

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE



FIVE USES OF PROBLEMS

Here are 5 ways wherein God wants to use problems in our lives:

1. God uses problems to DIRECT you.

Sometimes God must light a fire under you to get you moving. Problems often point us to the right direction when we are going the wrong way. **Problems often motivate us to change.** Is God trying you to get your attention? **Sometimes it takes a painful situation to make us change our ways.** **Jonah** run away from God's commission and went to Tarshish. He reaped a storm, got thrown away from the ship, and got swallowed by a fish two days and three nights, instead of smoothsailing to Nineveh.

2. God uses problems to INSPECT you.

People are like **tea bags**. If you want to know what's inside them, just drop them into hot water! Has God tested your faith with a problem? What do problems reveal about you? When you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy, because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience." Look at **Job and Abraham** as our example. Job never murmured but thanked God in the midst of his loss and suffering with boils knowing that God is able to restore him back some day. "The Lord giveth; the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord", that was his guiding thoughts. Abraham was promised by God a son to become the Father of nations. Yet later on He asked Abraham to offer this only son Isaac as a sacrifice on the mountain. Did Abraham complain? No. He had a revelation that God is able to raise his son back from the dead. But when they both passed the test, they were blessed by God even greater than before.

3. God uses problems to CORRECT you.

Some lessons we learn only through pain and failure. It's likely that as a child your parents told you not to touch a hot stove. But you probably learned by being burned. **Sometimes we only learn the value of something ...health, money, a relationship... by losing it.** David said, "It was the best thing that could have happened to me, for it taught me to pay attention to your laws" (**Psalm 119:71-72**). David reaped what he sow when He committed adultery. He even sent Uriah to battle to die and be killed in order for him to legally take Batsheba for a wife, amidst having 500 wives already. He lost the joy of his salvation. He was ousted by his son Absalom and his kingdom was divided and ruined. Yet with deep repentance He was able to gain back the favor of God. His son Solomon by Batsheba was even considered by God to erect His temple.

4. God uses problems to PROTECT you.

A problem can be a blessing in disguise if it prevents you from being harmed by something more serious. Last year a friend was fired for refusing to do something illegal that his boss had asked him to do. He was an accountant and was asked to cheat on the income tax return of the company but refused to do it considering that He is a Christian and could not compromise on it. His unemployment was a problem - but it saved him from being convicted and sent to prison a year later when management's actions were eventually discovered. *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good* (**Genesis 50:20**). Consider Joseph as an example. He was rejected of his brethren, sold to Egypt for

Why does God allow trials and sufferings in a Christian's life? Does it mean that when we are in deep trial and in deep suffering that God has already forsaken us or that He is punishing us for our sins? Are we promised a flowery bed of ease once we accept Christ and after we have been born-again?

INTRODUCTION



Trials are but a normal part of a Christian life. No one can evade them nor escape them. They come as a natural part of daily life's circumstances. Trials are a significant part of God's permissive will, to test us and to bring us into perfection. I Peter 4:12-13 exhorts us, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

I PETER 1:7 states, "That the **trial** of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

What we ought to do is to face our trials squarely and sensibly with prayer and supplications and with trust in God. The Bible says that "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Trial is a part of the Christian Heritage. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing [this], that the **trying** of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have [her] perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:2-4). *Blessed [is] the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* (James 1:12)

The problems we face will either DEFEAT us or DEVELOP us - depending on how we respond and react to them. Unfortunately, most people fail to see how God wants to use problems to perfect our lives. The Bible says that "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord." If you love the Lord, your problem was sent to you by God for a purpose. Some people react foolishly (by blaming others and some even resort to committing suicide) and resent their problems rather than pausing to consider what benefit these problems might bring.

30 pieces of silver, was imprisoned for a crime he did not make, yet through all these trials and miseries, He held on to God with faith, and God made him governor of Egypt. He saved his own family (Jacob his father, and his 11 brothers) at the end, when the great famine in Egypt took place.

5. God uses problems to PERFECT you.

Problems, when responded to correctly, are character builders. God is far more interested in your character than your comfort. Your relationship to God and your character are the only two things you're going to take with you into eternity. "We can rejoice when we run into problems... they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady" (Romans 5:3-4). Consider **Paul and his sufferings**, which built his character – **Paul was beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned, stoned, had a thorn in the flesh) yet all these trials made him stronger than ever.** He said in **II Cor. 12:7-10**- *"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."*

Here's the point - God is at work in your life - even when you do not recognize it or understand it. ROMANS 8:28, *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose."* It is much easier and profitable for you when you just cooperate with Him. It is hard to kick against the pricks.

