

Recognizing the Blessings and Benefits of Trials

Part III

Trials are a blessing for the Christian because all things work together for good to those who are called unto the purpose of God. We now continue to look at trials with a new perspective.

3. Trials Increase Our Effectiveness in Serving Others

I've learned that the way I respond to trials can have a great effect on whether they become roadblocks in my life or expressways to learning and growth. When we stress over difficulties, the experiences only serve to weigh us down. When we remember that these trials are part of the plan in making us effective workers for the Lord, we learn trials are an opportunity to grow and learn.

We seldom consider how our current struggles might prepare us for future service, yet God often equips us to serve others as a result of our most painful experiences. In 2 Corinthians 1:4, we learn that God the Father comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort we are comforted with by God.

In addition to the personal benefit God produces, the fruit of adversity in our lives will often bear the seeds of comfort for other hurting believers along the way. The Lord's intention to comfort us is also His investment in bearing the pain of others who are not even hurting yet. When we enjoy the supernatural peace that surpasses our understanding today, we become distributors of that same consolation to others tomorrow and every day thereafter (Philippians 4:7).

4. Trials Can Be a Form of Discipline Intended to Produce Repentance

The scriptures explicitly teach that God does discipline those who belong to Him. Hebrews 12:9-11 reminds us:

Furthermore, 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.

Sometimes trials are the consequences of our sinful choices and actions. Other times our adversities may not be directly traceable to a specific moment of disobedience, but God intends to produce greater holiness within us, nonetheless.

God loves us too much to ignore any behavior or perspective that would push us away from Him. Like a loving father, He carefully and expeditiously works to correct us when we stray. Though this involvement in our lives can be painful at times, it proves God's affection for us rather than His abandonment of us.