

HARDSHIPS, SUFFERING & GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Jesus clearly tells me that I cannot be His disciple unless I make the commitment to follow Him. (See Matt. 10:38, Matt. 16:24, Luke 14:27, John 12:26) Quite regularly, as I follow Him, He will cause me to encounter circumstances that I will perceive as unpleasant and often beyond my human ability to cope. The purpose of this lesson is to help me understand the process in which **every** circumstance, even those that appear insignificant, whether good or bad, pass through God's permissive will. He uses **every** circumstance in His process of transforming me into a holy and useful vessel, through which He can accomplish His eternal purposes.

A Christian who does not understand the significance of God's sovereign control over **all** circumstances will typically respond with complaining, blaming, self-pity, anger or bitterness. It pleases God when I choose to cooperate with Him by acknowledging to Him my acceptance of what He has designed for me, and seek His direction for the appropriate and godly response, as well as for any lessons He may want me to learn.

- 1. Is God in absolute control over all that happens in the universe and on earth? Does there exist some person or force that can somehow affect God's sovereign power? Does He always do what is right? Can God do wrong? Can He make mistakes? Is He totally trustworthy?**

Deut 32:4 *"The Rock! His work is **perfect**, for **all** His ways are **just**; a God of **faithfulness** and **without injustice, righteous** and **upright** is He.*

Psa 18:30 *As for God, His way is **blameless**; the word of the Lord is **tried**; ...*

Prov 21:30 *There is **no** wisdom, **no** insight, **no** plan that can succeed against the LORD.*

Job 34:12-16 *"Surely, God **will not act wickedly**, and the Almighty **will not pervert justice**. ...*

Isa 46:11 *... Truly **I** have spoken; truly **I will** bring it to pass. **I** have planned it, surely **I will** do it.*

Dan 4:35 *"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted **as nothing**, but He does according to **His** will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and **no one** can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'*

- 2. Is God in absolute control over all the circumstances and details of my life? (Read and contemplate Psalm 139 together.)**

Acts 17:25 *... He Himself gives to all people **life** and **breath** and **all things**;*

Job 34:14-15 *"If He should determine to do so, if He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath, **all flesh would perish together**, and **man would return to dust**.*

Jer. 1:5 *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, ...*

Jer. 10:23 *I know, O Lord, that a man's way is **not in himself**, **nor** is it in a man who walks **to direct his steps**.*

Prov 16:9 *The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord **directs** his steps.*

Prov 19:21 *Many plans are in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord **will stand**.*

Jer. 29:11 *'For I know the **plans** that I have for **you**,' declares the Lord, 'plans for **welfare** and not for calamity to give you a **future** and a **hope**.*

Matt 6:25-27,34 *“For this reason I say to you, **do not be worried** about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? “Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not worth much more** than they? “And **who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?** ... “**So do not worry** about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Rom. 8:28 *And we know that God causes **all** things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

1 Cor. 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is **faithful**, who **will not allow** you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the **way of escape** also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

3. God tells me in His Word that I should consider hardships and suffering to be a “normal” part of my Christian experience here on earth. Hardships and suffering should not be assumed to be an indication of God’s displeasure. Nor can I assume that His blessings always imply my faithfulness. He is a loving God, and He takes care of His children even when they are displeasing.

Note: Let us define “difficulties” as “**anything that I personally find unpleasant**”. We all find physical suffering to be undesirable, however, because of our diverse personalities, we can have very differing reactions to most circumstances. (One person may watch or participate in a sport, or other activity, and find it exhilarating, while another would view it as a totally unpleasant experience.)

a. Here are two examples of believers who were suffering poverty from the world’s perspective, but they were rich before God. They were not being punished, but were temporarily poor so God could make them eternally rich.

Luke 16:19-31 *“Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. “And **a poor man named Lazarus** was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. “Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. “In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. ... Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. ...*

Mark 12:41-44 *And He (Jesus) sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. A **poor widow** came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, **out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.**”*

b. The apostle Paul did not view hardships as something unusual. In fact, the following long list of hardships are things that transpired while Paul was in the center of God's will, seeking to please Him as His servant.

Acts 9:15-16 (God said of Paul) ... he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

2 Cor. 6:4-10 (Paul wrote) ... as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

2 Cor. 11:23-27 ... in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

Phil. 3:7-11 ... I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish

Phil. 4:11-13 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Acts 16:22-40 The crowd rose up together against them (Paul & Silas), and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he ... threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; ...

c. Neither did the other apostles find hardships and suffering to be unusual.

Acts 5:40-41 ... they (Jewish leaders) flogged them (the apostles) and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.

1 Cor. 4:9-13 *For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, ... ; we are weak, ... we are without honor. To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.*

Rev 1:9 *I, John, your ... fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*

d. Neither should I find it unusual when I encounter hardships and suffering.

