Himself. This is because ease and comfort lead us to independence. The times that have brought us nearest to God have been the times when we could say, "You have known my soul in adversities" (Ps. 31:7).

4. *Love*

When God wants to teach us to love, He sometimes lets ill-treatment, injustice, and maybe even the severest wrong drive us to Him for the love that "bears all things ... endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). First, we find that we do not have the love adequate for the

test. Then, as we gradually learn this humbling lesson, He leads us on in deeper testing until we can thank Him for the fire that exposed us to the depths of His grace and His overcoming love.

5. *Patience*

In God's school we learn to endure, and patience is the crowning grace of the Christian life. When patience has its perfect work, then we become "perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (Jas. 1:4). This crowning lesson of the spiritual life is most often learned in the school of suffering.

Trials take away the fear of suffering and the dread of pain as we experience God's sustaining grace. They enable us to put on His strength and courage and rise above the grip of fear until we welcome the conflict and victory as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Trials Outfit Us to Help Others

When we handle trials to the glory of God, we show the world what God can do for His children, and what Christ-filled lives can accomplish where others fail. God wants us

to be living epistles of Christ to men (2 Cor. 3:3), showing them by our example that Christ can keep His own in every situation, and that the power of His grace is practical, and adaptable to every human need.

Trials prepare us to help others by the lessons we learn through each experience (2 Cor. 1:3, 4). The insensitive and immature heart is largely unable to comfort, counsel, and bless a suffering world. God has to burn in us first what He wants us to give out to others. A painful experience qualifies us to comfort, strengthen, and encourage the souls whom He sends us, and to whom we can say, "I have been there, and I can tell you from my own experience that 'my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus' " (Phil. 4:19).

Trials are Occasions for Victory

Trials become occasions for rewards – eternal crowns which will never pass away. When history is forgotten and the records of time are wiped out – when the solar system has vanished away – the eternal results of trials will shine in our lives as we share with

God the new heavens and the new earth, and the glories of the coming age.

Are we trying to learn from our sorrows? To win a crown? To get from our present trials all that Christ has for us? Will we be “more than conquerors through him who loved us?” Will we endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ? If so, we will some day hear Him say: “Well done, good and faithful servant ... Enter into the joy of your lord” (Rom. 8:37, 2 Tim. 2:3, Mt. 25:21).

—*A. B. Simpson*

Scriptures from *The New King James Version*, © 1994, Thomas Nelson, Inc. By permission.

Free tracts and biblical counsel available by request. Write:
Grace & Truth • 210 Chestnut Street, Danville, IL 61832
or • P.O. Box 4902, Kaduna Junction P.O., Kaduna, Nigeria
Email: tracts@gtpress.org / Web: www.gtpress.org

PRINTED IN USA