

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



Trials®

COMPILED BY
S.MCRAE

TRIALS “Quality of Life Series”

LEADER: Anybody ever experience any trials?

Ever had a rotten day?

READER: “How Can You Tell When It’s Going to Be a Rotten Day?”

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/t/t-73.htm#TopOfPage>

(CALL OUT NUMBERS)

1. You wake up face down on the pavement.
2. You call Suicide Prevention and they put you on hold.
3. You see a “60 Minutes” news team waiting in your office.
4. Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles.
5. You turn on the news and they’re showing emergency routes out of the city.
6. Your twin sister forgot your birthday.
7. Your car horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a group of Hell’s Angels on the freeway.
8. Your boss tells you not to bother to take off your coat.
9. Your income tax check bounces.
10. The bird singing outside your window is a buzzard.

LEADER: I’m sure you can think of many more.

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=t&whichFile=trials>

Trouble seems to be woven into the fabric of living.
It’s as much a part of life as blessings and triumphs.

READER: Job 14:1

Man, who is born of woman, Is short-lived and full of turmoil.

LEADER: Many of our distresses are caused by our own sin and foolishness.

READER: Proverbs 21:23

He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles

LEADER: Some difficulties are created by other people.

READER: Psalm 9:13

*Be gracious to me, O LORD; See my affliction from those who hate me,
You who lift me up from the gates of death,*

LEADER: God allows trouble but is always in control

READER: “The More Iron Is Worked the More it is Worth”

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/t/t-73.htm#TopOfPage>

F. B. Meyer explained it this way: “A bar of iron worth \$2.50, when wrought into horseshoes is worth \$5. If made into needles it is worth \$175. If into penknife blades it is worth \$1,625. If made into springs for watches it is worth \$125,000. What a ‘trial by fire’ that bar must undergo to be worth this! But the more it is manipulated, and the more it is hammered and passed through the heat, beaten, pounded, and polished, the greater its value.”

Christian, are you wondering about the trials through which you are passing? With impatient heart are you saying, “How long, O Lord?” The heat of the flame and the blows of the hammer are necessary if you are to be more than an unpolished, rough bar of iron. God’s all-wise plan, though it calls for the fire, produces the valuable watch spring of maturity. His very best for your life has behind it His perfect timing. - P.R.V.

LEADER: We have a refuge and strong defense in the Lord.

READER: Psalm 59:16

But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength; Yes, I shall joyfully sing of Your lovingkindness in the morning, For You have been my stronghold And a refuge in the day of my distress.

LEADER: He invites us to call upon Him in our distress.

READER: Psalm 50:15

Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.”

LEADER: We can expect deliverance in keeping with His will.

READER: Psalm 107:6

Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He delivered them out of their distresses.

READER: Psalm 143:11

For the sake of Your name, O LORD, revive me. In Your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble

LEADER: So...are we gonna take a beating up lying down...or a building up, facing up, looking up, getting up from the One who'll never let you down?

READER: “SFJTD”

Good Morning. I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help. If the devil happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, DO NOT attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the SFJTD (something for Jesus to do) box. It will be addressed in MY time, not yours.

Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold on to it or attempt to remove it. Holding on or removal will delay the resolution of your problem. If it is a situation that you think you are capable of handling, please consult me in prayer to be sure that it is the proper resolution. Because I do not sleep nor do I slumber, there is no need for you to lose any sleep. Rest my child. If you need to contact me, I am only a prayer away.

READER: 1 Peter 5:6-11

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

READER: “Troubles and Turns” Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-09-13-99.shtml>

May the God of all grace . . . perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. --1 Peter 5:10

I once heard Warren Wiersbe say that where you turn when you're in trouble reveals your character.

Think about it. What does it tell us about young kids whose trouble turns them toward gangs or guns or drugs? What do we learn about adults whose difficulties direct them toward alcohol or illicit relationships or the bizarre teachings of a cult?

What does it tell us about ourselves? Where do we turn when we have trouble with a relationship? Do we turn to the Bible for wisdom? Do we pray for direction? And where do we look for help when we are struggling with sin? To the Lord Jesus, the Master of forgiveness? To Scripture for foolproof help? Or to the dark recesses of life for a self-preservation that always leads to destruction?

In 1 Peter 5:10, we see where we can turn when trouble visits us. Wiersbe summarized the verse by saying that we need to look up to the God of all grace, look back and remember that He called us, look ahead and recognize the coming glory, and look within to see how God is equipping us through our difficulties.

