



**'COPING WITH LIFE'S
HARDSHIP!'**

***Booklet 17
Effective Christian Living" Series***

Ron G. Christian

THE BIG QUESTION
#17
COPING WITH LIFE'S HARDSHIP!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Title
1.	"WHY SHOULD I HAVE HOPE AMIDST LIFE'S TROUBLING CIRCUMSTANCES?"
	4
2.	"WHAT BENEFIT CAN I DERIVE FROM EXPERIENCING GRIEF AND ADVERSITY?"
	8
3.	"CAN I FIND HOPE AND STRENGTH AMIDST MY GREAT LOSSES?"
	13
4.	"ARE THERE SOME EXPLANATIONS FOR MY MULTIPLE SUFFERINGS?"
	20
5.	"HOW SHOULD I COPE WITH TROUBLESOME CIRCUMSTANCES WITH HURTFUL PEOPLE" ?
	24
6.	"IS THERE SUSTENANCE FOR ME WHEN I AM ATTACKED BY EVIL FORCES" ?
	28

7. **"CAN GOD'S SALVATION BRING DELIVERANCE TO MY VERY TROUBLED SOUL?"**

32

8. **"WHAT BENEFITS CAN I DERIVE FROM POSITIVELY FACING MY PROBLEMS?"**

36

9. **"ARE ALL MY SUFFERINGS SENT TO ME DIRECTLY BY THE ALMIGHTY GOD?"**

41

10. **"WHAT KINDS OF SUFFERING SHOULD I ANTICIPATE THROUGHOUT MY LIFE?"**

47

11. **"WHY MUST I EXPERIENCE CONSIDERABLE PAIN IN MY MATURING PROCESS?"**

51

12. **"CAN I BE ASSURED THAT GOD WILL FORGIVE ALL MY SHAMEFUL SINS?"**

56

13. **"HOW MUCH DOES JESUS CARE ABOUT MY GREAT SUFFERING?"**

59

14. **"DO I HAVE A SHELTER DURING MY STORMS OF LIFE?"**

62

- 15. “CAN I EXPERIENCE SWEET PEACE AMIDST LIFE’S TURMOILS?”**

66

- 16. “WHAT CAN GOD DO WITH ALL MY SUFFERING?”**

69

- 17. “HOW CAN I TURN A TRAGEDY INTO A TRIUMPH?”**

72

- 18. “CAN JESUS UNDERSTAND MY MANY HUMAN FRAILTIES?”**

75

- 19. “WHAT ALL-CONSUMING PURPOSE SHOULD CONTROL MY PERSONAL LIFE?”**

78

- 20. “WHY SHOULD CHRIST’S CROSS BE CENTRAL IN MY LIFE?”**

82

- 21. “DOES GOD CARE FOR ME PERSONALLY?”**

85

- 22. “WHY SHOULD I FEEL DEEPLY FOR SUFFERING PERSONS?”**

87

23. "WHAT CONDITIONS MUST I MEET TO ENJOY SPIRITUAL SECURITY?"

90

24. "HOW CAN I COPE WITH LIFE'S MULTIPLE TESTS AND TEMPTATIONS?"

95

1.

"WHY SHOULD I HAVE HOPE AMIDST LIFE'S TROUBLING CIRCUMSTANCES?"

There are times in life when we do not know which path to take. Decisions are often hard to make, and doubts and fears assail.

The more we try to understand, the more confused we become. The future is an unknown maze, which does not seem to have any rhyme or reason to it. We are at our wit's end; we do not know which way to turn.

There are disappointments, adversities, or sorrows that come to us, which cause us to question and wonder.

God may hide from us the immediate answer and tell us simply to wait and trust. It is at such times that we need to listen carefully to the

Psalmist's instructions: "Why are you bowed down, O my soul; why so restless within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet thank Him for the help of His countenance."

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

A storm is raging and a small child, looking out of a window at the storm, is crying in fear of the tempest. Which is most helpful to the child? For the father to tell the child not to fear because the storm will soon be over, or for the father to take the child into his arms love, and comfort the child? The child may not understand how the tempest will soon be over, but the child will understand the actions of love and comfort in the father's arms. When a Christian is baffled by the storms of life, the best thing to do is to rest in his Father's care. The life of faith is the life of hope and rest. Paul knew Christ and, therefore, he could say, "We are at our wit's end but never at our hope's end." Someone said, "There are no hopeless situations, only people who have grown hopeless because of them."