GOD HAS REAL CONFIDENCE IN YOU

Brother Branham, in the following quotes, teaches us how to deal with trials positively:

"When it looks like everything's gone wrong, God's giving you a trial. He's got confidence in you. He don't have to baby you around. You're not a hotbed plant, a hybrid. You're a real Christian. God's giving you a test, see what you'll do about it. Amen. No wonder Peter said, "These fiery trials, why, **count it a joy.** It's—it's more precious to you than gold." And many times we hum and haw, "Oh, well. If I just..." Well, that—well, that's something God give you to overcome. He—He—He knows you'll do it. He's—He's—He's put his trust in you." (VICTORY.DAY:title SIERRA.VISTA.AZ 63-0421)

"You mustn't question anything to God. "For the footsteps of the righteous is ordered of the Lord." And every trial is put upon you to prove you. And the Bible said they're more precious to you than gold. So if God let a few light afflictions happen to you, remember, it's for the correction of you. "Every son that cometh to God must first be chastened of God and tried," child-trained. There's no exceptions, "Every son that cometh..." **And these afflictions are done or brought—brought about to see what attitude you'll take.** See, it's God on this proving ground. That's all earth is, is a proving ground, and where He's trying to prove you." (HEBREWS.CHAPTER.4.title JEFF.IN HEB 57-0901E)

TRIED AND TESTED

"He that cometh to God must first be tested. Tested what? With the Word. That's God's test. Do you believe it? He that cometh to God must be tested. That only shows a true child (See, see?): be tested. And when the test comes on, you can't overcome 'less there's a test give to you. **And when a test is given, it's to see whether you can overcome or not.** And Jesus said, "To him that overcometh," the test. The test is the greatest thing that ever happened to you. And I believe it's written in the Scripture, Peter said that our trials are worth more to us than precious gold. It's a testing time; it's... And one good evidence to us that God is with us, when we're tested, for all children of God are tested and tried." (HOW.CAN.I.OVERCOME.title JEFF.IN V-4 N-12 63-0825M)

God brings tensions into the church, "For every son that cometh to God must be tried, and proven, and tested. He lets sickness strikes you. He lets diseases come on you to test you and to prove you, to show the world that you're truly the seed of Abraham. **He permits it by His own will. He permits disasters; He permits the friends to turn against you. He permits all these things, and turns the Devil loose to tempt you, and he'll do all but take your life.** He could throw you on a bed of affliction; he could turn your neighbors against you; he could turn the church against you; he can do most anything, and it's God's will for him to do it. **We are taught that it is more precious than gold to us."** (POSSESSING.THE.ENEMY'S.GATES.title JEFF.IN V-11 N-6 59-1108)

"Unless we suffer with Him we cannot reign with Him. You have to suffer to reign. The reason for this is that character simply is never made without suffering. **Character is a VICTORY, not a gift.** A man without character can't reign because **power apart from character is Satanic.** But **power with character is fit to rule.** And since He wants us to share even His throne on the same basis that He overcame and is set down in His Father's throne, then we have to overcome to sit with Him. And the little temporary suffering we go through now is not worthy to be compared to the tremendous glory that will be revealed in us when He comes. Oh, what treasures are laid up for those who are willing to enter into His kingdom through much tribulation." (117-2 SMYRAEAN.CHURCH.AGE - CHURCH.AGE.BOOK.CPT.4)

"You see, they could not figure out God's love. They thought that love meant no suffering. They thought that love meant a baby with parental care. But God said that His love was "elective" love. The proof of His love is ELECTION--that no matter what happened, His love was proven truly by the fact they were chosen unto salvation (because God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth). **He may commit you to death as He did Paul. He may commit you to suffering as He did Job. That is His prerogative. He is sovereign. But it is all with a purpose.** If He did not have a purpose, then He would be the author of frustration and not of peace. His purpose is that after we have suffered awhile we would be made perfect, be established, strengthened and settled. As Job said, "He puts strength in us." (Job 23:6b) You see He, Himself, suffered. **He learned obedience by the things that He suffered.** He was actually made perfect by the things that He suffered. **Hebrews 5:8-9,** *"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."* In plain language, **the very character of Jesus was perfected by suffering.** And according to Paul He has left His church a measure of suffering that they, too, by their faith in God while suffering for Him, would come to a place of perfection. Why did He want this? **James 1:2-4,** *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."* (117-2 SMYRAEAN.CHURCH.AGE - CHURCH.AGE.BOOK.CPT.4)

"Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials that are to try you." That is what Peter said. Is it strange that God wants us to develop a Christ-like character that comes through suffering? No sir. **And we all have trials. We are all tried and chastened as sons. Not one but goes through that.** The church that is not suffering, and is not being tried, hasn't got it--it isn't of God. **Heb. 12:6**, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

LIBERATION FROM WORLDLYISM

"And sometime it takes hard trials to break the bands of the world off of us. Sometimes God lets us have a little trial, you know, to see what we'll do, to take you out of the world. Or other words, let you have a little trial and knock you out of that organization, and that idea that "the Methodist is the only one, the Baptist, or the Pentecostal, or that's—that's the only group they got. If you don't believe it like my church believe it, you don't believe at all." Sometimes He lets a little trial happen. Maybe you got a sick baby. Maybe something takes place right at the hour of death, maybe someone taken from you, or something. **What's it to do? To break you away, to show you something, open your eyes.**" (SHALOM.title SIERRA.VISTA.AZ V-13 N-5 64-0112)

