

## Getting Through the Hard Times, Part 4

### Allowing God to Change You

**Why does God allow evil?** This is an age-old question, one that men have struggled with over the centuries. **There are at least three answers in the bible.**

- 1. There is evil in the world because we are living in a cursed world system that is ruled by Satan.** This curse came through man's disobedience, not through God.

God did not create the world to be evil, but good,  
Genesis 1:31 *Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.*

The world became cursed when Adam and Eve sold out to Satan. Even the ground was cursed,

Genesis 3:17 [God speaking to Adam and Eve] *"...Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.*

This curse is still in effect. One day, however, even the earth will be delivered from this curse, "*the bondage of corruption,*"

Romans 8:21 *...the creation itself will also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

In that final day, death will be "*swallowed up in victory,*" 1 Corinthians 15:50-57. Also, Satan and his cohorts will be cast into the Lake of Fire, Revelation 20:10. But until that time, we are living in a world system that is under a curse.

Furthermore, Satan, the deceiver who comes to "*steal, kill and destroy,*" John 10:10, rules this world system. How did this happen? Before the fall, God had given man dominion to rule over the earth,

Genesis 1:28 [God speaking to Adam and Eve] *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

Man's dominion was stolen by Satan when man fell. In three places in the book of John, Jesus tells us that Satan is the ruler of this world,

John 12:31 [Jesus speaking] *"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."*

John 14:30 [Jesus speaking] *"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.*

John 16:8-11 [Jesus speaking] *“And when He [the Holy Spirit] has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”*

Further corroboration is in Matthew 4:8, where Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world. Jesus did not contest his rulership, but fought back with the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. Paul also calls Satan *“the god of this world,”* 2 Corinthians 4:4 (KJV).

Here is the good news: when Jesus came into this world, He began taking back everything that Satan had stolen. His death on the cross has redeemed us from much of the curse, in that those who belong to Christ will spend eternity with Him. In addition, we take back our lives, our families, our health, our finances and everything that concerns us by declaring Jesus' rulership in our lives, and by walking in obedience to His Word. In Him, we are God's children and the sheep of His pasture. We can trust our Shepherd to take care of us—and also to teach us how to fight the adversary, Satan. We are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who loves us, Romans 8:37!

**But here is the key to winning: obedience is required.** We can help God or Satan. We can feed the enemy, or strengthen God's hand. **God never violates the human will.** In order to win, we must first of all ask Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior. Then we need to obey Jesus Christ, follow Him, and apply His truths. **We can win, but we need to be willing to be raised up as warriors, and learn how to fight!**

- 2. The Galatians 6:7 principle.** God must obey His Word, Psalm 138:2. Therefore, He must judge evil, Exodus 34:7. To the extent that we ourselves participate in an evil world system, we accrue the penalty for evil. This is the Galatians 6:7 principle, and it is at work in the life of every person on earth, Christian and non-Christian,

*Galatians 6:7-10 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

Some of the evil that comes upon us is the result of living in a cursed world, and some evil is the direct result of poor choices we have made in the past. It is also possible that some is the result of poor choices our forefathers have made, for curses can be passed down to the third and fourth generation.

There can be—and usually is—a lag between the time we sin, and the time the consequences of our sin comes upon us. In part this lag is because of God’s mercy. God has no joy in the death of the wicked, Ezekiel 18:23, 32, and God will give us ample opportunity to repent. It is the goodness of God that can lead to our repentance, Romans 2:4! But there will be a day of reckoning, and it can be sudden, Proverbs 29:2. Galatians 6:7 warns us, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked....*”

Satan can only attack us by the Law, Psalm 94:20. In other words, he must have a legal reason to attack us. But here is where Satan is canny, and many Christians can become discouraged. Because when a man or woman is a part of Satan’s world system, they do not necessarily get all that is coming to them in this life. In fact, Psalm 73 tells us that some of Satan’s people can live quite nice, comfortable lives—for a season, until their sudden end, when with terror they are thrown into the pit. But what happens if some of these people become Christians? Then Satan demands his just dues! He has a legal right to attack them, Galatians 6:7, Psalm 94:20—and he does so almost immediately!