Hope in God is not in vain, for God is in control of the circumstances. Although the present bids us to be despondent, and the future looks unpromising, hope in God gives us confidence in God that the wrong will be punished and the right will be rewarded. Hope in God bids us to wait patiently and to pray persistently. Hope in God bids us to "cast our care upon him, for he cares for

us." Trouble yet Triumph in Christ! That is the message of the Christian!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Dearest Lord, the old 'spiritual song' says 'nobody sees the trouble I'm in', but, I am grateful that You, who sees all and who knows all, understands perfectly the deep trouble that I (and my hurting family) am presently facing! I am at the 'end of my own human resources'! I do not know which way to turn, or what decision I should make! Life, with all of its complexities, is too confusing to me! I have prayed much, but my mind remains confused. I believe my motives are 'pure' and my intentions are 'honorable', but only you, all-knowing God, truly know me - my motives, my desires, my motivations, my difficult relationships, and everything else! Why is it so difficult for me, at times, to communicate with other human beings (some of whom appear to be hostile rather than conciliatory, ultra-sensitive rather than transparent and easy to get along with)? It is my desire to extend forgiveness to all, but frankly there are some whom I know who are out to 'destroy' me. Plotting, lying, slander, stealing, hatred - how, dear Lord, do I cope with these sins which are boldly demonstrated in the life of my personal enemies? Yes, I know you have told me the answer (so help me to incorporate that answer): Trust in the Lord, cast my cares on God for He cares for me, forgive everyone, pray for

my persecutors, hold resentments toward no one, return good for evil. I now allow the Spirit to shed abroad God's love in my heart, I now wait on the Lord, and I now continue to hope for change. Yes! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

The object of your hope determines the value of your hope. Hope placed in the Living God is hope that will find fulfillment in God's own time and way!

2.

"WHAT BENEFIT CAN I DERIVE FROM EXPERIENCING GRIEF AND ADVERSITY?"

During the arid periods of life, the believer must learn to find good where only evil seems to be present, to transform a tragedy into a triumph, to dig a well and find a spring of blessings. The man of faith, whose mind is set on God and whose soul yearns for the 'courts of the Lord', is the man who digs for wells even in the desert experiences of life.

The believer must train himself to ask, when facing problems, "What good does God intend for me to salvage out of this problem and trouble?" In the midst of great adversity, Paul dug a well; he turned his stumbling blocks into stepping stones; he used his prison experiences in Rome for his good and for God's glory.

Wrote Paul to the Philippians, regarding his imprisonment: "Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest; and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear." (Philippians 1:12-14)

If Paul's prison experience resulted in Roman pagans being converted, in timid Christians being encouraged, and in the Gospel message being spread, what do you suppose your 'prison'

experience could result in?

Someone once said to a gallant soul who was undergoing a great sorrow: "Sorrow fairly colors life, doesn't it?" Back came the reply: "Yes, and I propose to choose the color." This is like saying, "During the desert experience of life, I will not give up. I will make it a place of springs!"

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The direct outpouring of God's blessings is promised to those faithful pilgrims who have learned to face trials optimistically and creatively. "The autumn rains also cover it with pools." (Psalms 84:66)

There shall be showers of blessings. This is the promise of love; There shall be seasons refreshing, Sent from the Savior above."

"There shall be showers of blessings. Send them upon us, O Lord; Grant to us now a refreshing; Come, and now honor Thy Word!

There are so called 'dry periods' in every believer's life. Every Christian goes through periods of trials when he does not feel the closeness of God or when the blessings of God seem to be withheld. It is during these times that Christians must keep their appetite for God alive and their quest for God in earnest.

As a creative pilgrim, the single-minded Christian must seek to use every problem as a stepping-stone for spiritual growth.

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

Dearest Lord, there is so much I need to learn, when I am experiencing adversities, of one kind or another. Although I, of course, do not know the 'infinite mind of the Almighty' (whose thoughts are higher than my thoughts, as the heavens are higher than the earth), but allow me, dear Lord, to receive an answer from you, on the following questions (and possible answers) that have come to my mind, after much contemplation. Here are the questions and answers (relating to possible benefits to me of having various adversities).