"That's the way God does His church. He gives you trial after trial, test after test, trial after trial, test after test, until the life of Christ is reflected in your life, until you become peaceful, sober, meek, gentle, humble, ready, submissive, willing, turn your head from the things of the world and looking straight to Calvary to the One Who's doing the beating. Many times you think it's strange because fiery trials, and sickness, and persecutions; **it's only done to test you, to get the dirt out of you, to get the sludge out of you, to get the slowness out of you, to wake you up** to the place where you can look and see the reflection--or men can see the reflection of Christ in you: Christ in you, the hope of glory." (TIME.TESTED.MEMORIALS.OF.GOD.title JEFF.IN 57-0818)

"And now He says to His own, "As many as I love, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN." **To rebuke is to reprove. To reprove is to `expose with a view to correction.' Chasten does not mean to punish. It means to "discipline because the subject's amendment is in mind."** This is exactly what we find in **Hebrews 12:5-11**, "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (355-1 LAODICEAN.CHURCH.AGE - CHURCH.AGE.BOOK.CPT.9)

"Happiness does not consist of how much the world's goods you own, but how contented you are with the portion that's allotted to you. That's right." (LIFE.STORY.title LITTLE.ROCK.AR 50-0200)

GROWING PAINS OF HIS GRACE

"And when somebody begins to make fun of you, say, "She's old fashion. Look at him, he's... Oh, I'll tell you; he used to be..." All right, **just remember, it's growing pains. That's that persecution's good for you. It's growing pains.** Oh, yes, **He permits crosses and crossroads and junctions.** He always does that in order to perfect us for His service. He permits those things to happen. Can't you understand that? **He does that so He can perfect you for the calling He's called you for. That's your growing pains.** He did **Daniel** that way, you know. He did the **Hebrew children** in the fiery furnace. What did the fiery furnace do? **The fiery furnace only broke the bands that had them bound.** That's all the furnace did, just burnt loose the bands. **Sometimes it takes trials to break the bands of the world off of us, take you out of the world.** Might be have to take you out of your creed first. **Like the man drowning in the river, you have to take him out of the river 'fore you get the river out of the man.** That's about the way God has to do sometime. Let them throw you out, one time, then they get the world out of you. Got to--got to get you out of the world first. Sometime these growing pains is what does that. Oh, yes." (SHALOM.title PHOENIX.AZ V-22 N-1 64-0119)

"The cloudy skies and storms of life are no signs of God's disapproval. Neither are bright skies and still waters signs of His love and approval. His approval of any of us is only IN THE BELOVED. His love is elective which He had for us before the foundation of the world. Does He love us? Ah yes. But how shall we know? We shall know because He SAID SO, and manifested that He did love us for He brought us to Himself and gave us of His Spirit, placing us as sons. **And how shall I prove my love to Him? By believing what He said, and by conducting myself with joy amidst the trials that He in His wisdom allows to come to pass.**" (118-2 SMYRAEAN.CHURCH.AGE - CHURCH.AGE.BOOK.CPT.4)

GOD PURGING OUR CHARACTER

"Now, if you ever notice, how that when the disaster struck **Job's home**, and the children was all killed and everything... And all Job had was destroyed. **God wasn't rebuking Job. He was only purging Job.** Amen. I like that word, a purge. The branch that bears fruit, then God purges it, that it'll bring forth more fruit. **The trouble of it is, we think sometimes God's angry with us. But He's only trying to purge us that we'll bring abundance of fruit, giving us a few trials.** The Bible said that they're worth more to you than precious gold. Did you ever know, that every son that cometh to God, must first--first be tried, whipped, child whipping correction? It's not easy. When God gives you a whipping, you go out here and say, "Well, I'll mingle around a little bit." God will give you a real old fashion spanking for it. And I tell you, if we had more of that in the natural today, we'd have better children. God wants His household straightened out. **So He gives you a little whipping, so you can get straightened up. Makes you love Him more.** My father used to give me whippings, and I thought, "Oh, my." I wished I could call the old gray-headed brother, father of mine, back from the other lands today. I would respect every whipping he ever give me. I never got even as much as I needed. I thought so then, but I don't now, because it corrected me. Though he didn't do right himself, yet he wanted me to do right. Amen. He wants us to. **If the earthly parents wants us to so well, what about our heavenly Parent the Lord Jesus? He has to correct us.** And the Scripture says, "If we cannot stand chastisement, or a whipping, child-correction, then we become illegitimate children and not the children of God." See? After all the turmoil, and everything was over, and then, God had taken all of his sheep, and his cattle, and his horses, and things, then, at the end of his chastisement, or purging, God, doubled to him. If he had ten thousand cattle, He give him twenty thousand cattle. See? Oh, isn't that marvelous? **God purged Job for**

the purpose to bless him. (APPROACH.TO.GOD.title CHICAGO.IL 55-0123A)