Trouble on the horizon? Turn to 1 Peter 5:10 and let it guide you as you turn to God for help. --JDB

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged--
Take it to the Lord in prayer. --Scriven

Life's challenges are designed not to break us but to bend us toward God.

LEADER: So how are we to look at trials? From: Trials and Temptations by Mike Barres

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200308/20030810_trials.html

• Life has its bumps in the road. Sometimes we call them trials and temptations. James encourages us with these words: *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”* (James 1:2 NAS)

• James wants us to know that trials and temptations can actually make us stronger and better equipped to handle life if we will learn from them

• Genuine joy can come from knowing that we'll be better for having gone through them.

• Some people learn from their trials and temptations and are actually stronger afterward. Others, however, get stuck in a victim mentality and are paralyzed by self-pity.

READER: “Shake It Off and Step Up”

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon1a/shakeit.htm>

A parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule 'braying' - or - whatever mules do when they fall into wells. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathised with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbours together and told them what had happened...and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery. Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbours continued shovelling and the dirt hit his back...a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back...HE SHOULD SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP! This he did, blow after blow.

“Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!” he repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or distressing the situation seemed the old mule fought “panic” and just kept right on SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP!

You're right! It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, STEPPED TRIUMPHANTLY OVER THE WALL OF THAT WELL! What seemed like it would bury him, actually blessed him...all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity.

Remember that FORGIVENESS--FAITH--PRAYER-- PRAISE and HOPE...all are excellent ways to “SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP” out of the wells in which we find ourselves!

LEADER: Let's see if James has any other tips for us:

READER: James 1:5

“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

LEADER: So what questions can we ask when seeking wisdom?

1. Is it because of something I did?
2. Is it a trial or temptation from the devil?
3. Does God want me to see something or to learn something?
4. Is it just the stuff of life, like a leaky faucet or a car breaking down?
5. Can we see good in it?
6. If it has to do with people, are we learning to resolve conflict in a Christ like way?

READER: Romans 8:28

“we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

READER: “Solving Problems God’s Way” (Excerpt) Charles Stanley’s In Touch for Living

Source ~ http://www.intouch.org/gen_content/index_627258_36167457.html

As we are diligent to inbed God’s Word within our hearts, we also must be steadfast to recall it when the moment calls for it. Through reading the Bible, we receive the instruction to handle each situation in our lives. Whether it be a major trial or the daily grind of life, God shows us how to handle each test as it arises.

Tests come in all different shapes and sizes. Some are anticipated, others blindsides us in the middle of the afternoon. Some tests require us to endure, others simply ask us to make the right decision immediately. Regardless of the package in which the test is wrapped, there is one trait we always must remember about our heavenly Father during these times: God will give us the strength and peace to endure.

When God told King Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted, Solomon asked for wisdom. (1 Kings 3) Through his God-given wisdom, Solomon learned that it was foolish to attempt to solve problems without the Lord’s help. Solomon writes, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight”* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

To spend time wondering how you are going to get out of a certain situation is time wasted. God’s guidance is all we need to endure every test and every trial that appears in our lives.

“In all your ways acknowledge him and He will make your paths straight.” - Proverbs 3:5-6

LEADER: And here’s some more words of wisdom:

READER: QUOTE #1

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=t&whichFile=trials>

“Never attempt to bear more than one kind of trouble at once. Some people bear three kinds--all they have had, all they have now and all they expect to have.” - Edward Everett Hale.

READER: “Trouble” Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-06-18-99.shtml>

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. --1 Peter 4:12

Does it surprise you that trouble is a part of life? Probably not. We all know trouble close-up and personal--bad health, empty bank account, blighted love, grief, loss of job, and the list goes on.

It shouldn’t surprise us, therefore, that God permits the added trials of being ridiculed and hated because we follow Christ (1 Pet. 4:12). But trouble, whether it is common to man or unique to Christians, can reveal to us the moral fiber of our soul.

I have never seen a golf course without hazards. They are part of the game. Golfers speak of the courses with the most hazards as the most challenging, and they will travel a long way to test their skill against the most demanding 18 holes.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “If I had a formula for bypassing trouble, I wouldn’t pass it around. I wouldn’t be doing anyone a favor. Trouble creates a capacity to handle it. . . . Meet it as a friend, for you’ll see a lot of it and you had better be on speaking terms with it.”

Let’s not think it strange when trouble comes, for God is using it to test the stamina of our souls. The best way to handle trouble is to commit “our souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator” (v.19). --HWR

The troubles that we face each day
Reveal how much we need the Lord;
They test our faith and strength of will
And help us then to trust God’s Word. --DJD

Great triumphs are born out of great troubles.

