

The “Bad” Times

Bill Brinkworth

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

Those “bad” times many times are sent by God to make us into what He desires us to be. They will 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 challenging times as “joyful times.” How can anything as miserable as some have experienced be joyful? Usually, a lesson is learned, and thankfulness is realized after the fire of tribulation is passed through – when we’re out on the other side of the calamity. It is then we can have “joy.”

After one goes through so many “temptations” and remembers how they benefited from those experiences, one can 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.”

The Bible gives us many reasons why hard times come into our lives. Those amidst trials learn many lessons:

- Some did not learn their lesson when taking the “course”. Later, they faced more challenging training further down life’s path because they never learned it the first time.

- Sometimes, those tempestuous times are meant to strengthen us. We can be made stronger when awed at His deliverance from the impossible. When we reach 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 seeing what God has done. After passing through enough tests and remembering how we were delivered in the past, we have faith that He will guide us through the next difficulty.

“Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.” I Sam. 12:24

- Part of what happens when our faith is strengthened is that we are taught. We learn more about Him, what He can and will not do, and His other character traits when we see God work.

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The Bible View



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Why Me?

Bill Brinkworth

Paul was a man used greatly by God. With God’s helping hand, this evangelist survived shipwrecks, beatings, persecutions, imprisonments, and other ill-treatments. With God’s miraculous help, this man was used in healings, revivals, and many miracles. However, as used of God as he was, Paul still had a personal ailment (II Corinthians 12: 7)



Commentators have strained at attempting to identify Paul’s “thorn in the flesh.” God has chosen not to make clear to us what it was. No matter what it was, Paul made it clear that it was an infirmity he faced. Three times, Paul pleaded with God to remove the malady from him (II Cor 12. 8). God’s answer was “... My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...”

(II Cor. 12: 9).

Here was a man who had seen glorious things in the third

Heaven (vs. 2-4) and had been delivered from many horrible things, yet God wanted Paul to experience this physical problem. God could have easily healed his body, but His answer was that His grace was enough for him to live with the problem and that Paul’s infirmity would be a vehicle to make him spiritually stronger.

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God Knows the Way

Author Unknown

*God knows the way of the righteous,
Even though it be dark and drear,
He knows when we’re weary,
Our burdens too heavy to bear;
We ask, as the shadows lengthen,
“Lord, lift Thou this burden of care!”
And often, His voice replieth,
“My child, I placed it for you there!
With grace that is all-sufficient,
That you might grow stronger in Me,
So trust, weary child, your Father,
He knoweth and careth for thee!”*

Why Me?

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If God would allow one of His great spiritual warriors to face such a battle, we, too, should not be surprised if we face health problems or other problems. As with most trials, we can do one of two things when going through testing. We can either shake our fists at God and be angry with Him, which is not the wise thing to do when we need Him the most, or get close to Him and rely on Him to get us through the struggle.

Paul chose not to be foolish and get angry at God. He decided that if God allowed him to go through the problem, he would have a good attitude about it (vs. 10) and give God the glory. In doing so, Paul was learning precisely what God wanted him to learn: that when he was weak, he was the strongest with God's help (vs. 10)!

The "Bad" Times

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Many lessons can be taught from life's trials. When they were led through the wilderness, Israel learned to fear and obey God. Jonah's experience also taught him to follow – the first time. Paul's blinding experience on the road to Damascus taught him there was only one way to

please God, and it was His way, not the traditions or religions of man. After Jesus healed the blind man from a lifetime of darkness, the man learned of His power. All these events changed the lives of the ones going through what they had originally thought were unwanted times. What would they have been like if they didn't go through them?

Certainly, tough times can change us. Jonah's attitude changed after his stay in the whale's belly. Saul had a new perspective on persecuted Christians after he was one. Joseph certainly appreciated all the hardships he went through when he saw how it prepared him for his future. We can lose all our self-righteousness in a hurry when we face trials and realize that only God can make a difference during those times.

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

Hard times can also direct us. The trials we go through many times change our direction and

put us on the course He desires – much like the detour that no one likes. If the detour did not change our route, we would end up in the construction workers' freshly dug trench, possibly damaging our vehicle and ourselves. The many extra miles were worth the aggravation we could have faced in the body shop or the hospital. When we look back on what could have happened, we can be joyful about what did not occur and thankful for God's direction.

Not all trials are punishment from God, but some are. Our miseries can be an act of God to correct us when we do wrong. A suitable punishment will change wrong behavior – and quickly. When God's people were doing wrong, God sent enemies, bondage, plagues, and a host of other deterrents to change their mindset. Parents sometimes have to punish their children for wrong behavior; our heavenly Father sometimes needs to do this, too.

Not too many people get excited when terrible things happen to them, but 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 many 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 properly.

In Moody's Bible

Dr. Harry Ironside

In the margin of Moody's Bible, opposite Phillipians 4:19, I found his notes there:

- 💰 "The Christian's bank note: from the President of the bank — 'My God'.
- 💰 Promise to pay — 'Shall supply'
- 💰 The amount — 'all you need'
- 💰 The capital of the bank — 'according to his riches in glory'
- 💰 The cashier's name — 'Christ Jesus'"

Moody noted that the amount was left blank for each to write in the measure of his need. Fortunately, Heaven's bank is always available. The Cashier is always present. The capital of the bank has never been impaired.

The Christian is to ask, according to his present need, and must use at once the riches provided. Christ's promises are more than beautiful sentiments to be hung on the wall for decorative purposes. They are not intended as life savers for use only in time of shipwreck. There is no excuse for spiritual poverty in the presence of such divine provision.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

— Phillipians 4:19

Some cry, "Why me" when they go through a trial. My question to them is, "Why shouldn't it be you?"