

Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

GRACELIFE



CHURCH



GOD'S PURPOSES IN PAIN - PART 6

PREPARATION

We **started** with the **importance of knowing a Biblical view of God**. Then we began our *series of words* beginning with the letter "**P**." **First**, was God **Proves**, or *tests our faith and love* to see where our *hope truly is*. God knows, but we need to know. **Second**, God **Purifies** us through problems. He *turns up the heat* in our lives to bring the good and bad to the top and *skim off the bad*, so He can see His reflection in our lives.

Third, was for our **Progress** in the *faith*. He uses problems to *mature us*, or grow us up! **Fourth**, is to develop **Patience**. That is *probably one of the hardest lessons to learn* in the Christian life. **Today** we come to the fifth **P**.

The fifth *purpose, is God uses problems* is for our **Preparation**.

A. God's Preparation of His Own

1. Joseph - *Genesis 37-50*

Genesis 37:1-11 - Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. 2These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad

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report of them to their father. 3Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. 4But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

A. God's Preparation of His Own

5Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. 6He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: 7Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” 8His brothers said to

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him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. 9Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” 10But when he told it to his

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father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you? 11And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

A. God's Preparation of His Own

1. Joseph - *Genesis 37-50*

After this, his father sent out Joseph to find his brothers and bring a report back to him. They see him coming, and their hatred is shown. Some wanted to kill him, but 2 said no, and they **sold him into slavery** to *traders who took him to Egypt*. In *Genesis 39*, Joseph became the **slave of Potiphar**, who noticed God blessed his work.

A. God's Preparation of His Own

2. David - *1 and 2 Samuel*

1 Samuel 16:10-13 - And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." 11 Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to

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Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” 12And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” 13Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward... Samuel... went to Ramah.

A. God's Preparation of His Own

2. David - 1 and 2 Samuel

David served Saul in the court, and then came the turning point: *David's battle with Goliath*. Jesse told David to go and check on his brothers, who were *fighting the Philistines* in the Valley of Elah. While there *David heard about* what was going on with Goliath, and that no one would fight.

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2. David - *1 and 2 Samuel*

1 Samuel 17:32-37 - And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."
33And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." **34**But David said

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to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. **And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, 35I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. 36Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised**

A. God's Preparation of His Own

Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.” 37And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!”

A. God's Preparation of His Own

Many other examples could be given: Abraham, Moses, the nation of Israel, Peter, Paul and others.

In all of these situations, the person or group went through difficulties that ***God permitted or initiated to prepare them for the future.***

“The flaming desire to be rid of every unholy thing and to put on the likeness of Christ at any cost is not often found among us. We expect to enter the everlasting kingdom of our Father and to sit down around the table with sages, saints and martyrs; and through the grace of God, maybe we shall; yes maybe we shall. But for the most of us it could prove at first an embarrassing experience. Ours might be the silence of the untried soldier in

the presence of the battle-hardened heroes who have fought the fight and won the victory and who have scars to prove that they were present when the battle was joined.” ...Tozer later added,

“It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until he has hurt him deeply.”

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

1. In This Life

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5For as we

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. 6If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. 7Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

1. In This Life

Paul uses the word "**comfort**" **5 times** in **verses 3-4**, and **5 more times** in **verses 5-7**. He uses 2 related words that mean, "to call to one's side, speak to, admonish, console, encourage and strengthen by consolation, comfort, encourage, instruct, teach or strengthen." One idea behind this word refers to being "**close-up and personal.**"

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

1. In This Life

One reason why *God comforts us* in problems is so *our hearts are more tender to those who are going through difficulty*, and *for us to help those going through difficulty*. These are 2 different, but related topics.

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

1. In This Life

First, sometimes we are *hard hearted to the hurting*. We sometimes do not care what others are going through and are not willing to help them.

God *uses problems in our life*, to **soften our hearts** towards those going through problems in their lives.

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

1. In This Life

Second, God uses *problems to teach us how to serve others*. He does this in many ways. Sometimes, the *ministry people have is based on a past loss or situation God brought them through*.

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

2. In Eternity

2 Corinthians 4:7-18 - But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10always

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12So death is at work in us, but life in you.

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

13Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak, 14knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. 15For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

God. 16So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

2. In Eternity

Paul talked about the difficulties he and other faced, but also *that God had not forsaken them*. The purpose for those trials was so ***the life of Jesus could be manifested or lived out in them***. The trials pushed them to Jesus, and as a *result*, they **looked more like Jesus!**

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

2. In Eternity

In verses 16-18 Paul says the problems they faced *pointed them to the future, rather than the present.* Our *inner self*, or our character, our spiritual maturity, our conformity to the image of Christ, gets stronger day by day, in the *context of suffering*, and *we do not lose heart!* How? Because the temporary

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

2. In Eternity

affliction, is preparing us for something we can't imagine! Only God knows the amazing things He is preparing for us, *not just in this life, but for eternity*. This is *how we can walk by faith and not by sight!* We look to what is eternal, and *through that lens, we look at what is temporal.*

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

Philippians 1:22-26 - For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. 25Convinced of

B. How God Uses Problems for Preparation

this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.