

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: James 1:2-4 “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

Quote: “Only God can turn a mess into a message, a test into a testimony a trial into a triumph, a victim into a victory.” Unknown

God does not tempt people to sin; however, He does bring into the lives of believers trials that are designed to display the reality of their faith and to develop the resolve of their faith. Trial is “trouble, or something that breaks the pattern of peace, comfort, joy, and happiness in someone’s life. It is ‘to put someone to the test,’ with the purpose of discovering that person’s nature or that thing’s quality.”¹ Tests in school or on the job often reveal the quality of our comprehension or our competence. Tests in life often reveal the quality of our character! Our response to a trial determines whether it becomes a test that can develop us or a temptation that can destroy us.

David committed sin with another man’s wife by yielding to temptation. Sin weakened him. He committed other sins trying to cover it up. Nearly a year of ignoring his evil actions went by before he recognized them for what they were—sins against God that caused him to grow cold spiritually. He cried out for forgiveness, restored joy and fellowship, and received all three.²

Joseph was a believer whose refusal to commit the sin of adultery displayed his faith and developed him for what God had in store for him. From the start, he recognized yielding to temptation as sin against God and his master. His refusal to sin cost him prison and yet it also gave him greater opportunity to serve God and others. As he grew in grace, he could see God’s providence even in his brothers selling him into slavery. When they feared that he might seek revenge, Joseph said, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”³ The “it” that God

meant for good included prolonged hardship. The Psalmist wrote of Joseph, “Moreover [God] called for a famine in the land; He destroyed all the provision of bread. He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the LORD tested him. The king sent and released him, The ruler of the people let him go free. He made him lord of his house, And ruler of all his possessions, To bind his princes at his pleasure, And teach his elders wisdom.”⁴ Through every trial on his journey, Joseph remained faithful. In hindsight, we can see how his trials not only had an immediate impact upon him personally, but also a long-range, far-reaching impact upon millions! The pit into which his brothers threw him; Potiphar’s house with his wicked, dishonest wife; prison for a prolonged period of time, and the palace of Pharaoh were all part of God’s providence for Joseph and for the nations of Egypt and Israel.⁵

Trials Can Make or Break You!

Paul said, “We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces patience; and patience, character; and character, hope.”⁶ God brought such a trial into Paul’s life to keep him from being prideful. Paul called this a “thorn in the flesh” and a “messenger of Satan to buffet” or punch him. He said, “Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”⁷ When Paul saw that his “thorn in the flesh” was to make him more effective for Christ, he welcomed it along with many other forms of hardship! God’s purpose in the trial was to show His grace and to grow His servant. We can rest assured that His purpose for the trials in our lives is the same—His glory and our good.⁸

1 MS Bible 2 Psalm 51 and 32 3 Gen.50:19-20 4 Psa.105:16-22 5 Gen.50:24-25 6 Rom.5:3-4 7 II Cor.12:7-10 8 Rom.8:28-30