

# 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 under-  
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.  
Proverbs 3:5-6

**Passage:** II Corinthians 11:23-28 “From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.”

**Quote:** “Adversity is God's most effective tool for the advancement of our spiritual lives.” Charles Stanley

**W**hy this? Why now? Why me? In the midst of physical and emotional pain, the most devout believers can be tempted to ask, “Why, God?” *When Christians cannot understand what God is doing, we can praise Him for Who He is.* In Psalm 139, we read that the LORD not only forms us exactly as He wants us, but He even ordains the number of our days beginning at our conception. He reaches into the womb to fashion each of us to fulfill our part in the detailed script that He has authored and wisely directs in every detail. He knows our path, our thoughts, our words. He is with us in all places and at all times. As our all-powerful Protector and Provider, He has His hedge about us. We can be assured that every test that God sends is there for His purpose. When Christians trust in His grace and mercy, the very things which can cause unbelievers to despair can be used for God's glory and the eternal good of those who share our trials with us, or who watch us go through them.

*Take heart, Christian!* Your Father has ordained every detail of your journey Home. When pain, grief or discouragement tempt you to question what He is doing, petition the Holy Spirit to enable you to see His “hand” ordaining “all things for good” in your life for His glory, and to fashion you into the image of His Son! A case in point is the Apostle Paul. He was used of God to pen more books of the Bible than any other man, and

yet he also suffered more than most in the providence of God. He saw God's hand clearly in his most grievous trials. Paul wrote, “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh *was given to me*, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 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.” Paul's attitude was, “If this will make me more like Christ, then I will joyfully embrace it.” His ambition was to finish strong in the race that God had set before him!

Paul spoke from experience when he wrote, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and *the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,* will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”<sup>1</sup> Isaiah prayed, “You will keep him in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.*” Following his list of some heroes of the faith, the author of Hebrews wrote, “Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us *run with endurance* the race that is set before us, *looking unto Jesus,* the author and finisher of our faith, *who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,* and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For *consider Him* who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, *lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*” The common thread of those believers who endured adversity was to trust in God. May we, by grace, do the same as we consider Jesus in the midst of our own adversity!

## God's A Honor Roll, Adversity

<sup>1</sup> Phil.4:6-7 2 Isa.26:3; 3 Heb.12:1-3