I learned about this when I was praying for a young woman who had come out of witchcraft. She had been a rebel in her family, and then became a witch who cursed people. Then one day as she flipping through channels in a motel room, R W Schambach, pointed his finger at the television screen and said, “Don’t you change that channel!” She was shocked, so much so that she didn’t change the channel. Instead she listened to the message and gave her life to Jesus Christ that day.

But, she told me later, her life fell apart immediately. She said she lost her job, her finances, her health, her family, her friendships. Only with time was she finally, as she learned about Christ, able to regain some of what she had lost, but her health was still poor. That’s when I took Crystal’s case to the Lord, and He told me about the Galatians 6:7 principle. She had cursed people, their health, their finances, their families and their relationships, and now she was receiving the fruit of her sins.

What can be done? How do we pray for such a person, I asked the Lord. He told me, “Pray for an attenuated harvest.” “Attenuated” means greatly weakened or reduced (I had to look it up). Pray for crop failure! And also, pray at the same time for the present crop of good seed to bear a quick harvest, so that the person does not become discouraged.

We all need to pray for crop failure! All of us have sins from our past lives. We may have repented, but there may still be consequences. Pray for crop failure of all the seed of your past sins—and then pray for a quick harvest of the seed you are sowing now, so that you can be encouraged!

At the same time, realize that ALL sin has consequences. At the very least, Satan will try to steal from us. Here is our challenge—to align ourselves with God alone, and to take back all that Satan has stolen. We can take it back, in Jesus’ name!

**But remember that Galatians 6:7 goes both ways, we can be blessed by our actions as well. Here is a spiritual principle. We may suffer in this world, and certainly we will go through tribulation, John 16:33. Nevertheless, if we live a life of love for God and obedience because we love Him, we will overwhelmingly be blessed.**

**Here is a formula for success,**

1. **Love God.** Put Him first in everything you do. Mark 12:30; Deuteronomy 6:5.
2. **Obey God.** Do this because you love Him, John 14:15. Remember that He will never ask you to do anything that is against His character, which is love, 1 John 4:8, or His word. (If in doubt, ask another Christian who knows the Bible.)
3. **Follow Jesus,** because Jesus asked us to follow Him, John 12:26. Spend time with Him in prayer and in His word, so that you can come to know Him and hear His voice, John 10:3, 16, 27. Be baptized by immersion, as He was, Matthew 3:13-16, and ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit, as He desires you to be, Luke 24:49; Ephesians 5:18; Acts 19:1-6..
4. **Learn to war in the Spirit,** as the bible teaches. Warfare is part of the Christian walk! Ephesians 6:14-18; 1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7-8; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.
5. **Do not be discouraged, keep on keeping on!** Inevitably, over a period of time, you will see the Galatians 6:7 principle work for you. Just keep on loving God, keep on obeying Him, keep following Him, and keep warring in the Spirit. Overwhelmingly, you will be blessed. Psalm 37:25.

3. **When God uses circumstances to effect a greater good.** What happens when a person loves God and is obeying Him, and yet that person still goes through a difficult time? Then just know that overwhelmingly, God is using those circumstances for a greater good.

If we are in Christ, then He knows our sorrows, and He will use them for good, inevitably.

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

God works all things for good for us who love Him. But what good? I used to say this verse to myself, claiming it almost lightly, without really comprehending what it was saying. Then one day as I walked back to my room in a church camp near Abilene, Texas, I heard the Holy Spirit say, "Read the next verse."

*Romans 8:29-30 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn of many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified, and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

What good? I read the next verse—and the verse after that—over and over again. Then as I prayed, I saw it. The good God wants is for us to look more like His Son, Jesus. He wants us to be conformed to the image of Christ! We should look like

Him, that is, we should act like Him, speak like Him, think like Him, and have the same attitudes and goals as He does! The more we look like Christ, the more God can use us for good!

God is not the author of evil, James 1:13. Nevertheless, He can use all things for our good—even ungodly circumstances. **Here is the third reason why God allows evil at times, because He sees the greater good that will come out of an evil circumstance, including the good that can be done in our own lives.**

Here is where some of the suffering in Scripture begins to make more sense. Why did Joseph suffer so much? Because God, who is in all time, saw the famine coming to the Middle East, including Egypt and present day Israel, and he sent Joseph ahead of his people so that they would be kept alive. Also, Joseph, and later the children of Israel's sojourn in Egypt for over 400 years would fulfill Scripture, and put the enemy to shame when God brought His chosen people out of bondage into the Promised Land.