Can illness give you something? It can give you an appreciation of good health and an appreciation for those who help you during your illness, and sympathy for those who endure a similar illness.

Can sorrow give you something? It can draw you closer to God and let you experience, as never before, the comforting presence of God, which shall in turn, enable you to be a better comforter of other sorrowing people.

Can financial loss give you something? It can give you a better realization of the perishability and unreliability of material things, and make you value the permanent and eternal possessions of

life more.

Can temptation give you something? By resisting the Devil and finding victory over temptation, you can come out a stronger and more mature Christian.

Can loneliness give you something? It can give you time to pray and to learn to cultivate a sense of God's constant abiding presence, and it can bring you opportunity to meditate without the distractions that being in a group brings.

Help me to see, as You, God, perfectly see possibilities in all my problems! Wipe the tears from my eyes (from grief), and give me perspective which declares that 'all things work into a pattern for good' for those who love the Lord! Help me to cooperate with you, as you gradually bring 'sunshine' out of the rain, and 'good' out of the 'bad', and 'triumph' out of the 'tragedy'!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

God will not leave the weary traveler to fend for himself. He will pour out 'showers of blessings' upon the barren land and will turn the deserts of life into rose gardens of sweet fragrance.

3.

"CAN I FIND HOPE AND STRENGTH ADMIST MY GREAT LOSSES?"

Does the Bible teach and does God promise that all who are Christians will always enjoy good health, and great wealth?

When Psalms 9:1-10 declares that: "O Lord, I will praise you with all my heart and tell everyone about the marvelous things you do. I will be glad, yes, filled with joy because of you. I will sing your praises, O Lord God above all gods. My enemies will fall back and perish in your presence; you have vindicated me; you have endorsed my work, declaring from your throne that it is good. You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked, blotting out their names forever and ever. O enemies of mine, you are doomed forever. The Lord will destroy your cities; even the memory of them will disappear. But the Lord lives on forever; he sits upon his throne to judge justly the nations of the world. All who are oppressed may come to him. He is a refuge for them in their times of trouble. All those who know your mercy, Lord, will count on you for help. For you have never yet forsaken those who trust in you."

Can those comforting words be claimed by the believer as a guarantee against all physical illness,

accidents, and against all financial poverty? Is the exercise of a dynamic faith that which gives a believer in the Lord ultimate soul security, in spite of life's losses and calamities?

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'" (vss. 1-2)

Are believers promised shelter from all storms of life? Do believers ever suffer loss and privation? What does it mean to be sheltered by the Most High, the result of which is to enjoy rest in His shadow?

Those who are believers are not promised immunity from troubles. Jesus Himself said to his followers, "In this world you will have troubles." (John 16:33)

Wrote Paul to Timothy, "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted, while evil men and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and deceived." (2 Timothy 3:12-13)

Sickness, sorrow, financial loss, death - all of these things come to believers as well as to non-believers. Paul suffered terribly because of his faith in Christ. He experienced hardships, distresses, beatings, imprisonments, sleepless

nights, hunger, and many other pressures and problems. "...giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our ministration be not blamed; "... but in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; in pureness, in knowledge, in long suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which

presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is caused to stumble, and I burn not? (2 Corinthians 6:3-10) "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is caused to stumble, and I burn not? (2 Corinthians 23-29)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Christians are not escapists from life's challenges, and believers are not promised immunity from Satan's attacks. But believers who live close to God - who 'dwell in the shelter of the Most High' - are believers who enjoy peace amidst the turmoil of life, and who experience joy amidst the sorrows of life, and who find rest amidst the

burdens of life, and who find purpose in spite of the disillusioning circumstances of life.

Wrote Paul, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves; we are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed;...". (2 Corinthians 4:7-9)

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High is he who looks to God for strength in his weaknesses. To God for comfort during his sorrows, to God for peace during his conflicts, to God for healing during his hurts, to God for meaning during his disillusionments, to God for rest during his weariness, to God for joy during his unhappiness!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, thank you for giving me, from the Bible, a more mature understanding of human loss and suffering. Those who are 'practicing the presence of God' in their lives - i.e., those who are learning to give attention to the Lord and who are continuously conscious of intimate communion with the Lord - these persons are living above their circumstances and are enjoying peace and joy in spite of external adversities.

