

Trials = Growth or Defeat (our choice)

Trials involving other people, our circumstances or ourselves can be our greatest motivation for spiritual growth or the deadliest means of defeat. The difference depends upon our focus and understanding of God's purposes through each trial we encounter.

What does the Lord desire to accomplish through our trials?

In James 1:2-4 we are told to "Consider it all joy my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

We further read in 1 Peter 5:10 "And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

So we understand through His Word that God desires to see specific changes and growth take place in our lives. As a result of our trials we are purged from unrighteousness and perfected in His righteousness to spiritual maturity.

One change that He desires to see come about in our lives is that of singlemindedness and victory over a life of doublemindedness and defeat.

In James 1:7,8 we are told ". . . let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways."

Our focus must be concentrated on the Lord at all times.

Colossians 3:2 tells us to "Set our minds on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

Trials also bring us to a place of examining our heart attitudes and motives concerning God, others, circumstances and ourselves.

In Psalm 139:23,24 the Psalmist cries out for God to "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way."

Whatever God reveals must be confessed as sin, repented of, and out of obedience to the Word, we must begin to walk in the light He has revealed. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Trials will also perfect us even through our weaknesses. 2 Corinthians 12:9,10 "... My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." ... therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

It is extremely important to thank God in the midst of our trials and circumstances. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 "In everything give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

We readily express thanks to God when things are going right, but there is often an opposite reaction when things are not going well. We must learn to praise the Lord in all of our trials and circumstances recognizing that God will,

if we let Him, make something good out of them. Romans 8:28 "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, ... God offers us a promise." Psalm 34:19 "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all."

We can be overcomers regardless of our trials and circumstances. Romans 8:37 "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us."

We must always remember that God is bigger than any trial that might come our way. John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

As you face the trials and circumstances of your daily lives, may you stand on God's promises and walk in the victory He has promised. 2 Corinthians 2:14 "... thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ. ..."