

When Trials Turn To Joy

May 25, 2014

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

7 So **to keep me from becoming conceited** BECAUSE OF the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, **to keep me from becoming conceited**.

8 **Three times I pleaded** with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

9 But he said to me, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”** Therefore **I will BOAST ALL THE MORE GLADLY of my weaknesses**, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 **For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

In every trial you learn about (*meditation is critical to the process*):

- God
- yourself

In the trial of the thorn in the flesh, Paul:

- learned about his pride; *how, when* and *why* that pride manifests
- learned the value of weakness producing dependency on God; personal weakness is better than personal strength
- experienced a complete change in attitude towards his trials; he now rejoices in what he used to seek deliverance from
- learned that the very thing he thought he needed deliverance from was God's instrument to set him free
- learned that the maturing, cleansing, freedom, joy and faith produced in the trial is far greater than the pain of the trial and worth every bit of the pain

James 1:2-4

2 **Count it all joy**, my brothers, **when you meet trials of various kinds**,

3 for you know that **the testing of your faith produces steadfastness**.

4 And **let steadfastness have its full effect**, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

HEALTHY SELF-AWARENESS IS ESSENTIAL TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND VICTORIOUS LIVING IN CHRIST.

SEEING YOURSELF CLEARLY IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD APPLYING PRESSURE AND STRESS TO OUR FLAWED CHARACTER; THEN THE FLAWS ARE REVEALED.

Hebrews 12:3-11

3 **Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.**

4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? **“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.**

6 **For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”**

7 **It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?**

8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

9 **Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?**

10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but **he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.**

11 **For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**

Hebrews 5:7-8

7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

8 Although he was a son, **he learned obedience through what he suffered.**

- ***By faithfully enduring the trial you will learn what it is in you that hinders or prevents you from obeying God. You will discover aspects of your character you never saw before. This process is what will set you free from yourself to obey God and stop sin.***

1 Peter 4:1-2

1 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, **for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**

2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

- ***The suffering exposes the flaws in character which cause us to disobey and demand life our way.***

Hebrews 5:13-14

13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.

14 But solid food is for the mature, **for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**

- **Peter was blind to himself until his failure was exposed under the pressure of the trial.**

Matthew 26:33–35

33 Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.”

34 Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”

35 Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.

Luke 22:61–62

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

How painful it can be when confronted with who and what we really are!

- **David was blind to his own sin.**

2 Samuel 12:7–9

7 Nathan said to David, “YOU ARE THE MAN! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul.

8 And I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more.

9 Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight?

- **Job learned under the crucible and pressure of his trial that he was self-righteous.**

Job 42:1–6

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

2 “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

3 ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

4 ‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’

5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;

6 therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

In the crucible of the trial, Job discovered who he really was and that discovery enabled him to repent and to be set free.

- **It often takes more than one failure for us to learn and be changed.**

Galatians 2:11-14

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

- There is **NO** spiritual growth and maturity without being put to the test. There is **NO** advancement in the things of God without being challenged beyond our limits and abilities. How else will you learn to walk in the supernatural with God?
- **UNDER THE PRESSURE OF THE TRIAL AND/OR TEMPTATION, ASK YOURSELF:**
 - **What is my reaction** (*attitude and behavior*)?
 - **How is my heart exposed?** What in me caused that reaction? (*In every trial, God is targeting something in your heart and life that needs cleansing and maturing.*)
 - **Under what conditions and pressures is this fault exposed?**
 - **How do I guard my heart in the next trial when the pressure comes again.**
 - **What do I need to confess, repent of and seek God's cleansing for?**
- **When we are blind to ourselves, we cannot see and know God clearly.**

Psalm 50:16–22

16 *But to the wicked God says: "What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips?*

17 *For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you.*

18 *If you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you keep company with adulterers.*

19 *"You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit.*

20 *You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son.*

21 *These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.*

22 *"Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver!"*

1 John 1:5–8

5 *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

6 *If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*

7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

8 *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*