What is the secret of contentment and joy? "It is centering on You, O My God, dwelling in the shelter of the Most High, resting in the shadow of the Almighty." (Isaiah 26:3) By saying, "I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

He who places his trust in God is placing his trust in the 'Most High', and thus, every threat is cut down to size! Problems may appear insurmountable and over-whelming until they are measured against the stature and the power of the 'Most High'.

O God, there is the popular saying: 'lemons can be turned into lemonade'! Please take my present tragedies, and turn them into triumphs! Take my obstacles, and turn them into stepping-stones! Mighty God, please perform some miracles in my life - yes, even in my 'little life'! Thank You! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

No problems are so great but what God's power to conquer those problems is greater yet, for God is the 'Most High'! One's losses can be turned into gains, and sorrows can be turned into joys because the 'Most High' can use everything to ultimately prosper His children!

4.

**"ARE THERE SOME EXPLANATIONS FOR MY
MULTIPLE SUFFERINGS?"**

The one, who has learned to rest alone in God as the source of his salvation and as the object of his great love, will be engaged, at times, in severe battles with the devil and with the devil's evil agents. The righteous may at times feel like a 'leaning wall' or a 'tottering fence', because of the undue pressure of evil men who seek to topple the righteous.

The righteous one whose confidence is in God alone can be assured of divinely given sustenance for continuing spiritual strength. The pressures of sin and Satan and evil men may be great, but the internal sustaining power of God's presence and comfort is much greater.

*"The soul that on Jesus hath learned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes; That soul,
though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll
never, no never, no never forsake!" (How Firm A
Fountain!)*

The one who has cast his care upon God is the one whose hope for deliverance from evil assaults will be fulfilled.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

It is good for a believer, who is harassed by evil

men or circumstances, to remind himself that, in spite of the storms without, there can be sweet rest and calm within. God alone is the source of that inward peace. God is the mighty rock, the refuge of protection against destruction from the enemy. God will enable the righteous to remain unshaken and unmoved, in spite of malicious attacks by evil men with devious strategies.

The one who trusts the Lord will receive his honor from the Lord, in spite of the dishonor and the abuse which the ungodly heap on the righteous. Declares the Bible, "The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will Of God lives forever." (I John 3:17)

God gives divine sustenance for continuing strength to those who place their total trust in God at all times, "Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge." (Psalms 62:8)

When fears annoy and pressures increase and the plots of evil men seek to undo your work and destroy your peace, then call upon the Lord. Keep your confidence in God at all times, whatever the circumstances around you may be.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Dear Father in Heaven, I thank you that you perfectly understand both my mental questions and my emotional trauma, when I am going through suffering of various kinds. Jesus Himself

was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. In all points He was tempted like me and yet He never sinned. Jesus is 'moved with the feelings of our infirmaries'! However, God, I have many questions about my physical and material problems. At some time and in some ways, would you please 'reason with me' about these questions? Please give me the courage to accept honest answers to some of these honest questions!

- A. Is the pain I am experiencing, because of these physical or material problems, the result of my own unwise decisions? (In other words, have I violated the rules for physical or economic health, the result of which is 'understandable' pain?)*

- B. Is the pain I am experiencing, because of physical or material problems, the result of external or mysterious happenings - happenings that are hard to control personally or hard to explain 'rationally'? Could these losses be the result of an unavoidable change in my environmental circumstances (such as an economic depression or recession or a disease epidemic)? Could these losses be the result of a direct Satanic attack, as in the case of Job in the Old Testament?*

- C. Whether the losses (and pain from the losses) are the result of explainable or*

unexplainable causes, what benefits can I derive from these losses?

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Dearest Lord, I know that my mind is 'finite', and Your mind (as infinite) contains all mysteries of eternity. But, as a creature with ability to exercise some 'reason', please speak to me and enable me to understand something about the mysteries of suffering! Thank you! Amen!"

5.

"HOW SHOULD I COPE WITH TROUBLESOME CIRCUMSTANCES WITH HURTFUL PEOPLE"?

There are times in life when we do not know which path to take. Decisions are often hard to make, and doubts and fears assail.