God is still bringing His people out of bondage today, and some of the adverse circumstances in our lives are the very circumstances God uses to change us and bring us out of bondage. We all have the sin tendency to want to go back to bondage. But what happens when God works the circumstances in our lives to absolutely hate evil, and also to get rid of every vestige of evil in our own hearts? And what happens when God can then use us in a greater way than ever before because we have allowed Him to take us through a trial, suffering or persecution?

Look at Joseph again. Didn't he seem so proud and self-important when God first moved in his life? He boasted about the visions he saw, he wore his coat of many colors with flourish, he tattled on his brothers, Genesis 37:1-11. They hated him, and with good reason. But look at the Joseph we see at the end of Genesis. He forgives his brothers. He doesn't hold anything against them. He even says,

Genesis 50:20 *But as for you, you meant evil against me, **but God meant it for good**, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

Joseph had become a very humble man. It was then that he saw the greater purpose God had for him and his people.

Similarly, Job can teach us much about getting through the hard times. There is so much we can admire about Job. In the beginning of the book, scripture tells us that Job was a righteous man. We are told, "*he was blameless and upright...one who feared God and shunned evil,*" Job 1:1. God also speaks of him as "*a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil,*" Job 1:8. Not only that, but in all the trials we see Job go through, he holds onto his righteousness. When God allows Satan to harass Job, and Job loses all his livestock, servants, and even his children—his seven sons and three daughters—Job mourns and yet still worships. We are told, "*In all this, Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong,*" Job 1:22. Job never blames God, nor does he ever lose his integrity, Job 1:22; 2:3.

Then God allows Satan to strike Job himself with painful boils from head to toe, Job 2:7. Job takes a broken piece of pottery and scrapes his skin, all the while sitting in ashes, Job 2:8. And Job's wife comes to him and spits out, "*Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!*" Job 2:9. But Job answers her mildly, showing great wisdom (Proverbs 15:1), "*You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?*" Job 2:10. Job refuses to curse God, even when he doesn't understand the source of adversity, or why God would allow such a painful trial.

Job's three friends show up, and for a while they are respectful, and even quiet. For a whole seven days and nights, they sat on the ground, "*and no one spoke a word, for they saw that his grief was very great,*" Job 2:13.

And then the trial became even worse, because the trial by people began. Job's friends held the view that Job had lost all his possessions, his children and health because of some hidden sin in his life. For the next 29 chapters Job's friends accuse him of evil, and Job defends himself. How could God possibly allow bad things to happen to a good person, they asked. Job had to be full of secret sin! The trial by Job's friends becomes so miserable that at one point, Job exclaims,

Job 6:14 ***To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.***

**Here Job teaches us what NOT to do when we have a friend who is going through a hard time.** Don't accuse your friend of evil, even if you think they have abandoned God! They don't need your ungodly judgments in the midst of a trial! They need your kindness, always! And don't abandon your friend! Many people see someone hurting—and disappear, maybe because they simply don't know what to say. **Here is something you can always say to someone who is hurting, simply the words, "I am sorry." Then just be there.** They may cry. Let them. They may talk about how much they hurt. Let them. They just need kindness. Show your kindness by being there for them. Don't judge them. Don't tell them that they messed up. The truth is that we all mess up. If it wasn't for God's mercy, where would any of us be? Psalm 130:3-4. Instead, encourage your friend with good words, kind words, which remind them that they are loved, and that God has not forgotten them. Remember that God will use the trial they are going through for good, always. He will never leave them nor forsake them, Hebrews 13:5. They are his precious son or daughter, and He loves them. Kindness draws more people to God than ungodly words or a judgmental attitude, Romans 2:4, "*the goodness of God leads... to repentance.*" Show them kindness. Speak to them kindly. And never, never, never judge a person who is going through a trial! That is God's job, not yours! Romans 12:18-21.

Or maybe you will be the one who is judged, not them—like Job's friends. God judged Job's friends, Job 42:7-8, and God required them to come with a sacrifice of repentance. In the end they were restored when Job prayed *for them*. Be careful what you say to a friend who is going through a hard time, lest you also be judged!