Even it's the oldest book in the Bible, Job. When he was broke out with boils, looked like everything had gone against him. And his—his Christian, or his religious friends said, "Job, you've done evil." **Many people want to say, because somebody's sick that they did evil. That's not the truth. Job was a perfect man.** God said so. But sometimes, God let's affliction hit His people to test them for their faith. **He was testing a saint not rebuking a sinner.** And God does that to test. Jesus said—the Scripture says every son that cometh to God must be tried, tested, child-trained. And then they're proven to be right children of God. And now, in Job's case, when all his riches was taken from him, and all of his children was taken, all of his friends was—turned their back upon him, set seven days, accusing him of being a secret sinner, yet Job not he—knew he was not a sinner; because he stood firm on what God had promised. God required the burnt offering. And Job had offered it for he and his children, and he knewed he was justified; because he had offered God's appropriate offering. **How we could draw from that today, when we know that we've come in the Presence of God with faith believing, there's nothing going to change that.** God said so, and that settles it. Then when he got so in his distress and set on the ash heap, scraping his boils, his body was broke out in boils. And his wife said, "Job, why don't you curse God and die?" He said (now, he never called her a foolish woman, she—he said, "You speak like one") he said, "Thou speakest like a foolish woman. **The Lord gave, and the Lord taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.**" **He would not curse God.** He knewed that he hadn't done. He said, "**I came into the world naked, and naked I shall return.**" (SHOW.US.THE.FATHER.title DAWSON.CREEK.BC 61-0521)

"Didn't mean much more to Job then. **He didn't need no more encouraging.** He was a prophet. The Spirit of God come on the prophet. He rose from his ash heap, shook himself. The lightnings begin to flash; the thunders roar. The prophet got in the Spirit. He said, "**I know my Redeemer liveth. And at the last day, He will stand upon the earth. Though the skin worms destroys this body, yet in my flesh I'll see God,** whom I shall see for myself. Mine eyes shall behold and not another. **For we brought nothing into this world and it's certain we take nothing out. The Lord gave, the Lord taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.**" What are we discouraged about? "I'll see Him at the last day," yet just as full of boils as he could be. "Yet in my flesh I'll see Him." Amen. Oh, my." (ANGEL.OF.THE.COVENANT.title PHOENIX.AZ 54-0301)

"**I remember the time standing at my latest temptation, my hardest. My wife was laying in the morgue, a corpse. My little baby was laying dying.** Healthy little child a few hours before, but it tookin' meningitis. And I went to the hospital. They had it an isolated ward, and the flies was all over it's little eyes. I was just a young minister, about twenty-five years old, mother dead, the baby laying dying. I went in reverently, got down on my knees, and I said, "Lord God, what have I done? Has there been anything that I've done to transgress You? Are You doing this... Or, why You tearing my heart apart? Don't take my little baby." I said, "Lord, I love that little thing so much." She was just big enough that when I come around the corner and blow the horn, she'd raise her little hands out and go, "Goo, goo, goo." And I just love little children. And there she laid there. The meningitis had drawed her, just in a few hours, her little blue eyes had cross, her little hand trying to wave good-bye to me. Oh, I couldn't stand it. I thought, "Oh, God, what can I do?" I knelt down to pray, and when I prayed, looked like a black sheet come down. **God refused to hear me.** What about that? I raised up and looked at the little thing.

And Satan come to me. He said, "Now, will you serve Him? Now, what do you think about Him? Your daddy died about a--two weeks ago in your arms. A doctor killed him with a dose of medicine." Said, "Your brother, less than a month ago, was killed

up there on a--on the road, and you picked him up and his blood running out of his body, where a drunk run over him." Said, "There lays your wife down here in the morgue. **And now, He's taking your baby out of your arms." Said, "You still love Him?"** I said, "**Though He slay me, yet I love Him. If He sends me to hell at the judgment day, He's just. I love Him anyhow.**" (HEAR.YE.HIM.title SASKATOON.SASK 57-0519A)