John 15:18-21 (Jesus said) ... *I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.*

John 16:33 *"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."*

Acts 14:22 ... *"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."*

Phil. 1:29 *For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,*

1 Thess. 3:2-4 (Paul wrote to the Thessalonian believers) ... *we sent Timothy, ... to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; ...*

2 Tim. 1:8 ... *join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,*

2 Tim. 3:12 *Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

1 Peter 2:20-21 ... *if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, (see also 1 Peter 3:13-17)*

1 Peter 4:12-16 *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ...but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

1 Peter 5:10 *After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*

Rom. 8:35-39 *Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

4. GOD TYPICALLY ALLOWS SUFFERING FOR ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- To build character into my life
- As a result of my own disobedience, neglect or carelessness.
- To teach me
- To help me understand the needs of others
- To use my life to be a blessing to others

a. **God uses suffering and hardships to build character into my life and to shape me into a usable and holy vessel in His hands. He alone knows what influences and circumstances will best enable Him to bless me and use me for the purposes that He has designed for my remaining time here on earth.**

Rom. 5:3-4 ... *we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;*
James 1:2-4 *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, so that you may be perfect (mature) and complete, lacking in nothing.*
Heb. 5:8-9 (speaking of Jesus) *Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. ...*
1 Peter 4:12-16 *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ...*

b. **Some suffering is brought about as a result of my own disobedience, neglect or carelessness. Even then, God is faithful and loving and will use my situation as a teaching experience for me. For example, if I am careless with my diet, I may as a result experience physical discomfort or suffering.**

1 Cor. 11:27-34 (Paul wrote) ... *whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ... For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep (died). But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment....*
Heb 12:6-11 *For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.” It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ... we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*

- c. Sometimes God allows me to suffer in order to demonstrate His faithfulness, power, and sufficiency, and at the same time to help me to recognize my personal weaknesses. (A deliverance, of necessity, requires something to be delivered “from”)**

2 Cor. 1:8-9 (Paul wrote) ... *our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;*

2 Cor. 12:7-10 ... *there was given me (Paul) a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me —to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 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.*

- d. Sometimes God uses suffering to help me identify with the suffering of others in order to be able with sincere compassion to be helpful to them.**

2 Cor. 1:3-5 (Paul wrote) ... *God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.*

Heb. 2:10,17-18 *For it was fitting for Him (God the Father), ... to perfect the author (Jesus) of their salvation through sufferings. ... 17-18 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, ... For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.*

1 Peter 5:9-10 (Peter wrote) *But resist him (the devil), firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, ... will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*

- e. Sometimes God allows me to pass through hardships in order for Him to shine through my life in a greater way. (A light is most visible and significant in the darkness.)**

Matt. 5:14-16 (Jesus said) “*You are the light of the world. ... “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

John 9:1-3 *As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

Acts 16:22-34 *The crowd rose up together against them (Paul & Silas), and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be **beaten with rods**. When they had struck them with many blows, they **threw them into prison**, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and **fastened their feet in the stocks**. But about midnight Paul and Silas were **praying** and **singing hymns of praise** to God, and the **prisoners were listening** to them; and suddenly there came a great **earthquake**, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, **what must I do to be saved?**" They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord **to him together with all who were in his house**. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, **he and all his household**. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and **rejoiced** greatly, **having believed** in God with **his whole household**.*

5. Following God will sometimes require a release of things I hold dear, in order for Him to replace them with what is **better and will have eternal benefits for me and others (e.g. comfort, material belongings, health, etc.).**

Matthew 5:11-12 (Jesus said) "*Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. "**Rejoice** and **be glad**, for **your reward in heaven** is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Luke 21:1-4 *And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a **poor widow** putting in two small copper coins. And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in **all that she had to live on**."*

Acts 4:32-35 *And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and **not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own**, but all things were common property to them. ... all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.*

Rom. 8:17-18 (Paul wrote) ... *if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are **not worthy to be compared** with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

Heb. 11:17-19 *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac**, ...*

Heb. 11:24-27 *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **choosing rather to endure ill-treatment** with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the **reproach of Christ** greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was **looking to the reward**. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he **endured**, as seeing Him who is unseen.*

1 Peter 1:6-7 *In this you greatly rejoice, even though **now for a little while**, if necessary, you have been distressed by various **trials**, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though **tested by fire**, may be found **to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ**;*

6. My responses to His designed circumstances are an indicator of my willingness to accept what He has planned for me and to entrust myself into His care.

a. Jesus shows me by example what my attitude and response should be.

Matt. 26:51-53 *... one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; ... "Or **do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?**"*

John 19:9-11 *... (Pilate) said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" Jesus answered, "**You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above**; ... "*

Heb 5:8 *Although He was a Son, He **learned obedience** from the things which He suffered.*

Heb 12:2 ***fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him **endured** the cross, **despising the shame**, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

1 Peter 2:19-23 *For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person **bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly**. ... if when you do what is right and suffer for it you **patiently endure** it, this finds favor with God. For you have been **called** for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an **example** for you **to follow** in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, **He did not revile in return**; while suffering, **He uttered no threats**, but **kept entrusting Himself to Him** who judges righteously;*

b. The apostle Paul chose to entrust himself into God's loving care.