LEADER: Now here's a couple of stories about some guys who had a really bad day:

READER: "A Guy Name David"

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=t&whichFile=trials>

One man's life provides a dramatic answer to the question, can God indeed bring positives out of troubled times? This young man's name is David, and he is an awesome picture of God's using difficulties for good. For years he viewed trials as something that affected only his external world, and any blow to what he owned or how he looked would discourage him and leave him feeling cheated. Today, David travels around the world, talking with people about how he discovered that no matter what happens to the outside, it's the internal life that trials really touch. Just like what happened in Jerry's life (whose story we shared in the last chapter), the bigger the trial, the more potential to see God's power and peace at work in the inner person.

During the Vietnam War, David went through rigorous training to become part of the ultra elite special forces team the Navy used on dangerous search-and-destroy missions. During a nighttime raid on an enemy stronghold, David experienced the greatest trial of his life. When he and his men were pinned down by enemy machine-gun fire, he pulled a phosphorus grenade from his belt and stood up to throw it. But as he pulled back his arm, a bullet hit the grenade, and it exploded next to his ear.

Lying on his side on the bank of a muddy river, he watched part of his face float by. His entire face and shoulder alternately smoldered and caught on fire as the phosphorus that had embedded itself in his body came into contact with the air. David knew that he was going to die, yet miraculously he didn't. He was pulled from the water by his fellow soldiers, flown directly to Saigon, and then taken to a waiting plane bound for Hawaii.

But David's problems were just beginning. When he first went into surgery -- the first of what would become dozens of operations -- the surgical team had a major problem during the operation. As they cut away tissue that had been burned or torn by the grenade, the phosphorus would hit the oxygen in the operating room and begin to ignite again! Several times the doctors and nurses ran out of the room, leaving him alone because they were afraid the oxygen used in surgery would explode! Incredibly, David survived the operation and was taken to a ward that held the most severe burn and injury cases from the war.

Lying on his bed, his head the size of a basketball, David knew he presented a grotesque picture. Although he had once been a handsome man, he knew he had nothing to offer his wife or anyone else because of his appearance. He felt more alone and more worthless than he had ever felt in his life. But David wasn't alone in his room. There was another man who had been wounded in Vietnam and was also a nightmarish sight. He had lost an arm and a leg, and his face was badly torn and scarred. As David was recovering from surgery, this man's wife arrived from the States. When she walked into the room and took one look at her husband, she became nauseated. She took off her wedding ring, put it on the nightstand next to him, and said, "I'm so sorry, but there's no way I could live with you looking like that." And with that, she walked out the door. He could barely make any sounds through his torn throat and mouth, but the soldier wept and shook for hours. Two days later, he died. That woman's attitude represents in many respects the way the world views a victim of accident or injury. If a trial emotionally or physically scars someone or causes him to lose his attractiveness, the world says "Ugly is bad," and consequently, any value that person feels he has to others is drained away. For this poor wounded soldier, knowing that his wife saw no value in him was more terrible than the wounds he suffered. It blew away his last hope that someone, somewhere, could find worth in him because he knew how the world would perceive him.

Three days later, David's wife arrived. After watching what had happened with the other soldier, he had no idea what kind of reaction she would have toward him, and he dreaded her coming. His wife, a strong Christian, took one look at him, came over, and kissed him on the only place on his face that wasn't bandaged. In a gentle voice she said, "Honey, I love you. I'll always love you. And I want you to know that whatever it takes, whatever the odds, we can make it together." She hugged him where she could to avoid disturbing his injuries and stayed with him for the next several days. Watching what had happened with the other man's wife and seeing his own wife's love for him gave David tremendous strength. More than that, her understanding and accepting him greatly reinforced his own relationship with the Lord.

In the weeks and months that followed, David's wounds slowly but steadily healed. It took dozens of operations and months of agonizing recovery, but today, miraculously, David can see and hear. On national television, we heard David make an incredible statement. I am twice the person I was before I went to Vietnam. For one thing, God has used my suffering to help me feel other people's pain and to have an incredible burden to reach people for Him. The Lord has let me have a worldwide, positive effect on people's

lives because of what I went through. I wouldn't trade anything I've gone through for the benefits my trials have had in my life, on my family's life and on countless teenagers and adults I've had the opportunity to influence over the years. David experienced a trial that no parents would wish on their children. Yet in spite of all the tragedy that surrounded him, God turned his troubled times into fruitful ones.

LEADER: His name is Dave Roeber. AND....another guy:

READER: "A Guy Named Job"

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon1a/job.htm>

Some 3500 years ago, a man named Job lived in Mesopotamia. He was blessed with a large family, seven sons and three daughters. Job was exceedingly wealthy. He had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 oxen, and 500 donkeys. Job also had many servants who cared for these flocks and herds.