SATAN CAN NEVER TAKE YOUR LIFE WITHOUT GOD'S APPROVAL

"**And remember, no matter how great the distress is, Satan cannot take your life until God has finished with you. There is nothing can happen to you unless God permits it.** There is no evil can come unless God permits it. And it's for your good He's working. Let's think, there when the floods came to destroy the world, it could not destroy Noah. Noah could not be destroyed, because that God had a work for him to do. Satan could not take them. He could not drown **Noah** in the flood, until the purpose of God had been finished. **He could not burn up the Hebrew children until the purpose of God had been finished.** He could not kill **Job** with boils and troubles until the purpose of God had been finished. Neither could the lions eat **Daniel** until God's purpose had been finished. Neither could death and old age take **Abraham** until the purpose of God had been finished. **And neither can it take you, or can it take me until the purpose of God of our life is finished.** So we gather from their consolation. **And why does God let troubles come? God harnesses trouble, puts bits in its mouth, and makes it obey Him, and those troubles bring us into a closer fellowship with God.** There had been no rainbow until the flood came. But after Noah was pressed into that condition that he was in, to float forty days and nights in a storm and the little ark pitching up and down in the water, it was after the flood was over that he saw the rainbow for its first time, the covenant of hope, the covenant of promise. After he'd went through the tribulation, then he saw the promise. That's the way you see the promise, after you've gone through the tribulation. I've liked that poem, or psalm: Must I be carried home to Heaven on a flowerly bed of ease, While others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas? **We ask for comfort and peace; God gives us the best He could give us: trials and tribulations. That's better than comfort and peace. Our comforts is just beyond the river.** It wasn't until the **Hebrew children** was forced into the fiery furnace, on one of their most outstanding trials, that they seen One like the Son of God stand among them. Their troubles produced the Son of God standing among them in the breezes to wave away the heat wave. But not until they went into the fire did that Comforter appear. It was **Daniel** who had purposed in his heart that he'd not defile himself with the things of the world, and was forced through a trial, whether he'd pray to God or go to a lions' den. **But it was after the heat was put on, and he was thrown into a lions' den, that after that, he saw the Angel of the Lord standing** in the midst of him, keeping away, that great Pillar of Fire standing between him and the lions. And the lions could not get him, because he'd went through the trials and temptations and troubles. He knew that his God was able to deliver him from that. It was Abraham, after he'd seen the ground get barren, and the drought come, and Lot separate himself and go down to live deliciously into the world; it was after he had heard the whines and cries of his herdsmen, with no grass for his cattle, but he maintained in the land that God gave him and told him to sojourn in. And as on that day, after he'd been tried till his—his patience was at the end; it was on that day that when after the trial was over, he spoke face to face with Elohim under the oak that day. It was after he'd suffered his trials, after he'd went through the troubles that he'd been through, that God appeared to him in the form of a Man, and set there and told him he was married and his wife's name was Sarah, and said she laughed at Him in the tent behind. It was there that Abraham called Him Elohim. **It was after the trial and tribulation.**" (I.KNOW.title JEFF.IN.EASTER.MESSAGE.BOOK 60-0417S)

MOLDING US INTO CHRIST'S CHARACTER

“Long years ago before they had the smelters, they used to take the gold, and how they would know how it was right or not, with all the sludge was out of it, all of the iron pyrite (that's fools gold), all the fools out of it, they—beaters beat it, and beat it, and turned it, and beat it, and turned it until the beater sees his reflection in the gold. That's the way God does His church. He gives you trial after trial, test after test, trial after trial, test after test, until the life of Christ is reflected in your life, until you become peaceful, sober, meek, gentle, humble, ready, submissive, willing, turn your head from the things of the world and looking straight to Calvary to the One Who's doing the beating. Many times you think it's strange because fiery trials, and sickness, and persecutions; it's only done to test you, to get the dirt out of you, to get the sludge out of you, to get the slowness out of you, to wake you up to the place where you can look and see the reflection—or men can see the reflection of Christ in you: Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (TIME.TESTED.MEMORIALS.OF.GOD.title JEFF.IN 57-0818)

“And sometimes we think that our burdens... I might inject this right here, that we think our burdens are so heavy sometimes, that there's nothing like it in the world. Do you know all those things are good for you? They are all to mold you, make you. Prophets and sages was molded on the backside of the desert in the hot blazing sun, through tribulations, and trials, and persecutions. And these things that we have today, there's nothing happened to us that hasn't happened to other Christians before. Other Christians has had to stand in the hour of darkness like this, and even be fed to lions for their testimony.” (WE.HAVE.SEEN.HIS.STAR.title TUCSON.AZ V-13 N-8 63-1216)

“As it taken Him four thousand years to make this Masterpiece, now He's been for nearly two thousand years making another Masterpiece: a Bride for Christ, another Masterpiece. In so doing it, He does it by His never-changing method, the same way He made the Masterpiece: His Word. That's the way He makes His masterpieces. Because it can only be a perfect masterpiece when it's the perfect Word. Any dirt, trash, injections, it'll break; but the heavens and earth will pass away, but that Word will never break. You remember, in cutting of diamonds, you have to have a perfect tool to do it with, not just any piece will do it. I've seen tons of them big grinders crash right through it and move them big tons over, and pass that diamond right on through. No, it don't break the diamond: has to be cut.” (MASTERPIECE.THE.title JEFF.IN V-4 N-7 64-0705)

