

## Health Problems

Bill Brinkworth

Paul was a man used greatly of God. With God's helping hand this evangelist survived shipwrecks, beatings, persecutions, imprisonments, and other ill treatment. With God's miraculous help this man was used in healings, revivals, and many miracles. However, as used of God as he was, Paul still had a personal ailment (II Cor. 12:7)

Commentators have strained at attempting to name Paul's "thorn in the flesh". God has chosen not to make it clear to us what it was. No matter what it was, Paul made it clear that it was an infirmity he faced. Three times Paul pleaded with God to remove the malady from him (II Cor. 12:8). God's answer was "...My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness ..." (II Cor. 12:9).

Here was a man that had seen glorious things in the third heaven (II Cor. 12:2-4), and had been delivered from many horrible things, yet God wanted Paul to experience this physical problem. God could have easily healed his body, but His answer was that God's grace was enough for him to live with the problem; and that Paul's infirmity would be a vehi-

"Some cry, 'Why me?' when they go through a trial. My question to them is, 'Why wouldn't it be you? Are you something special that you are the only person in the world that shouldn't have problems, or sicknesses?'"

cle to make him spiritually stronger.

If God would allow one of His great spiritual warriors to face such a battle, we too should not be surprised if we face health problems. As it is with most trials, when going through a testing. We can either shake our fist at God and be angry with him, which is not the wise thing to do when we need Him the most; or get close to Him and rely on Him to get us through the struggle.

Paul chose not to be foolish and get angry at God. He decided if God allowed him to go through the problem, then he was going to have a good attitude about it (II Cor. 12:10) and give God the glory. In doing so, Paul was learning exactly what God wanted him to learn; that when he was weak, he was the strongest through God's help (vs. 10)!

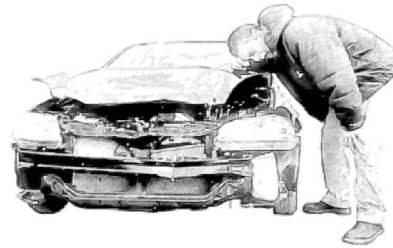
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## Reasons for Hard Times

Bill Brinkworth



Everyone has difficulties and tribulations one time or the other. There is no promise from God that even those that are believers are exempt from having hardships. Ordeals still rain on "the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

It does not necessarily mean that a person facing some misery is out of the will of God. Jesus healed a man of blindness in John 9. Jesus' disciples asked Him if the reason for the man's blindness was because of some sin he or his parents had committed. Christ responded that there was another reason for the man's infirmity. It was so God could get the glory in healing the man. God certainly was honored when

the man was able to see. "Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." John 9:3

There can be many other reasons why a person may be going through hard times. According to God's Word, they can include:

☞ To move a person to where God wants him, or to change that person for future use, as in the story of Joseph.

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## Difficulties One Can Face

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When we get saved, we are expected to serve the Lord that saved us. We are not to sit and soak, but to do as the Lord commands us; to go and tell others the messages from Gods Word, feed ourselves, have a relationship with the Lord, and to do whatever else the Lord lays on our hearts. These seem to some to be simple tasks, but little do many know

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## Reasons for Hard ...

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- ☞ To strengthen a person, as in the story of Job.
- ☞ To separate a person from things God wants him separated from, as in the story of Noah.
- ☞ To teach a person a lesson he needs to learn, as in the stories of Jonah and David.
- ☞ To get that person close to and reliant on God, as in the story of Lazarus.

Not all trials are God's wrath on a person. Much of the time it is a loving God's intervention in a person's life for their best!

## Difficulties One Can ...

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those "simple" things can cause us a lot of grief when we try to do them.

The Scripture in Matthew 10 is primarily to the disciples that Jesus had just hand-picked. The context of the passage is to these men who would be reaching the Jews. They were warned ahead of time, that it would not be an easy task to tell others what they had learned from Christ. Although it was addressed to the disciples reaching Israel, there is much that they faced, that if we try to live and do right, we can also expect to face; including persecution and resistance. Here are some of the things that we

can expect in our lives, if we strive to be a good Christian and do what we are told:

There will be some that will not receive the message of the Scriptures (vs. 14). Not everyone will jump for joy when they are told what the Word of God says. We probably were not excited the first time we heard the truths from God's Word either.

There will be problems from the "religious". Not everyone that has a "form of godliness" is a Christian. It was a religious group that tried the hardest to silence Christ. They did not want anyone exposing that their "religion" was contrary to what was taught in the Bible (vss. 16-17). Many of the "religious" today also do not want to hear the truth. They choose to believe only their traditions and interpretations.

The secular government will oppose many efforts to reach the world with the government of God. After all, many government officials think their rules and laws are what the world needs. They do not understand how a good Christian life can solve man's needs and problems. In Jesus' death, the government was much involved in His murder.

There may be conflicts from a family, when a member gets saved and lives differently than he did before (vs. 21).

A Christian may be hated for

how he lives (vs. 22). It's amazing how the world "understands" and tolerates criminals, but those that are living right often get more criticism and hatred than those purposely doing wrong. Perhaps, it is the godly example that convicts and troubles their conscience. The only way they can silence their troubled convictions is to get rid of the messenger, rather than change themselves!

It was not easy for these men to make a stand and live for Christ. It is not easy today, and that is probably why so many do not do it. They quit when the going gets tough! One cannot "quit" being a Christian, if he really is one. He can only "quit" being a good, living testimony of a living God.

## Different Temptations

*Bill Brinkworth*

James, who many believe to be the brother of Jesus, gives practical advice in his writing in James 1. One of the most practical and oft-visited situations for all people, including believers, is discussed here. The "good" side of going through difficulties is examined in verses 2-6.

James identifies the difficulties, trials, and enticements all face as "divers temptations". Although most initially shudder at even the thought of going through different problems, James exposes what can be posi-

tively gained by going through our individual "valleys". Instead of agreeing how terrible it is to have problems James encourages Christians to, "... count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;" (vs. 2).

How could anyone be joyful when facing joblessness, heartaches, financial problems, family problems, or the thousands of difficulties we all face in our lifetime? James tells us we can be "joyful" because:

- The trying of our faith during the hard times builds our patience (vs. 3). Since there usually is not much we can do but wait until the trial passes, we learn to patiently wait and trust in the Lord during those hard times.
- The practical lessons on patience we learn build a good Christian into a "tested" believer.
- When we are going through a "temptation", we go to the Lord in prayer more than we ever have before. In doing so, we get closer to the Lord, see how He supplies wisdom as to how to handle our trial (vs. 5), and have the potential to have our faith increased.

Trials and tribulations are not something anyone desires to go through, but after going through many of them, and drawing close to God during those times; we can learn that they are not so bad. The valley of "temptation" can be joyous, as our God guides us through the treacherous pathways.

**"Following God's Directions are the only way to get safely home."**