Job first three friends were not accepted. They weren't right with God, and did not speak for Him. Elihu, Job's fourth friend tries to tell Job that God is never evil, Job 34:12, and that He does not have to give us an explanation for what He does, Job 34:13-15. Then in chapter 38 suddenly God shows up, in all His dominion and might. God asks, "*Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it,*" Job 40:2. And here, finally, we see Job's fault—he has been trying to reason with God, even correct Him. He was saying, "This is not fair! Let me talk to God, and I will reason with Him!" But when God shows up, Job says this,

Job 40:4-5 "*Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth. Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; yes, twice, but I will proceed no further.*"

Job repents. Job was righteous. Maybe he was too righteous—he was self-righteous, and wanted to contend with God. But Job changes, he repents. And then Job says one of the most beautiful and remarkable passages in Scripture,

Job 42:5-6 "*I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*"

Job had heard of God before, and knew something about Him. **But now Job comes to know God in a more personal, immediate way.** Job had heard of Him before, but now his eye sees Him. He gains a closer, more intimate view of God! And in end, God blesses Job with much more than he ever had before, and gives him another seven sons and three daughters.

What can we learn from Job? Could it be, in all the trials we go through, that **God shows Himself to us more completely than we ever knew Him before?** Could it be that before our trial, we have only heard of God, but after, we actually come to see Him? Certainly this has been true in my life: I know God more now than before!

Also, look at how Job changed. **Could it be that God changes our character as we go through trials? Is it possible that God is forming the nature of His Son in us? Also, we need to ask, is it possible that God is doing something for the greater good through this trial?** Job was used for greater good, for his friends as well as himself, and us today, as well, for there is so much we learn from Job.

Maybe the trial you are going through now is for the greater good. God is the potter, we are the clay, Isaiah 64:8. Who are we to tell God what He should do with us, or how we should be formed? Let us learn from the story of Job, God is sovereign, and He is forming us to be His precious vessels—vessels which will know Him more intimately, and which will bear His likeness. Somehow, in some way, greater good will come out of our trial. Always remember, that regardless of what we go through, **God is for us. Overwhelmingly, regardless of what happens to us here on earth, we will win!** Many years ago, when I was going through a hard time, I made of chart of how to win. I hope it helps you as much as it has me.