“You've got to have a battle. If everything comes lazy, why, you're... What are you overcoming? They overcome by the Word of God and their testimony, the Blood of Christ. You've got to overcome something, and you've got to have some obstacles. And people that different, and fuss with you, and tell you you're holy-rollers, and things, you—that's put before you, it's a trial. If you haven't got that, then you're not even in the battle. What did you join the church... What did you join the Army and get training for? To lay around, strut up and down the streets and show off? That's the way some Christians act, that we want to be looked up to. You ain't going to be looked up to. You're going to be looked down on. “For all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecutions.” Pick up the Sword, cut everything free from you, and keep going on.” (PRESUMING.title CLEVELAND.TN 62-0408)

“Don't be scared. God's driving the winds. God's driving the ark. He has all things provided. Why, Noah wouldn't have had any victories, wouldn't have been storms and trials. If we're just put through a little safe tunnel to run through, there's no joy. The storms of life, what makes us have the joy. We'd never know what daylight was 'less we had some dark. We'd never know what a hilltop was 'less we had a mountain. We'd never

know what good health was 'less you had some sickness. You'd never know how to enjoy salvation 'less you was once a sinner. God's made all things, the law of contrast. He loves you.” (ARK.THE.title JEFF.IN V-26 N-18 55-0522)

“Great fearful waves are out here before us, but we know just beyond that wave yonder we're nearing the shore. See? We're nearing the shore. Just stay stable. Just stay in the Word; stay with God. No matter how you feel, what anything else, stay right with the Word. Let--let--let it stay stable. When you see all these great big old clouds around us, and storms a-coming, and atomic bombs, and everything else they're talking about; but our stabilizer is right straight in the Word. God said it would be here; we'll crest every one of them. Yeah. We'll go right over the top of them. Yes, indeed. They--they can't sink us; they can't drown us. You put us in the grave; we'll come out again. That's just all there is to it. There ain't no way in the world to keep it down there. We'll caress every one of them, 'cause our great Chief Captain is calling at the other side. (We're anchored in Jesus, The storms of life I'll brave; I've anchored in Jesus, I'll fear no wind or wave)” (CHRIST.REVEALED.IN.HIS.OWN.WORD.title JEFF.IN V-4 N-10 65-0822M)

THE BENEFITS THAT TRIALS AND TESTING BRING US

A TEST OF COURAGE

Some trials test us in one way and some in another. Some test our courage. Satan sometimes tries to frighten us by making a great show of threatening. Sometimes he makes things look very dark. He whispers to us that we shall surely be overwhelmed. If we but have courage to meet these, we shall be able to overcome them. Often we have but to face them boldly in order to chase them off the ground and to stand victorious on the field of battle. Other trials test our faith. When sickness or disease take hold of us, it is then that faith is tested. When the adversary tries to bring doubts in our minds about God's faithfulness or the truth of his Word, and the faithfulness of his people, then faith is the weapon that we need to use to overcome him.

A TEST OF LOYALTY AND FAITHFULNESS

There are trials that test our loyalty. We are brought face to face with the question whether we will be loyal to God and his truth, or whether we will take some seemingly easier way and compromise his truth for the sake of getting off easier ourselves. We are often put in a position where our loyalty is tested, where we have to stand right by the truth without deviating from it in the slightest degree, no matter what comes. Sometimes we must make a choice between Christ and our friends. The question is then one of loyalty. To whom shall we be true, Christ or our friends? To whom shall we submit ourselves, and whom shall we obey? He has said, “Be thou faithful unto death.” Shall we do it? Shall we do it no matter what it means nor how long a struggle it means? The battle is half won when we are fully decided to stand loyal whatever comes. Battles of this sort may be decided before we enter into them, and then we have only the fighting to do. The result is certain. The old saying, “Well begun is half done,” is certainly true in the Christian life, especially when it comes to the matter of being decided to do the right and stand loyally by the truth whatever comes.

A TEST OF OUR HUMILITY

There are things that test our humility. There are plenty of people who for their own purposes will flatter us and try to make us think that we are great personages or

that we have done some great thing. They will praise us and “make over” us generally for some selfish purpose. If we heed what they say, we may become puffed up over it, and come to esteem ourselves more highly than we ought. If we do something that is praiseworthy, we very often find within ourselves a feeling of having done so well that we become elated over it. This also is a test of our humility. Let us keep our feet on the ground no matter how much God blesses us. No matter how much praise comes to us, no matter how many things are said in our favor, let us keep balanced, and let not our humility be turned into pride.

A TEST OF OUR LOVE FOR GOD

There are things that test our love. Can we love God just as much after he has let us pass through a hard trial as we did before? If our brethren do something to wound us, can we still love them? If people misunderstand us and attribute wrong motives to us, can we still love them? These are the tests that count. These are the tests that test love. These are the things that prove whether it is genuine or not. If we are despised and persecuted, misrepresented and abused, can we still love? If people are our enemies, can we still love them?