The more we try to understand, the more confused we become. The future is an unknown maze, which doesn't seem to have any rhyme or reason to it. We are at our wit's end; we don't know which way to turn.

There are disappointments, adversities, or sorrows that come to us, which cause us to question and

wonder.

God may hide from us the immediate answer and tell us simply to wait and trust. It is at such times that we need to listen carefully to the Psalmist's instructions: "Why are you bowed down, O my soul; why so restless within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet thank Him for the help of His countenance."

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

A storm is raging and a small child, looking out of a window at the storm, is crying in fear of the tempest. Which is most helpful to the child? For the father to tell the child not to fear because the storm will soon be over, or for the father to take the child into his arms, love, and comfort the child. The child may not understand how the tempest will soon be over, but the child will understand the actions of love and comfort in the father's arms. When a Christian is baffled by the storms of life, the best thing to do is to rest in their father's care. The life of faith is the life of hope and rest. Paul knew Christ and therefore could say, "We are at our wit's end but never at our hope's end." Someone said, "There are no hopeless situations, only people who have grow hopeless because of them."

Hope in God is not in vain, for God is in control

of the circumstances. Although the present bids us to be despondent and the future looks unpromising, hope in God gives us confidence in God that the wrong will be punished and the right will be rewarded. Hope in God bids us to wait patiently and to pray persistently. Hope in God bids us to "cast our care upon him, for he cares for us." Trouble yet Triumph in Christ! That is the message of the Christian!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Oh God, you are a transforming God! You are able to make all things (good or bad) serve me in my efforts towards Christ-like living. The following insights (truths) you have taught me - regarding all kinds of reactions towards me (both positive and negative, both affirmative and critical).

Those who respond or react wrongly to either criticism or to praise will be set back in their Christian lives. Therefore, it is vitally important to know how to handle both criticism and praise. Handle all criticism and praise creatively and humbly. When you are criticized unjustly, give it to God, lest you become bitter or discouraged. When you are praised greatly, give it to God lest you become puffed up in your spirit and proud in your mind. Accept all criticism, whether it seems 'constructive' or 'destructive', as an opportunity to grow and to improve.

The Book of Proverbs is full of advice regarding the importance of graciously accepting the advice of others who are wiser than we are.

O Master of Men, let me follow You more closely in my daily life and relationships, that I might (through your indwelling Holy Spirit) become a more 'masterful man' (able to cope with all 'changes and chances' of circumstances, and with all various 'types' of people - both helpful and hurtful!).

Help me, O God, to cope with life with all of its problems and perplexities! Thank You for Your all-sufficient grace - grace for every challenge of Life! Will You, Mighty Conqueror, make me a conqueror over all my fears, failures, and frailties? Thank You!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

God can even use our 'enemies' to impart truth to us, to ultimately make us better persons!

6.

**"IS THERE SUSTENANCE FOR ME WHEN I AM
ATTACKED BY EVIL FORCES?"**

What is one of the 'secrets' of daily renewal? Using all experiences - good or bad - to draw us closer to God and to make us more understanding servants of God's people! In the midst of great trials, Paul learned to use his trials as 'stepping stones' rather than as 'stumbling blocks'. When life gave him a 'lemon', he turned it into 'lemonade'! He never 'wasted' his troubles on self-pity, but he instead used his trials to make him a more understanding person! A more mature Christian! And he taught his young converts to look at life and life's hurts through 'positive lenses'.

Wrote Paul, "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ; the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we

suffer. We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us." (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

You can learn to catch the 'curved balls' which life throws at you, if you never forget the truth of Romans 8:28: "And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans." This verse does not say that all things, in and of themselves, are intrinsically good.

We know that there are many inequities and mysteries in life, and we know that, even though God is sovereign, He does not will many things. He does not will the tragedies, which innocent people suffer because of the wrong moral choices of wicked people. He does not will evil, but in a moral universe where the exercise of free moral agency is a necessity, God does permit the plots of wicked men.

But "though wrong seems often so very strong, God is Ruler yet." In the end, God will "balance the books". God is the perfect 'bookkeeper'; eventually all wrong will be punished, and all righteousness will be rewarded. Those righteous persons, who suffer needlessly and unjustly now, will be compensated wonderfully, hereafter.

As in the case of Joseph in the Old Testament, what sinful men meant for evil, God transformed

into good. All things - even the bad things - will be worked into a pattern for good to those who love the Lord!

