

God's Purposes in Trials - Dependence

June 8, 2017

God's Sovereignty in Trials

Every trial in your life is either designed directly by God or contained under His immediate supervision and control.

1 Corinthians 10:13 NASB

"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 (*ekbasis - an egress, way out, exit*) also, so that you will be able to endure it."

Psalm 27:5-6 NASB

5 For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock.

6 And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

Psalm 5:11-12 NASB

11 But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

12 For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.

Psalm 32:7 NASB

7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah.

Psalm 32:10 NASB

10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, But he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him.

Acts 7:54-60 NASB

54 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.

55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;

56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse.

58 When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

God's Purposes: Testing Our Obedience

- *True, intrinsic quality is always tested under stress and pressure, never at rest.*
- *The test of our obedience is not salvation by works, trying to earn or merit our salvation by acts of obedience.*
- *The test of our obedience is proving by demonstration the genuineness of our faith.*
- *The genuineness of our faith is demonstrated by holding and living the profession of our faith firm to the very end, no matter what the cost.*
- *When we finish our course and keep the faith to the end, it's not by our own efforts or striving, it's only and all by the faith which God birthed in us. To God be the glory!*

Deuteronomy 8:2 NASB

2 "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, **that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.**"

Genesis 22:1-3 NASB

1 Now it came about after these things, that **God tested Abraham**, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

2 He said, "**Take now your son, your only son, whom you love**, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and **offer him there as a burnt offering** on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

3 **So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey**, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

James 1:12 NASB

12 Blessed is a man who **perseveres under trial**; for **once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life** which the Lord has promised to **those who love Him**.

Revelation 2:10 NASB

10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, **so that you will be tested**, and you will have tribulation for ten days. **Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

1 Peter 1:6-8 NASB

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

7 **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;**

8 **and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,**

If we pass the test when tried in this life, we can't take any glory. The faith which enables us to pass the test is a gift of God. Passing the test has nothing to do with self-determination or self-righteousness.

Hebrews 3:6 NASB

6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house--whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Hebrews 3:12 NASB

12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

15 while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."

16 For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?

17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

Hebrews 6:4-8 NASB

4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

God's Purposes: Strengthening Our Endurance

James 1:2-4 NASB

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 NASB

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

You don't have to finish with flawless perfection, but you do have to finish in faith.

Requirements for endurance (which God exercises in trials):

- **Fixing your eyes on Jesus.**

Hebrews 12:1-3 NASB

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

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.

3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

- **Surrendering to God's Lordship and sovereignty.**

Jeremiah 18:3-6 NASB

3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel.

4 But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,

6 "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.

- **Learning how to draw on God's strength.**

Isaiah 40:29-31 NASB

29 He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power.

30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly,

31 Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

- **Learning how to draw on God's peace.**

Isaiah 26:3 ESV

3 You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Philippians 4:6-7 ESV

6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Learning to walk by faith to see beyond the circumstances.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NASB

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

God's Purposes: Cultivating Our Dependence

Matthew 5:3-4 NASB

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"The 'poor in spirit' are the spiritually humble who feel no self-esteem, self-importance or pride, and have no confidence in the flesh. This principle is the foundation of the deeper life, for until we have experienced it the deeper life is impossible." Hobart Freeman, "Deeper Life" p. 158

Matthew 5:3-4 NASB

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"I groan daily under a body of sin and corruption. Oh for the time when I shall drop this flesh, and be free from sin!" --Charles Spurgeon

Success, apparent or real, can be a deadly seduction, deceiving and blinding our heart with self-sufficiency, self-confidence and independence. It steals from our heart the foundational drive to pursue God, our desperate need for Him.

Deuteronomy 8:12-14 NASB

12 otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them,
13 and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies,

14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Revelation 3:14-20 NASB

14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Embrace and thank God for any trial that presses you into God's presence for strength and comfort in needy dependence. That trial is saving your life and your eternity! You are being trained and fitted with a spiritual skillset which you cannot acquire any other way.

Daniel 4:28-37 NASB

28 "All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king.

29 "Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon.

30 "The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'

31 "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you,

John 19:10-11 NASB

10 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?"

11 Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above..."

32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.'

33 "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

34 "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

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?'

36 "At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me.

37 "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

"The Lord sometimes suffers His people to be driven into a corner that they may experimentally know how necessary He is to them." — Charles H. Spurgeon

Daniel 5:18-23 NASB

18 "O king (Belshazzar), the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father.

19 "Because of the grandeur which He bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations and men of every language feared and trembled before him; whomever he wished he killed and whomever he wished he spared alive; and whomever he wished he elevated and whomever he wished he humbled.

20 "But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken away from him.

21 "He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like that of beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven **until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes.**

22 "**Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this,**

23 **but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified.**

Matthew 19:16-24 NASB

16 And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

18 Then he said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness;

19 honor your father and mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

20 The young man said to Him, "**All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?**"

21 Jesus said to him, "**If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.**"

22 **But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.**

23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "**Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.**

24 "**Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.**"

2 Corinthians 12:1-10 NASB

1 Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I know how such a man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows--
4 was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

5 **On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses.**

6 For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; **but I refrain from this, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me.**

7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself!

8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

9 **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.**

10 **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.**

John 15:1-6 NASB

4 **"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me."**

5 **"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."**

"God must do everything for us. Our part is to yield and trust." — A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God

"Many's very human habit of trusting in himself is generally the last great obstacle blocking his pathway to victory in Christian experience." — A.W. Tozer, I Talk Back to the Devil: Essays in Spiritual Perfection

"If you think you can walk in holiness without keeping up perpetual fellowship with Christ, you have made a great mistake. If you would be holy, you must live close to Jesus." Charles Spurgeon