A TEST OF OUR STEADFASTNESS

There are trials that test our steadfastness - whether we will just stand still and suffer and endure until God sees that it is enough and takes us out of the fire. **Other things test our patience.** These are often very small tests, and the smaller they are, the more they test our patience. Sometimes we need to keep a good hold upon ourselves and “let patience have her perfect work,” that we may be “perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” No matter in what way we are tested, if we have a will to be true God will see to it that we have grace to trust him, so that we may overcome and be “more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:37).

SOURCES OF TRIALS

CIRCUMSTANCIAL TRIALS

Many trials are only the natural result of circumstances. Sometimes circumstances are in our favor, and work for our happiness, peace, and contentment. Sometimes we have smooth sailing, and everything goes pleasantly. We are courageous and confident and rejoicing. The sun shines brightly out of a cloudless sky, and every prospect seems fair. But this does not always last. Sooner or later the clouds must come and the storm-winds beat upon us. We must have the rough weather as well as the pleasant, the storm as well as the calm. The sunshine and the calm are very needful in life, and they work out a definite purpose; but the storms and the rain and the wind are likewise needed; they also fulfill their purpose. Trials will come; we cannot evade them. We cannot look ahead into the future; so we may plan and build up hopes, only to have our air-castles come crashing down around our heads. If we have set our hearts upon these things, we are likely to look very gloomily upon their wreck and to feel very bad over the result.

If we permit ourselves to give way and grieve over the failure of our plans and hopes, we may make ourselves and those around us miserable. Sometimes people let go their hold on God just because they do not get their way in things. They let disappointment so discourage them that they just give up trying to do right. That is acting like a spoiled child. If our plans and hopes fail,

God will not fail. Sometimes it is a real blessing to us that they do fail; for God can plan far wiser for us than we can for ourselves, and we ourselves can act more wisely after we have failed than we did before. Never fret on account of disappointments. They grow rapidly under such treatment, both in size and in intensity.

Losses may come to us; our property may be swept away or burned up. If we have our hearts set upon our possessions, this may touch a tender spot, and we may let it darken our lives and make us morose and dissatisfied. Poverty may come and the many difficulties incident thereto. How greatly such things may try us will depend upon how much we rebel against the circumstances or how easily we submit to and adapt ourselves to the inevitable. How greatly we are affected by our trials depends on how much we open our hearts to them and encourage them.

Sickness may lay its heavy hand upon us or our loved ones, and try every fiber of our being. It may play upon the chords of pain a threnody that thrills with exquisite torture, or it may fire our blood with fever until the sparkle has gone from the eye and the glow of health from the cheek, or it may bind us in chains helplessly captive. Death may come and take those dear by the ties of nature or friendship and leave sorrow and grief to be our companions. These things try the soul, but they must be borne. We cannot escape such things, for they are the common heritage of those who dwell in the tabernacles of clay. They belong to mortality and to the mutable things of time.

PERSECUTION FROM OTHER PEOPLE

JOHN 15:18-21 - *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.”*

MATTHEW 5:10-12 - *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”*

There are trials that come to us as the result of the acts or attitude of others. How few are man’s kindnesses to man! How great his inhumanity! How much of the human distress is needless and comes only by the inconsiderate or evil acts of others! Christ said that we should not marvel if the world should hate us. Neither should we marvel if it should act out its hatred in malicious persecution. **Our Lord has told us that offenses must come. To be a Christian means to be a target for the world’s hatred. We can count this a part of our heritage. Sometimes we shall have cruel mockings and have our names cast out as evil. We cannot endure these things without some sense of pain.** How much we suffer under them will depend on how we meet them. If we praise God and go resolutely on our way, strength will be given us, and we shall overcome, and instead of hindering us, persecution will bring us rich treasures of grace and blessing.

Sometimes we may be tried over what others do when they have no thought or intention of causing us a trial, and perhaps are wholly ignorant that they are causing us to be tried. Very often people allow themselves to be tried when things need not be a trial if they will hold the right attitude toward the supposed offender. We

can let ourselves be tried over trifles if we will, when if we would act as a real man or woman, we could pass over them quite easily and do it joyously and not suffer to amount to anything. The trouble with so many is that they are like petulant children, who are hurt or displeased at almost anything. If someone has really done something on purpose to try you, you should not give him the satisfaction of knowing that it hurt. Keep the hurt out of sight. Hide it away and over come it, and, if possible, let it be known to none but God. Bear with meekness what happens. Pray for your persecutors. That is the surest way to keep God in your own heart. "Father, forgive them," is the plea that takes the sting out of persecution.