Acts 20:22-24 *"... bound in spirit, I (Paul) am on my way to Jerusalem, **not knowing** what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that **bonds and afflictions await me**. "But **I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself**, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, ...*

2 Cor. 12:7-10 ... He (God) has said to me (Paul), “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather **boast about my weaknesses**, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 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.

Phil 3:10 that I (Paul) may **know Him** and the power of His resurrection and the **fellowship of His sufferings**, being **conformed to His death**;

Phil 4:12 I (Paul) know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; **in any and every circumstance** I have learned **the secret** of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

c. Job had learned that he could entrust himself into God’s sovereign care. In one day God allowed Satan to take away almost all Job possessed, including his children (Job 1:4-19). Then God allowed Satan to severely afflict Job’s physical health (Job 2:1-8). Yet Job’s response pleased God.

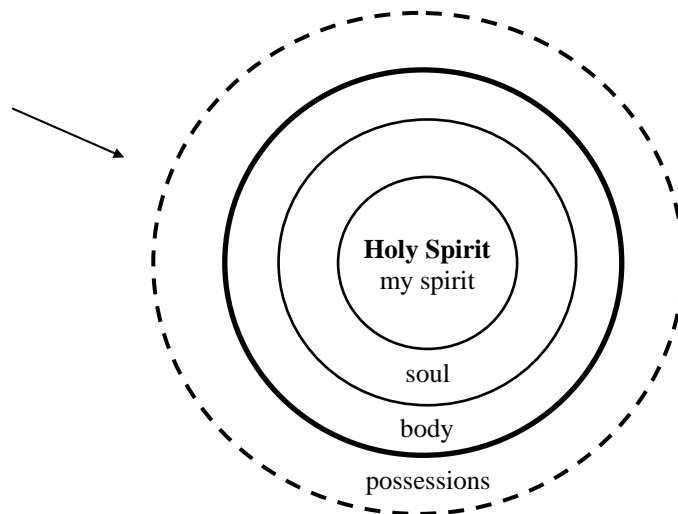
Job 1:1-3 ... a man ... whose name was **Job** ... was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Job 1:20-22 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and **worshiped**. He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. **Blessed** be the name of the Lord.” **Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.**

Job 2:7,8,10 ... Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. ... Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” **In all this Job did not sin with his lips.**

God’s
“**hedge**” of
sovereignty

Job 1:9-10 Then Satan answered the Lord, “Does Job fear God for nothing? “Have You not made a **hedge about him** and **his house** and **all that he has**, **on every side**? ...



- d. Let us look at Joseph's response to the hardships that God allowed - His jealous brothers hated him and sold him to foreign traders, who took him to Egypt (Gen. 37:2-36). Then he was falsely accused of attempted rape, and innocently suffered in prison (Gen. 39:1-40:23 and Psa. 105:17-19).

Joseph spoke of God's faithfulness and sovereignty to his brothers.

Gen. 41:52 ... he said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction".

45:5 "Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

45:8 "Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; ...

50:19-20 ... Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

CONCLUSION: God is worthy of my trust. I can always count on Him to do what is in my best interest. When I stand before Him in heaven, and understand what He was doing in my life here on earth, I will have no regrets for the times when I trusted Him fully. He does not desire for me to look at hardships with solemn resignation, neither to pursue suffering for its own sake, but rather with childlike faith to accept what comes from a Father who loves me beyond human understanding. Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (1 Peter 4:19)

Psalms 33:18-21 ... the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name.

Psalms 34:4-8 I (David) sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. ... This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Rom. 8:31-32 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

1 John 5:18-19 We know [absolutely] that anyone born of God does not [deliberately and knowingly] practice committing sin, but the One Who was begotten of God carefully watches over and protects him [Christ's divine presence within him preserves him against the evil], and the wicked one does not lay hold (get a grip) on him or touch [him]. We know [positively] that we are of God, and the whole world [around us] is under the power of the evil one. (Amplified New Testament)

1 Thess. 5:16-18 Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

7. [Our Daily Bread](#) – (March 21, 2005)

A Bumpy Road

When people tell me life is hard, I always reply, "Of course it is." I find that answer more satisfying than anything else I can say. Writer Charles Williams said, "The world is painful in any case; but it is quite unbearable if anybody gives us the idea that we are meant to be liking it."

The path by which God takes us often seems to lead away from what we perceive as our good, causing us to believe we've missed a turn and taken the wrong road. That's because most of us have been taught to believe that if we're on the right track God's goodness will always translate into a life free of trouble.

But that's a pipe dream far removed from the biblical perspective. God's love often leads us down roads where earthly comforts fail us. Paul said, "To you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29). When we come to the end of all our dark valleys, we'll understand that every circumstance has been allowed for our ultimate good.

"No other route would have been as safe and as certain as the one by which we came," Bible teacher F. B. Meyer said. "If only we could see the path as God has always seen it, we would have selected it as well." —David Roper

*If some darker lot be good,
Lord, teach us to endure
The sorrow, pain, or solitude
That makes the spirit pure. —Irons*

No trial would cause us to despair if we knew God's reason for allowing it.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

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["10 Reasons To Believe In A God Who Allows Suffering"](#)

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