

The Blessings and Benefits of Problems (Part 2)

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.

Second, problems can teach us patience.

1. One of the most difficult things to do is to wait. It is contrary to our flesh. Our flesh says, "I want it, and I want it now."
2. This is why we many times make bad decisions which lead to problems. We don't want to wait. Wisdom and prudence say wait, but our flesh wants immediate pleasure.
3. One of the most important principles of the Christian life is the principle of delayed gratification. It stands in contrast to the principle of immediate pleasure.
 - Delayed gratification means that I will follow God's Word, even if it means temporary discomfort so that I can eventually experience true, godly, gratification. It is the gratification that comes from an internal peace, knowing that I obeyed God and did right.
 - **Practical Illustration:** A farmer works, toils, and sweats in the fields, and there is no immediate pleasure or fruit in all this work. He is working on the principle of delayed gratification – the gratification that comes in several months when the fields are full of crops and fruit. James 5:7-8
 - **Spiritual Illustration:** A dating couple that keeps themselves pure until their wedding night
4. One of the character traits of the fruit of the Spirit is "*longsuffering*." The idea of this word is that we patiently continue to do right, even if we incur suffering for doing right.
 - We may suffer long as we do right, but we do this as opposed to immediately doing what feels good in the moment.
 - James 5:10-11 - The idea of this passage is that James is encouraging the little flock of Israel to continue to be faithful to God, despite their suffering and affliction. They will be happy they did when they see Christ returning – delayed gratification.
5. Problems have a way of teaching us the godly virtue of patience. Romans 5:3-4
6. Here is a typical scenario that most of us have been through:
 - We get impatient and we make some bad decisions.
 - Those bad decisions create problems, trials, and afflictions.
 - We pray for God's deliverance, but it doesn't come.
7. Why doesn't God swoop in and deliver us and eliminate the problem? Can you imagine if God bailed us out every time we jumped the gun and made a bad decision? We would just keep making those same bad decisions, over and over again.
 - **Illustration:** This is exactly what many parents do with their children (even after they are grown), and the result is that they never learn the lessons God wants them to learn.
8. God doesn't do this. He doesn't eliminate the problem. God knows that it is a teaching tool to prepare us for future decisions. We learn patience and longsuffering the best when suffering!

9. Unfortunately, it is true that most of us grow the most spiritually when going through problems. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4
10. So there is, in fact, great blessings and benefits in problems – we learned that problems can help to lead us to a state of humility, and also help to teach us patience.