

THE BIBLE VIEW

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The "Bad" Times

Bill Brinkworth

No one likes troubles, trials, and tribulations, but we all will or have had them. Since all will encounter them in our lives, it makes sense to view them in the proper light.

Those "bad" occurrences many times are sent by God to make us into what He desires us to be. They teach us lessons in life's school that will never leave us the same. It can be for this reason God preserved the words in James 1:2-4, "*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; [trials] Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*" We are to take these hard times as a "joyful time."

How can anything as miserable as the difficulties some have experienced be joyful? Usually, the lesson is learned and appreciated after the hardship is over and when we are out on the other side of calamity. It is then we can have "joy."

After one goes through so many "temptations" and remembers how they benefitted from those experiences, one can quickly develop the right attitude the next time unpleasantness comes into view. "Ah, I don't like the class, but the lesson I will learn will be worth it." That can be joy.

The Bible gives us many different reasons why hard times come into our lives. Those amidst trials can learn much. Some did not learn their lesson when taking the "course." Later on, they faced harder training further down life's path because they never learned what they should have learned the first time.

Sometimes these tempestuous times are meant to strengthen us. We can be stronger when we are awed at His deliverance from the impossible. When we get to that point, we can look back and say, "Only God could have gotten me through that."

"He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen." Deut. 10:21

Other times, our turbulent trials build our faith after we see what God has done. After passing through enough testings and remembering how we were delivered in the past, we will have faith that He will guide us through the next time.

"Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you." 1 Samuel 12: 24

When our faith is strengthened, we learn more about what He can do, what He will not do, and His other character traits. The lessons are many that can be taught from life's trials.

Israel, when they were led through the wilderness, learned to respect and follow God's commandments. Jonah's experience also taught him to obey – the first time. Paul's being blinded on the road to Damascus taught him there is only one way to please God; it was His way, not the traditions or religions of man that should be followed. After Jesus healed the blind man from a lifetime of darkness, that man learned of His power. All these events changed the lives of the ones going through what they initially thought were unwanted times. What would they have been like, if they did not go through them?

Reading in the Scriptures, one can easily see how the hard times were used to teach God's people how He could protect them. God has used hornets, earthquakes, darkness, disease, fear, water, to name a few to guard and lead His own. What an unforgettable lesson must have been learned when they got to see the mighty works of their protective, teaching Father.

Hard times can also direct us. The trials we go through many times change the direction we are going and put us on the course He desires – much like the detour that no one likes. If our route were not changed, we would end up in the construction worker's freshly dug trench, possibly damaging our vehicle and us. The extra, detoured miles were worth the aggravation we could have faced in the body shop or even in the hospital.

When we look back on what could have happened, we can be joyful about what did not occur and we should be thankful for His direction. Indeed, tough times can change us. Jonah's attitude was changed after his stay in the whale's belly. Saul (Paul) had a new perspective of persecuted Christians after he became one. Joseph was certainly appreciative of all the hardships he went through when he saw how it prepared him for his future. We can lose all our self-righteousness and self-worth in a short hurry when we face trials and realize that in those times only God can make the difference.

Not all trials are a punishment from God, but some are. Our miseries can be an act of God to correct us when we do wrong. A suitable attention-grabbing experience can change wrong behavior quickly. When God's people were doing wrong, God sent enemies, bondages, plagues, and hosts of other deterrents to change their mind-set and direction. Parents sometimes have to punish their child for wrong behavior; our heavenly Father sometimes needs to do this, also.

As you will learn, if you have not already, there is much to be learned from the "bad times." Not one spiritual and close-to-God Christian got that way without going through a lot of heartaches. Sometimes the most spiritual have gone through the most. There is a connection. Hard times can have a positive effect on us if we learn our lesson correctly.

"A strong oak is just a nut that stood its ground!" — *Author Unknown*

Fixer of Broken Things

Bill Brinkworth

As a child, when something was broken, usually an adult would fix it. It seemed whatever happened, an adult, be it parent, teacher, or a neighbor could easily solve the problem that troubled us younger folk. As I got older, there were problems that an adult could not fix. They tried and gave it their best attempt, but their solutions did not work. Many times, they shook their heads and admitted they had the same thing broken in their own lives and did not know how to repair it for themselves.

After I was saved, I did learn that there was one that could fix situations and dilemmas that no other could fix. It was not the psychiatrist that could remedy many cases for they had their own unfixed problems. It was not the pills of the doctors, for many times they only removed the symptoms and not the root of an ailment. It was not the wisdom of the teachers, for many of them had no idea or experience to fix many of the traumas one faced. It was the wisdom delivered by God that could fix anything!

“Unfixable” things could be fixed by following the advice in His Word, heard from the preaching of His word, or even gleaned from biblically-related writings. His wisdom has helped billions upon billions. Our heavenly Father has raised trillions. His advice, when obeyed, can fix many broken things in our lives. His Word advises us how to fix:

Broken hearts and feelings:

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” Psalms 34:18

He can be close to those that have had their hearts broken by tragedy, rejection, or disappointment. Not only can He be with you when you go through the valley of despair, He can also help you get the victory.

Broken confidences:

“And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.” Psalms 9:10

Others may fail you, but God will never neglect one of His children. He promises “... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” (Hebrews 13:5)

Broken Lives:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” II Corinthians 5:17

If you have come to a point where you have realized you have messed up your life, God can change you from the inside out and give you a second chance if you allow Him.

Broken fellowships, relationships and even a broken body of poor health:

“For with God nothing shall be impossible.” Luke 1:37

When all earthly hope seems to have vanished, there is a God that can do anything and can change any situation.

Not all things that are “broken” should be fixed. There are times things need to stay broken and discarded. Sometimes they are allowed to be “broken” because if something is not changed, our life will not be what it should or could be. That is why God’s help is the only one we should seek. He loves us the most and desires what is good for us and our relationship with Him. His intervention and direction are the best. If God’s discernment is that something broken in our lives needs fixing, He is the one that can fix it. If it is best for you and in God’s will, God can be the fixer of what is broken in your life. There is hope!

“You cannot trace the guidance of the Spirit of God, or diagnose His operations in the secret rooms of the soul. He seems at times to let good go, and to bring good out of evil, and light into darkness.” — R. Benson

A Father’s Mistake

D. L. Moody

A father took his little child out into the field one Sunday, and it being a hot day lay down under a beautiful shady tree. The little child ran about gathering wild flowers and little blades of grass, and coming to its father and saying, “Pretty! Pretty!” At last the father fell asleep and while he was sleeping, the little child wandered away.

When he awoke, his first thought was, “Where is my child?” He looked all around, but he could not see him. He shouted at the top of his voice. Running to a little hill, he looked around and shouted again. No response!

Then going to a precipice at some distance, he looked down and there upon the rocks and briars, he saw the mangled form of his beloved child. He rushed to the spot, took up the lifeless corpse, and hugged it to his bosom, and accused himself of being the murderer of his child. While he was sleeping his child had wandered over the precipice.

How many fathers and mothers are sleeping now while their children wander over the terrible temptations of the world — right into the bottomless pit. Father, where is your boy tonight?

“O fathers and mother, the ruin of your children or their salvation, will, under God, very much depend on you.” — Spurgeon