## How to Stand Through the Storms of Life—and Win!

What to Do	What Not to Do
<p><b>Fix your eyes on Jesus</b>, Heb.12:2 (NIV); Col.3:1-2</p> <p><b>Trust God, commit yourself Him, and cast all your cares upon Him</b>, 1 Pet.2:23; 4:19; 5:6-7; Is. 26:3 Ps.10:14; 37:3-11; 32:10; 55:22; Prov.3:5; Job13:15</p> <p><b>Forgive the people involved</b>, Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35; Mark 11:25-26; Luke 23:34; Col. 3:13</p> <p><b>Speak to your mountain--all spiritual adversity</b>, Prov 18:21; Mark 11:23, James 4:7; 2 Cor. 10:3-6; for example, Zech. 4:7. Do this in Jesus' name.</p> <p><b>Get stronger--stay in the word of God and prayer</b>, Job 17:9; Eph. 6:10; John 15:5; James 1:21-22; Ps. 37:31; 50:15; 88:13; 118:14-17; 119:9-11; 109:4; Prov. 8:34-35; Rom. 12:2; Jude 1:20-21; Is. 40:31 p</p> <p><b>Praise God, worship, dance</b>, Ps. 68:4, 34; 69:30; 70:4; 71:8, 14-21; 89:15-18; 119:54; 145; 149</p> <p><b>Strengthen your faith by remembering all that God has done for, you</b>, Ps. 77:10; 1 Sam.30:6;12:24; Ps.103:2-5; 105:5; 119:49-52; 1 Peter 2:1-3</p> <p><b>Hold fast to your integrity</b>, Job 2:3,9-10;17:9;Dan.1:8</p> <p><b>Be gracious, do good, and hold onto your peace</b>, 1 Pet. 2:1, 12,15; 3:1, 17; 4:19; Luke 6:27-36; Rom.12:18; Heb.12:14; Ps. 34:14; 37:3-8; Prov. 11:16; 13:21</p> <p><b>Love and rejoice</b>, Matt. 5:11-12; 1 Pet. 1:6-8,22; 2:17 4:8,13; Jas1:2; Eph.4:1-3;Col.3:12-14; Rom12:9-21</p> <p><b>Be completely rid of the flesh. Die to self</b>, Rom. 8:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:11; Job 11:13-19; Gal. 5:16-17, 24; Col. 3:1-17; Eph. 4:20-32</p> <p><b>Let God vindicate you in His own time</b>, Is.53:7; Ps. 26:1; 39:1-2; 94:22; 37:34; Rom. 2:4</p> <p><b>Hide yourself in Him</b>, Ps. 57:1; Prov. 27:12; 28:28</p> <p><b>Remember God is your hope, your inheritance, and your salvation</b>, 1 Pet. 1:3-6, 13; 4:12-14; 5:6,10; Job 19:25-27</p> <p><b>Realize that we are called endure with patience as Christ did</b>, 1 Pet. 2:20-21; 4:1; James 5:7-12; Phil. 1:29; 2:5-8; Is. 52:13-53:12</p> <p><b>Realize that trials met in the right way purify the soul and makes us stronger</b>, 1 Pet. 1:7, 22; 4:1-2; James1:4; Ps.66:12; 2 Cor.4:7-11; Job23:10</p> <p><b>Realize that trails are linked with great joy, great love, and great glory</b>, 1 Pet. 1:11; 3:8; 4:13-14, 19; 5:1, 6, 10; Phil. 2:9-11; James 1:12</p>	<p><b>Do not think that something unusual has happened to you</b>, John 15:18-21; 16:33; 1 Pet. 4:12-13; 5:9</p> <p><b>Do not blame God</b>, Job 1:21-22; 2:10; James 1:12-17; 5:10-11; 1 Pet.1:13-17; 2:19-23; 3:15</p> <p><b>Do not lose your peace</b>, James 1:19-20; Ps. 37:1-8; 1 Cor. 6:7; 1 Peter 3:14-15</p> <p><b>Be alert. Do not entertain the enemy's thoughts</b>, 1 Pet.1:13-15; 5:8-9;2 Cor.10:5; James 4:7-8</p> <p><b>Do not allow the flesh to take control</b>, Ps. 37:8; Eph.4:20-32; Col. 3:5-17; Rom. 8:12-14; Gal. 5:24</p> <p><b>Do not allow yourself to be offended</b>, Luke 9:52-56; 1 Sam.18:11-14; 2 Sam. 16:11-12</p> <p><b>Do not harbor bitterness or unforgiveness</b>, Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35; Col. 3:13; Heb. 12:15</p> <p><b>Do not complain or dispute</b>, Phil. 2:14; James 4:11; 5:9; Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14</p> <p><b>Do not judge or condemn the person who hurt you</b>, Luke 6:37; Matt. 7:1-2; Rom. 14:4; James 2:12-13; 4:11</p> <p><b>Do not attack the person who was used by the enemy to attack you</b>, 1 Pet.2:1,23; 3:9; Eph. 6:12; Ps.34:13-14; Matt. 26:51-52</p> <p><b>Do not repay evil for evil</b>, Rom. 12:17-21; Matt. 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-36 ; 1 Peter 3:9</p> <p><b>Do not avenge yourself</b>, Rom. 12:19; Deut. 32:35; Lev. 19:18; <b>Realize God may be waiting to give them a chance to repent!</b> Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11; Rom. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Is. 30:18; <b>Also God will not move until you forgive completely</b>, 2 Cor. 10:6; Col. 3:13</p> <p><b>When God begins to deal with the person who hurt you, do not gloat</b>, Prov. 24:17-18; Job 31:29-30; Prov.17:5; Obad.1:12-15;1Cor.13:6</p> <p><b>Do not be afraid</b>, 1 Pet. 3:14-15; Luke 12:4; Prov. 29:25; 2 Tim. 1:7; Is. 41:10; 43:1-3b</p> <p><b>NEVER let go of your trust in the Lord</b>, Prov. 3:5-6; Ps. 37:3, 5, 40; 44:17-18; 57:1; Job 13:15; 23:10; Is. 26:3</p>