SATAN AS PERMITTED BY GOD

Some trials come directly from Satan, with God's permissive will. For some reason we are left liable to his attacks. He attacked Job, destroyed his children, his possessions, and his health. God could shut him clear way from the world, just as he has shut him away from heaven, if he chose. But for some purpose he sees fit to let us be exposed to his attacks here. Many persons feel like a little boy who once said: "Mother, I wish God would kill the devil. Why doesn't he do it? I would if I were big enough." But Satan is limited in his work against us, and God is ever on our part, so that he can never go beyond God's will for us, so long as we leave ourselves in God's hands and rely upon him for the needed help. God does see fit sometimes to let him try us severely, but there never need be any cause for despair. God will not suffer us to be tempted more than we are able to bear. If Satan makes the temptation, God makes the way out. Sometimes he does not let us see the way out, even when he has prepared it, and we have to resist and endure the temptation until he sees that it has gone far enough. Then he shows us the way out. Sometimes he will take us and lift us clear out of it by his own hand. At other times he will put our adversary to flight. Our part is to endure and trust; God's part is to make the way of escape. We must endure patiently until our deliverance comes.

GOD'S PROVING GROUNDS

Sometimes God himself tries or proves us. "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried" (Zechariah 13:9). **The purpose of God's trying us is often that we may know ourselves.** If we become self-sufficient, or go to rejoicing in our own works, he will likely send upon us or permit to come upon us something that will bring us to know our insufficiency and need of help from him. **Danger is often the only thing that can help us to know our own weakness; so God often lets a danger come in order to bring us to our senses.** We should not let such a thing discourage us, but get the lesson that our strength is from him and that our best efforts, if merely of ourselves, can avail little. He who trusts in God has strength enough for his needs.

God sometimes tries us that we may know him better. He wants us to know just how dearly he loves us, and how earnest is his care for us, and how faithful he is to us; and so he lets every hope and resource fail us and distress fall upon us. **When everything fails, and we turn to him, how real is his help!** how sweet is his comfort! If, however, when we find ourselves in such a situation, we despair and give up, we lose the blessedness that he was preparing us for. We grieve his loving heart and cheat ourselves. Hold fast and wait for him to work out his purpose. He afflicts only to heal. He grieves only to turn the grief to rejoicing, and to give greater rejoicing than could come through any other means. Our trials are the root upon which our blessings grow. These roots may be bitter, but the fruit is sure to be sweet if we patiently wait for its maturing. Too many want the fruits of joy, but are not willing to have the trial. Many choice fruits grow on thorny trees, and he who will gather the fruit may expect to be pricked now

and then by the thorns.

SELF-MADE TRIALS: YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW

But the trials that are hardest to bear are the ones we bring upon ourselves. Many people suffer as a result of their own indiscretion. If you commit a crime, there is a law to prosecute you. People sometimes act unwisely or unbecomingly, and people buffet them for their faults. There is the golden rule that say, "Do not unto others what you want others not to do unto you." If we break that rule, it's because of our own fault that we suffer. In return, we will be ridiculed or condemned; your names will be on the tongue of the gossip, and you have no one to blame but yourselves. If we do not act wisely or worthily, we need not expect to have the trust, confidence and esteem of others. If we are buffeted for our faults, the only Christian thing to do is to endure with meekness and patience and try to do better next time. Whatever we sow, we shall reap. This is one kind of trial that is always bitter medicine. It brings no joy. The best thing we can do is to take our bitter medicine and make no wry faces about it.

We sometimes do things or say things that bring heaviness upon us. We heap blame and condemnation upon ourselves. We feel regret and sorrow, and cannot get done chiding ourselves. How many of these self-made trials could be avoided if we would have been careful always to watch ourselves and to think of the outcome before we speak or act. When we have brought such a trial upon ourselves, we can only brace up and endure it manfully. We need to learn well our lesson, but we need not let ourselves be crushed under it. Do not let yourself brood over it. Brooding will not help matters. Resolve to do better next time and ask God to help you. Rise above the trial. If you have learned your lesson, God will help you out. He does not want to bruise you over it. He may chasten you sorely, but he will do it for your profit, not for your destruction.

I ASKED GOD; BUT GOD SAID "NO" - By Claudia Weizs

I asked God to take away my bad habits. God said, "No." "It is not for Me to take them away, but it's for you to give them up."

I asked God to grant me patience. God said, "No." "Patience is a by-product of tribulation; it is not granted, it is learned."

I asked God to spare me pain. God said, "No." "Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares, yet it brings you closer to Me."

I asked God to boost my spirit to grow. God said, "No." "You must learn to grow on your own, I will just prune you to make you fruitful."

I asked God, "Can you make me whole?". God said, "No." "Your spirit is already whole; and your body is only temporary."

I asked "God give me all things that I might enjoy life". God said, "No." "I will give you Life, so that you may enjoy all things."

I asked God to give me true happiness. God said, "No." "I'll give you the blessings; Happiness is an outlook that's up to you."

I asked God to help me love others, as much as He loves me. God said..."Ahhh, you finally you got the idea. Therefore, share love... love your enemy, And pray for those who persecute you. LOVE is the real reason why I sent my Son Jesus."

John 3:16 - "For God so LOVED the world that he gave His only begotten Son, so that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting Life."