

## “Foundations” – Lesson #8

### **BENEFITING FROM ADVERSITY**

God does not promise that only good things will happen to His children. He does not promise ‘health, wealth and prosperity’ to every believer. However, He does promise that whatever happens, He will use for your eternal benefit. You may not always understand the reason for difficulties in your life, but God can and will bring good out of bad situations. He always turns tragedy into triumph for those who love, trust, and obey Him.

God has absolute sovereign control over everything. No hardship, sickness, disaster, or evil can touch your life without His divine permission. And when it does, He will sovereignly transform the result of the adversity into a blessing as you daily respond in faith and trust. Everything that happens to you is filtered through His love.



Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

# “Foundations” – Lesson #8

Sometimes when we suffer loss, we are tempted to ask, "Why" and grow bitter. The Bible gives us some definite ways we can profit from suffering, and become spiritually enriched. In this lesson we will study how we can benefit spiritually when we experience suffering.

## I. THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING

1. Read Genesis 2:15-17. What did God originally planned for man?

Genesis 2:15-17 “<sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup>but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

---

It is important to understand that God did not plan suffering and death for His world. To discover the source of all sorrow, read Genesis 3 and discuss the following questions:

2. According to Genesis 3:4-5, who tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit? List the serpent’s tactics?

---

---

---

---

3. Despite the serpent’s obvious salesmanship, could he make Eve eat?

---

4. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sinned, what happened to them in Genesis 3:16-24?

---

---

---

5. Circle one. Who is to blame for all the suffering in the world?

God

the serpent (Satan)  
Revelation 12:9,20:2

Adam and Eve

## II. THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT EXEMPT FROM SUFFERING

1. What often accompanies a person's faith in Christ? Philippians 1:29

---

## “Foundations” – Lesson #8

2. What is promised to those who live godly lives? II Timothy 3:12

---

3. Read the scripture below. What should be our attitude toward suffering and what can it do us?

James 1:2-4 “<sup>1</sup>Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>2</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. <sup>3</sup>Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

---

---

### III. THE PURPOSE OF SUFFERING

1. Read the scripture below. How is suffering beneficial for spiritual progress?

Psalms 119:67,71 “<sup>67</sup>Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word... <sup>71</sup>It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.”

---

2. Read the scripture below. How does affliction help us to comfort others?

II Corinthians 1:3-7 “<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. <sup>5</sup>For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. <sup>6</sup>If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. <sup>7</sup>And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

---

---

---

3. Read the scripture below. What did Paul suffer in Asia and what did He learn through it?

2 Corinthians 1:8-10 “<sup>8</sup>We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup>Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup>He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us...”

---

---

---

---

## “Foundations” – Lesson #8

4. Read the scripture below. What was the result of Paul's adversity?

Philippians 1:12 “Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.”

---

5. Read the scripture below. Discuss the fourfold aspect of God's purpose:

Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

- a. God's purpose is \_\_\_\_\_ . . . . “all things”  
b. God's purpose is \_\_\_\_\_ . . . . “work”  
c. God's purpose is \_\_\_\_\_ . . . . “together”  
d. God's purpose is \_\_\_\_\_ . . . . “for good”

Examples of Romans 8:28:

- At age 17, Joni Eareckson Tada, dove into a California bay, broke her neck and had to be pulled from the water. Joni was unable to feel or move her arms and legs. In her sorrow, Joni asked a question that I am sure all of us have pondered when going through great difficulty or tragedy: “What possible good can come out of what I am now going through?” She also asked, “Why me?” Today, Joni has become a world renowned minister. From her wheel chair she explains, “The suffering and pain have helped me mature emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Pain and suffering have purpose. I believe God was working in my life to create grace and wisdom out of the chaos of pain and depression.”
- A Christian man who became one of the most successful and influential business leaders in his state, later became ill with cancer. As his body was ravaged with disease, he and his wife drew closer and closer to Christ. They read the Scriptures and sang hymns of praise throughout the day. On several occasions he said, “I am so glad I have cancer because it was only when I discovered cancer that my relationship with Christ really became intimate. I had known about Christ. I had received Christ. I went through the ritual of being a Christian, but somehow it was not until I became ill and faced my eternal destiny that I looked up and experienced the loving, forgiving grace of God.”
- In the book *It Is Toward Evening*, Vance Havner tells of a small Southern community where the people specialized in growing cotton. In fact, cotton was the only crop the townspeople grew. No one in the community became rich, but everyone managed to get by—until disaster struck. A small insect, the boll weevil, invaded the fields,

## “Foundations” – Lesson #8

destroying the crops and threatening to ruin the community. Out of frustration, the farmers planted peanuts and other crops in their ravaged fields. Eventually, these crops brought the town greater prosperity than it could have ever experienced raising cotton. In the end, what seemed a calamity became the catalyst for undreamed of wealth. In appreciation, the townspeople erected a monument to the boll weevil, which still stands today.

### **IV. THE COMPARISON BETWEEN PRESENT SUFFERINGS AND COMING GLORY**

"Bearing the cross precedes wearing the crown"

1. Read the scripture below. What is the relationship of present suffering to eternal glory?

2 Corinthians 4:17 "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

---

2. Read the scripture below. What are we promised when life's sufferings are over?

2 Corinthians 5:1 "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands."

---

When you remember the glorious destiny that is yours with Christ, your problems today become easier to endure. As you daily place your faith in Christ and invite Him to live His supernatural life in and through you, you can experience a life of victory—now and for eternity.

### **GOD WILL HELP YOU TO TRIUMPH:**

Remember Christian, God is your hope! And because of His presence and power, you can face the adversities of life without fear!

The Bible proclaims, "Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him" (2 Corinthians 2:14). God does not want His children to be crushed by life's hardships. He wants you and me to triumph and to spread His fragrance everywhere we go and no matter what we are faced with!