What is one of the 'secrets' of daily renewal? Using all experiences - good or bad - to draw us closer to God and to make us more understanding servants of God's people!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, you know that we humans (including believers) do not enjoy the storms of life. But I must acknowledge that your Word (Bible) teaches me that you can 'use' the storms to bring me (with my co-operation) to a greater understanding of my need to draw closer to you, and to a greater appreciation and sympathy for those suffering one around me!

I know that I, as a believer in Christ, am engaged in a spiritual battle! It is true that (because of Christ's victory on the Cross and through the empty tomb), Satan is a defeated foe, but I know that Satan is still 'on the loose' since he has not yet been cast into the Lake of Fire! He is a dangerous and subtle foe, and, therefore, I must daily 'watch and pray'. I must put on the Spiritual Armours (Ephesians 6).

I must obey the 'Still, Small Voice' of the Holy Spirit. I must hide the Word of God in my heart, lest I sin against my Lord! I must 'be about my Father's business'. Sowing the Seeds of love, and I must serve my fellowmen with cheer and joy

(using my spiritual gifts to edify all around me). I must be a member of a godly group of believers (accountability group). I must quickly confess my sins to God, when I fall, and be restored in humility to continue my 'faith venture' to Heaven! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

The Scripture exhorts us to cast all our cares (anxieties, fears, and burdens) upon Him, for He careth for us! For the weary in soul and the disheartened in spirit, there is divine sustenance available. Look Up! Reach Out! Focus on the Rock of your Salvation, and you will continue to stand amidst all the pressures of Life.

7.

"CAN GOD'S SALVATION BRING DELIVERANCE TO MY VERY TROUBLED SOUL?"

Have you ever felt weary in your soul, wishing for a time of rest from your heavy burdens? Have you sometimes felt tempted by the enemy of your soul to give up your faith? Have you ever felt attacked by unbelievers whose evil aim was to topple you from your lofty place of spiritual fellowship and activities? Have you ever wished you could turn the vessel of your soul upside down in God's secret presence, to share with the Lord your innermost thoughts, feelings, and desires?

Have you ever felt that you needed a stronger shoulder to lean on than the shoulder of your closest friend or loved one?

Have you ever wondered if this universe really is a 'moral' universe, when in this world wrong so often seems to go unpunished, and when right so often seems to go unrewarded?

Have you known people whose souls were very restless as they were trying to find satisfaction in something or in someone other than in God? Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Are you weary; are you troubled in your soul? Has your pursuit for money or for pleasure or for prestige and position left your soul restless and discontent?

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Do you recognize your need for Salvation? Salvation comes from the same family of words as 'Saved'. Do you recognize your need to be 'saved'? 'Saved from what'? You may ask, "Saved from your sins". Your sins are the result of your deliberate breaking of God's moral laws - The Ten Commandments"!

Saved from your bondage, and your bondage is the result of hurtful habits you have formed in your life. Physical bondage like alcoholism; spiritual bondage like pride; social bondage like inferiority; psychological bondage like worry!

Saved from condemnation, not only in this life but also damnation hereafter. To be saved from 'hell on earth' and from 'hell after death' is God's miracle of grace made available for every human being.

Salvation from sin, from bondage, from condemnation. This is part of what 'salvation' means to a sinner. To recognize the need of Salvation is important, but it is just as important to recognize the source of Salvation. God alone is the source of Salvation.

Some say (perhaps lightly) statements like the following; "His job was his Salvation", or "His marriage to that special woman was his Salvation", or "His grant of that loan was his Salvation; or "His relocation to that new city was his salvation". Most of us know, in a lower 'human way of talking', that a new job, or a marriage to a particular person, or a relocation to a new city, or a receiving of a college degree, might all be considered a person's 'Salvation'. But to talk of 'Salvation' in these ways is almost to cheapen this marvelous word. 'Salvation', in the truest and most meaningful way, comes from God Alone!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O Lord, I acknowledge that if I put my trust in anyone or in anything other than in God alone for my salvation, I am putting my faith in an object that is powerless to save me! Money cannot save me! The Church cannot save me. Education cannot save me!