Marauders destroyed a large portion of these herds and murdered Job's servants. Lightning caused huge fires, burned the sheep, and killed additional servants. Hurricane force winds toppled the home of the oldest brother and killed all Job's children who were gathered there for a party. All this took place in a single day. Job was devastated.

This was not the end of his hardship. Job suffered the calamity of ill health. Sore boils broke out all over Job's body. He groaned under the pain. His only medication was to scrape his oozing flesh with a piece from a broken clay pot. When three friends came to visit Job, they were astonished at his appearance. They sat in silent amazement and grief. Job's response is amazing. *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord"* (Job 1:21). He asks, *"Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?"* (Job 2:10). How would you answer?

READER: "Two Sides of the Coin" Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-09-10-99.shtml>

Count it all joy when you fall into various trials. --James 1:2

Temptations and trials are two sides of the same coin, for a single Greek word conveys both ideas. In James 1:2 we are told to rejoice when we fall into various "trials." But verse 13 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."

In a sermon titled "Faith Tested and Crowned," Alexander Maclaren distinguished between being tempted and being tried. He said that "the former word conveys the idea of appealing to the worst part of man, with the wish that he may yield and do the wrong. The latter means an appeal to the better part of man, with the desire that he should stand."

Maclaren continued, "Temptation says, 'Do this pleasant thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is wrong.' Trial or proving says, 'Do this right and noble thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is painful.'"

God uses trials to make us *"perfect and complete, lacking nothing"* (Jas. 1:4). And He has promised a *"crown of life"* (v.12) to those who endure. So when we're going through a trial or when temptations come, let's remember what God is accomplishing in us. It will help us to avoid the lure and trap of yielding to temptation. --DJD

When you are tested from without
Or tempted from within,
Rely upon the Lord for strength
To help you turn from sin. --Sper

Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us; God tests us to bring out the best.

READER: QUOTE #2

"You will have no test of faith that will not fit you to be a blessing if you are obedient to the Lord. I never had a trial but when I got out of the deep river I found some poor pilgrim on the bank that I was able to help by that very experience."- A.B. Simpson

LEADER: Here's a guy with the right attitude:

READER: QUOTE #3

Lieutenant Paul Galanti, a US Navy pilot, spent 6 1/2 years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. The experience has given him a heightened sense of ordinary privileges that most of us take for granted. Speaking of his life today, nearly three decades after being released, Galanti says, "There's no such thing as a bad day when there's a doorknob on the inside of the door."

READER: "The Cushion of the Sea"

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon1/cushion.htm>

I read a story about a new submarine that was being tested. As part of its test, the submarine had to remain submerged beneath the ocean's surface for a long time. While the submarine was submerged for its test, a powerful storm passed through the area, causing a great deal of damage.

When the submarine returned to the harbor, the head of the team that was evaluating the submarine asked the captain, "How did that terrible storm affect you?" The captain looked at the man in surprise and exclaimed, "Storm? We didn't even know there was one!"

The reason for the captain's surprise was that his submarine had been so far beneath the ocean's surface that it reached the area known to sailors as "the cushion of the sea." Although a storm's high winds may whip the surface into huge waves, the waters in the "cushion" are not even stirred. So while vessels up above were being subjected to turmoil and damage, the submarine down below was not affected. It remained safely in the "cushion."

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO OUR LIVES?

Deuteronomy 31:8 says "...*God will never leave or forsake His people.*" So even during difficult times, God is there to provide us with peace and safety. But like the submarine, we must take certain actions if we are to receive the benefits that are available.

How are you focusing your life? A life focused on yourself and your problems puts circumstances between you and God. However, a life focused on God puts Him between you and your circumstances. Make no mistake about it, the right focus makes all the difference in the world.

Protect your mind from damaging waves of frustration, worry and despair. Focus your life on God, and place your trust in Him. If you do, storms of various types will still come and go. But as you are cushioned by God's grace, you will gain the tranquility that only He can provide.

"Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you." Psalm 55:22

READER: "Good Timber" by Douglas Malloch, quoted in Resource

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=t&whichFile=trials>

The tree that never had to fight
For sun and sky and air and light,
That stood out in the open plain
And always got its share of rain,
Never became a forest king
But lived and died a scrubby thing.

The man who never had to toil
To heaven from the common soil,
Who never had to win his share
Of sun and sky and light and air,
Never became a manly man,
But lived and died as he began.

