

The Blessings and Benefits of Problems (Part 1)

Introduction:

1. We have learned that problems are a part of life. Because of the curse of sin on this earth, problems are woven into the fabric of everyday life.
2. We see this exemplified throughout the Bible. The men and women of greatest faith encountered deep trials. We also see this truth demonstrated in our own personal lives.
3. When we face problems, it doesn't mean that we are lacking faith. It doesn't mean that we are "out of the will of God," nor does it mean that God is angry with us.
4. Problems are simply a reality of life for the child of God. They are something that we all must face and deal with.
5. We studied an entire lesson on the source of problems. Problems come from a variety of sources. We discovered that they can come through:
 - Satanic assault
 - A violation of God's principles (bad choices)
 - Simply living in a fallen creation
 - Persecution due to our godly lives
6. But did you know that there is a blessing and benefit in problems? God's ultimate desire for each of us is to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-29). God desires that we reflect Christ's glory in all that we do and everywhere we go.
7. But how do we get to that point where Christ is completely magnified in our bodies? How do we manifest His glory instead our own self-glory and self-will? Problems can play a key role in this glorification process.
8. Consider Jesus Christ. What came before His glorification? (Hebrews 2:9-10; 1 Peter 1:11). Jesus is full of glory at the right hand of the Father, but that glory did not come cheaply or easily. That glory was preceded by suffering. Hebrews 12:2-3
9. Our path is the same as our Savior's. If we are to manifest His glory while here on earth, it will probably come through some degree of suffering and problems. Romans 8:17-18; 2 Corinthians 4:8-11
10. We get very comfortable here on planet earth. But we must remember and understand that our ultimate destination is to reveal Christ's glory in the heavenlies throughout the ages to come.
11. This is why God does not insulate His children from the problems of life. God is not consumed with our comfort and happiness. He is consumed with us manifesting the life and glory of His Son.
12. Problems and suffering have a way of reminding us that this earthly life is not the real thing. Our time on this earth is simply a preparation ground for something far better. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Colossians 3:1-4
13. There are many internal benefits and blessings of problems. Let's examine some of those benefits.

First, problems can lead us to a state of humility.

1. Most people have a hard time handling success. If everything a person touched turned to gold, that person would tend to become cocky, arrogant, self-sufficient, and prideful.
2. God cannot use a prideful person. 1 Peter 5:5 states that “*God resisteth the proud.*” It has been said, “It is possible to be too **big** for God to use you, but never too **small** for God to use you.” Proverbs 29:23
3. God’s call is for us to put away pride and humble ourselves. James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6
4. Here are five tests of pride:
 - How do we react when someone is chosen over us? 1 Corinthians 12:26-27
 - How do we react to criticism? 1 Peter 2:23
 - Do we try to be different, just to be noticed? Philippians 2:2-3
 - Do we always consider ourselves a “cut above” others? Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:3
 - Are we quick to see other’s weaknesses, but slow to see our own? Matthew 7:3-5
5. Problems and suffering enter into lives and can help to either:
 - Correct a pride problem – **Example:** Peter (Matthew 26:33-35; cf. Matthew 26:69-75)
 - Prevent a pride problem – **Example:** Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
6. If pride is allowed to continue unchecked, it will eventually destroy a person (Proverbs 16:18). Therefore, God, as a loving heavenly Father, is not going to isolate the believer from problems.
7. God does not **send** problems into our lives, but He will not stop problems from coming into our lives quite naturally. Neither will He wave a magic wand and make them go away.
8. Why is this? It is because God understands the benefit of problems, and that suffering and problems can lead us to a state of humility (which is the place where God can use us and manifest the glory of Christ through us).