Good timber does not grow in ease;
The stronger wind, the tougher trees;
The farther sky, the greater length;
The more the storm, the more the strength;
By sun and cold, by rain and snows,
In tree or man, good timber grows.

Where thickest stands the forest growth
We find the patriarchs of them both;
And they hold converse with the stars
Whose broken branches show the scars
Of many winds and of much strife --
This is the common law of life.

READER: "His Promise"

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=t&whichFile=trials>

God has not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our life through;
God has not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.
But God has promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way;
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

Source Unknown.

READER: "If God Brings You To It"

If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it.

Happy moments, praise God.
Difficult moments, seek God.
Quiet moments, worship God.
Painful moments, trust God.
Every moment, thank God.

READER: "Hang in There"

Source ~ <http://www.heartlight.org/cgi-shl/todaysverse.cgi?day=19980120>

"Hang in there!" There are few traits more important than perseverance. Most important accomplishments in life happen because of perseverance. Most "luck" occurs when we've persevered long enough for the "magical moment" to come along -- in other words, I don't believe in luck. Edison said it best: life's greatest feats, the world's greatest discoveries, his own most fantastic inventions are "1% inspiration and 99% perspiration." "Hang in there!" and see the glory of God come through in you, not because of luck, but because of God's grace, love, and Providence!

LEADER: "He Weaveth Me"

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=t&whichFile=trials>

My life is but a weaving between my Lord and me. I cannot choose the colors He worketh steadily. Oft times he weaveth sorrow and I in foolish pride forget He sees the upper and I the underside. Not till the loom is silent and the shuttle ceases to fly shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why.

COMMENTS IF TIME:

**ALLOW 10 MINUTES PRIOR TO CLOSING FOR
PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES:**

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR YOUR READERS

READERS

“How Can You Tell When It’s Going to Be a Rotten Day?”

1. You wake up face down on the pavement.
2. You call Suicide Prevention and they put you on hold.
3. You see a “60 Minutes” news team waiting in your office.
4. Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles.
5. You turn on the news and they’re showing emergency routes out of the city.
6. Your twin sister forgot your birthday.
7. Your car horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a group of Hell’s Angels on the freeway.
8. Your boss tells you not to bother to take off your coat.
9. Your income tax check bounces.
10. The bird singing outside your window is a buzzard.

_____ ▪ _____

Job 14:1

_____ ▪ _____

Proverbs 21:23

_____ ▪ _____

Psalms 9:13

_____ ▪ _____

“The More Iron Is Worked the More it is Worth”

F. B. Meyer explained it this way: “A bar of iron worth \$2.50, when wrought into horseshoes is worth \$5. If made into needles it is worth \$175. If into penknife blades it is worth \$1,625. If made into springs for watches it is worth \$125,000. What a ‘trial by fire’ that bar must undergo to be worth this! But the more it is manipulated, and the more it is hammered and passed through the heat, beaten, pounded, and polished, the greater its value.”

Christian, are you wondering about the trials through which you are passing? With impatient heart are you saying, “How long, O Lord?” The heat of the flame and the blows of the hammer are necessary if you are to be more than an unpolished, rough bar of iron. God’s all-wise plan, though it calls for the fire, produces the valuable watch spring of maturity. His very best for your life has behind it His perfect timing. - P.R.V.

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Psalms 59:16

_____ ▪ _____

Psalms 50:15

_____ ▪ _____

Psalms 107:6

_____ ▪ _____

Psalms 143:11

_____ ▪ _____

“SFJTD”

Good Morning. I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help. If the devil happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, DO NOT attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the SFJTD (something for Jesus to do) box. It will be addressed in MY time, not yours.

Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold on to it or attempt to remove it. Holding on or removal will delay the resolution of your problem. If it is a situation that you think you are capable of handling, please consult me in prayer to be sure that it is the proper resolution. Because I do not sleep nor do I slumber, there is no need for you to lose any sleep. Rest my child. If you need to contact me, I am only a prayer away.

_____ ▪ _____

1 Peter 5:6-11



“Troubles and Turns”

May the God of all grace . . . perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. --1 Peter 5:10

I once heard Warren Wiersbe say that where you turn when you're in trouble reveals your character.

Think about it. What does it tell us about young kids whose trouble turns them toward gangs or guns or drugs? What do we learn about adults whose difficulties direct them toward alcohol or illicit relationships or the bizarre teachings of a cult?

What does it tell us about ourselves? Where do we turn when we have trouble with a relationship? Do we turn to the Bible for wisdom? Do we pray for direction? And where do we look for help when we are struggling with sin? To the Lord Jesus, the Master of forgiveness? To Scripture for foolproof help? Or to the dark recesses of life for a self-preservation that always leads to destruction?

In 1 Peter 5:10, we see where we can turn when trouble visits us. Wiersbe summarized the verse by saying that we need to look up to the God of all grace, look back and remember that He called us, look ahead and recognize the coming glory, and look within to see how God is equipping us through our difficulties.

Trouble on the horizon? Turn to 1 Peter 5:10 and let it guide you as you turn to God for help. --JDB

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged--
Take it to the Lord in prayer. --Scriven

Life's challenges are designed not to break us but to bend us toward God.



“Shake It Off and Step Up”

A parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule 'braying' - or - whatever mules do when they fall into wells. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathised with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbours together and told them what had happened...and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery. Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbours continued shovelling and the dirt hit his back...a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back...HE SHOULD SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP! This he did, blow after blow.

“Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!” he repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or distressing the situation seemed the old mule fought “panic” and just kept right on SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP!

You're right! It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, STEPPED TRIUMPHANTLY OVER THE WALL OF THAT WELL! What seemed like it would bury him, actually blessed him...all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity.

Remember that FORGIVENESS--FAITH--PRAYER-- PRAISE and HOPE...all are excellent ways to “SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP” out of the wells in which we find ourselves!



James 1:5



Romans 8:28



“Solving Problems God’s Way”

As we are diligent to inbed God’s Word within our hearts, we also must be steadfast to recall it when the moment calls for it. Through reading the Bible, we receive the instruction to handle each situation in our lives. Whether it be a major trial or the daily grind of life, God shows us how to handle each test as it arises.

Tests come in all different shapes and sizes. Some are anticipated, others blindsides us in the middle of the afternoon. Some tests require us to endure, others simply ask us to make the right decision immediately. Regardless of the package in which the test is wrapped, there is one trait we always must remember about our heavenly Father during these times: God will give us the strength and peace to endure.

When God told King Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted, Solomon asked for wisdom. (1 Kings 3) Through his God-given wisdom, Solomon learned that it was foolish to attempt to solve problems without the Lord’s help. Solomon writes, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight”* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

To spend time wondering how you are going to get out of a certain situation is time wasted. God’s guidance is all we need to endure every test and every trial that appears in our lives.

“In allyour ways acknowledge him and He will make your paths straight.” - Proverbs 3:5-6

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QUOTE #1

“Never attempt to bear more than one kind of trouble at once. Some people bear three kinds--all they have had, all they have now and all they expect to have.” - Edward Everett Hale.

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“Trouble”

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. --1 Peter 4:12

Does it surprise you that trouble is a part of life? Probably not. We all know trouble close-up and personal--bad health, empty bank account, blighted love, grief, loss of job, and the list goes on.

It shouldn’t surprise us, therefore, that God permits the added trials of being ridiculed and hated because we follow Christ (1 Pet. 4:12). But trouble, whether it is common to man or unique to Christians, can reveal to us the moral fiber of our soul.

I have never seen a golf course without hazards. They are part of the game. Golfers speak of the courses with the most hazards as the most challenging, and they will travel a long way to test their skill against the most demanding 18 holes.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “If I had a formula for bypassing trouble, I wouldn’t pass it around. I wouldn’t be doing anyone a favor. Trouble creates a capacity to handle it. . . . Meet it as a friend, for you’ll see a lot of it and you had better be on speaking terms with it.”

Let’s not think it strange when trouble comes, for God is using it to test the stamina of our souls. The best way to handle trouble is to commit “our souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator” (v.19). --HWR

The troubles that we face each day
Reveal how much we need the Lord;
They test our faith and strength of will
And help us then to trust God’s Word. --DJD

Great triumphs are born out of great troubles.

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“A Guy Name David”

One man's life provides a dramatic answer to the question, can God indeed bring positives out of troubled times? This young man's name is David, and he is an awesome picture of God's using difficulties for good. For years he viewed trials as something that affected only his external world, and any blow to what he owned or how he looked would discourage him and leave him feeling cheated. Today, David travels around the world, talking with people about how he discovered that no matter what happens to the outside, it's the internal life that trials really touch. Just like what happened in Jerry's life (whose story we shared in the last chapter), the bigger the trial, the more potential to see God's power and peace at work in the inner person.

During the Vietnam War, David went through rigorous training to become part of the ultra elite special forces team the Navy used on dangerous search-and-destroy missions. During a nighttime raid on an enemy stronghold, David experienced the greatest trial of his life. When he and his men were pinned down by enemy machine-gun fire, he pulled a phosphorus grenade from his belt and stood up to throw it. But as he pulled back his arm, a bullet hit the grenade, and it exploded next to his ear.

Lying on his side on the bank of a muddy river, he watched part of his face float by. His entire face and shoulder alternately smoldered and caught on fire as the phosphorus that had embedded itself in his body came into contact with the air. David knew that he was going to die, yet miraculously he didn't. He was pulled from the water by his fellow soldiers, flown directly to Saigon, and then taken to a waiting plane bound for Hawaii.

But David's problems were just beginning. When he first went into surgery -- the first of what would become dozens of operations -- the surgical team had a major problem during the operation. As they cut away tissue that had been burned or torn by the grenade, the phosphorus would hit the oxygen in the operating room and begin to ignite again! Several times the doctors and nurses ran out of the room, leaving him alone because they were afraid the oxygen used in surgery would explode! Incredibly, David survived the operation and was taken to a ward that held the most severe burn and injury cases from the war.

Lying on his bed, his head the size of a basketball, David knew he presented a grotesque picture. Although he had once been a handsome man, he knew he had nothing to offer his wife or anyone else because of his appearance. He felt more alone and more worthless than he had ever felt in his life. But David wasn't alone in his room. There was another man who had been wounded in Vietnam and was also a nightmarish sight. He had lost an arm and a leg, and his face was badly torn and scarred. As David was recovering from surgery, this man's wife arrived from the States. When she walked into the room and took one look at her husband, she became nauseated. She took off her wedding ring, put it on the nightstand next to him, and said, "I'm so sorry, but there's no way I could live with you looking like that." And with that, she walked out the door. He could barely make any sounds through his torn throat and mouth, but the soldier wept and shook for hours. Two days later, he died. That woman's attitude represents in many respects the way the world views a victim of accident or injury. If a trial emotionally or physically scars someone or causes him to lose his attractiveness, the world says "Ugly is bad," and consequently, any value that person feels he has to others is drained away. For this poor wounded soldier, knowing that his wife saw no value in him was more terrible than the wounds he suffered. It blew away his last hope that someone, somewhere, could find worth in him because he knew how the world would perceive him.

Three days later, David's wife arrived. After watching what had happened with the other soldier, he had no idea what kind of reaction she would have toward him, and he dreaded her coming. His wife, a strong Christian, took one look at him, came over, and kissed him on the only place on his face that wasn't bandaged. In a gentle voice she said, "Honey, I love you. I'll always love you. And I want you to know that whatever it takes, whatever the odds, we can make it together." She hugged him where she could to avoid disturbing his injuries and stayed with him for the next several days. Watching what had happened with the other man's wife and seeing his own wife's love for him gave David tremendous strength. More than that, her understanding and accepting him greatly reinforced his own relationship with the Lord.

In the weeks and months that followed, David's wounds slowly but steadily healed. It took dozens of operations and months of agonizing recovery, but today, miraculously, David can see and hear. On national television, we heard David make an incredible statement. I am twice the person I was before I went to Vietnam. For one thing, God has used my suffering to help me feel other people's pain and to have an incredible burden to reach people for Him. The Lord has let me have a worldwide, positive effect on people's lives because of what I went through. I wouldn't trade anything I've gone through for the benefits my trials have had in my life, on my family's life and on countless teenagers and adults I've had the opportunity to influence over the years. David experienced a trial that no parents would wish on their children. Yet in spite of all the tragedy that surrounded him, God turned his troubled times into fruitful ones.

“A Guy Named Job”

Some 3500 years ago, a man named Job lived in Mesopotamia. He was blessed with a large family, seven sons and three daughters. Job was exceedingly wealthy. He had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 oxen, and 500 donkeys. Job also had many servants who cared for these flocks and herds.

Marauders destroyed a large portion of these herds and murdered Job’s servants. Lightning caused huge fires, burned the sheep, and killed additional servants. Hurricane force winds toppled the home of the oldest brother and killed all Job’s children who were gathered there for a party. All this took place in a single day. Job was devastated.

This was not the end of his hardship. Job suffered the calamity of ill health. Sore boils broke out all over Job’s body. He groaned under the pain. His only medication was to scrape his oozing flesh with a piece from a broken clay pot. When three friends came to visit Job, they were astonished at his appearance. They sat in silent amazement and grief. Job’s response is amazing. *“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord”* (Job 1:21). He asks, *“Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?”* (Job 2:10). How would you answer?

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“Two Sides of the Coin”

Count it all joy when you fall into various trials. --James 1:2

Temptations and trials are two sides of the same coin, for a single Greek word conveys both ideas. In James 1:2 we are told to rejoice when we fall into various “trials.” But verse 13 says, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.”

In a sermon titled “Faith Tested and Crowned,” Alexander Maclaren distinguished between being tempted and being tried. He said that “the former word conveys the idea of appealing to the worst part of man, with the wish that he may yield and do the wrong. The latter means an appeal to the better part of man, with the desire that he should stand.”

Maclaren continued, “Temptation says, ‘Do this pleasant thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is wrong.’ Trial or proving says, ‘Do this right and noble thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is painful.’”

God uses trials to make us *“perfect and complete, lacking nothing”* (Jas. 1:4). And He has promised a *“crown of life”* (v.12) to those who endure. So when we’re going through a trial or when temptations come, let’s remember what God is accomplishing in us. It will help us to avoid the lure and trap of yielding to temptation. --DJD

When you are tested from without
Or tempted from within,
Rely upon the Lord for strength
To help you turn from sin. --Sper

Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us; God tests us to bring out the best.

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QUOTE #2

“You will have no test of faith that will not fit you to be a blessing if you are obedient to the Lord. I never had a trial but when I got out of the deep river I found some poor pilgrim on the bank that I was able to help by that very experience.”- A.B. Simpson

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QUOTE #3

Lieutenant Paul Galanti, a US Navy pilot, spent 6 1/2 years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. The experience has given him a heightened sense of ordinary privileges that most of us take for granted. Speaking of his life today, nearly three decades after being released, Galanti says, “There’s no such thing as a bad day when there’s a doorknob on the inside of the door.”

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“The Cushion of the Sea”

I read a story about a new submarine that was being tested. As part of its test, the submarine had to remain submerged beneath the ocean’s surface for a long time. While the submarine was submerged for its test, a powerful storm passed through the area, causing a great deal of damage.

When the submarine returned to the harbor, the head of the team that was evaluating the submarine asked the captain, “How did that terrible storm affect you?” The captain looked at the man in surprise and exclaimed, “Storm? We didn’t even know there was one!”

The reason for the captain’s surprise was that his submarine had been so far beneath the ocean’s surface that it reached the area known to sailors as “the cushion of the sea.” Although a storm’s high winds may whip the surface into huge waves, the waters in the “cushion” are not even stirred. So while vessels up above were being subjected to turmoil and damage, the submarine down below was not affected. It remained safely in the “cushion.”

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO OUR LIVES?

Deuteronomy 31:8 says “...*God will never leave or forsake His people.*” So even during difficult times, God is there to provide us with peace and safety. But like the submarine, we must take certain actions if we are to receive the benefits that are available.

How are you focusing your life? A life focused on yourself and your problems puts circumstances between you and God. However, a life focused on God puts Him between you and your circumstances. Make no mistake about it, the right focus makes all the difference in the world.

Protect your mind from damaging waves of frustration, worry and despair. Focus your life on God, and place your trust in Him. If you do, storms of various types will still come and go. But as you are cushioned by God’s grace, you will gain the tranquility that only He can provide.

“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you.” Psalm 55:22



“Good Timber” by Douglas Malloch

The tree that never had to fight
For sun and sky and air and light,
That stood out in the open plain
And always got its share of rain,
Never became a forest king
But lived and died a scrubby thing.

The man who never had to toil
To heaven from the common soil,
Who never had to win his share
Of sun and sky and light and air,
Never became a manly man,
But lived and died as he began.

Good timber does not grow in ease;
The stronger wind, the tougher trees;
The farther sky, the greater length;
The more the storm, the more the strength;
By sun and cold, by rain and snows,
In tree or man, good timber grows.

Where thickest stands the forest growth
We find the patriarchs of them both;
And they hold converse with the stars
Whose broken branches show the scars
Of many winds and of much strife --
This is the common law of life.



“His Promise”

God has not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our life through;
God has not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.
But God has promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way;
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

Source Unknown.

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“If God Brings You To It”

If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it.

Happy moments, praise God.
Difficult moments, seek God.
Quiet moments, worship God.
Painful moments, trust God.
Every moment, thank God.

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“Hang in There”

“Hang in there!” There are few traits more important than perseverance. Most important accomplishments in life happen because of perseverance. Most “luck” occurs when we’ve persevered long enough for the “magical moment” to come along -- in other words, I don’t believe in luck. Edison said it best: life’s greatest feats, the world’s greatest discoveries, his own most fantastic inventions are “1% inspiration and 99% perspiration.” “Hang in there!” and see the glory of God come through in you, not because of luck, but because of God’s grace, love, and Providence!