Loved ones cannot save me! Military power cannot save me! My own morality, philosophy, or religiosity can't save me. The Might Savior alone can save me - Now! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Your position, power, prestige, or popularity can't save you! Only God can save you! Wholehearted commitment to God alone brings sweet confidence that your salvation is real and that your security is lasting!

8.

**"WHAT BENEFITS CAN I DERIVE FROM POSITIVELY
FACING MY PROBLEMS?"**

First: *Suffering can cause one to see God more clearly. Great spiritual vision of God is oftentimes the product of great sorrow. Someone said, "The vision of God can be seen more clearly through a tear."*

Second: *Suffering can cause one to depend more on God's power instead of on human strength. God's strength is made perfect through human weakness. God's power is only available to the one who knows that he is weak and powerless and helpless and hopeless without the enabling presence of the indwelling Spirit.*

Third: *Suffering can perfect ones character and bring about greater spiritual growth and maturity. Wrote James, "**Dear brothers is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.**" (James 1:2-4)*

God can use all things in life - the 'good', and the 'bad', and the 'indifferent'. God can produce something 'excellent' out of them. He can take the 'raw materials' of life and do something good with them. Would you eat a cake if the heat of the oven

were not first applied intensively to the cold liquid ingredients, which were poured into the cake pan? Heat is important to produce a favorable cake. It is important for 'heat' (suffering, discipline, and trials) to be applied to the life of a believer, if he is to become a mature, tasteful, and attractive Christian!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Fourth: Suffering can enable a believer to develop a heart-felt ministry to other suffering persons. Many times, those who are most effective in ministry are those who minister in an area where they have suffered most.

Fifth: Suffering can help develop a tender heart and a sympathetic nature. Think of the most beautiful and lovely and tender-hearted people you have known. Have they not usually been persons who have gone through difficult trials, tests, and sorrows, and have emerged victoriously? Have they not been the persons who, because of life's trials, have become understanding, gentle, stable, and caring? Someone said that when certain sorrowing people needed a comforter, they would go to a certain woman, who was known for her gentle eyes. These gentle eyes came from a gentle heart, made tender through much sorrow.

Sixth: Suffering can result in making you strongest where you have long been the weakest. It was said that 'where a tape is spliced, it is

stronger at the point of the splice than anywhere else. It was said that 'the place where the broken bone heals is much stronger than any other part of the bone'.

Seventh: Suffering can help turn your 'focus' away from the transitory and temporary concerns of earthly life, to more clearly 'focus' on the permanent and eternal verities of life.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, I am told by many that 'the morning comes after the dark night!' I am told by many that 'righteousness will eventually reign', even though wickedness presently appears to have the 'upper hand'! I am told by many that God 'bottles up my tears', and that 'God does not allow His children to shed needless tears'! I am told by many that it is good that I have a broken heart (because of the great pain of my sorrows), for 'God does not despise a broken heart and a contrite spirit of humility'! I am told by many that I must be patient in the face of horrible evil (deception, lying, plots, etc.), for God eventually will 'right all wrongs' and 'vindicate His justice' and 'reveal His holiness' and 'manifest His wrath against all evil doers'!

I am told by many, in light of life's mysteries and injustices and inequities, that I am not meant to understand the 'whys' of life's 'hurts', because 'God's ways are higher than my ways and His thoughts higher than my thoughts, as the heavens are higher

than the earth!

O God, I am supposed to rejoice in all my 'life's losses', as greatly as during all of my life's 'gains'! Gains or losses, why should my response be different! If I have You and You have me - I am a total winner! Thank You! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

God is able to turn a 'Black Friday' into a 'Good Friday', because of a Bright Easter Sunday Morning, you can be sure that such a miracle - performing God is able to turn your own personal 'tragedy' into a glorious 'triumph'!

After the 1st and 2nd days of evil (deception) comes the 3rd day of Resurrection (total victory over evil)! Believe! God has a special 'Grace' (Strength) to give you, for each unique trial (problem) that you endure, and He has a good purpose (gift) For You In Every Hardship!

9.

**"ARE ALL MY SUFFERINGS SENT TO ME DIRECTLY BY
THE ALMIGHTY GOD?"**

Some well-meaning Christians - Christians who believe they are honoring the "sovereignty" of their living God - find themselves saying some very hurtful (and erroneous) things to broken-hearted parents of infants or to young people who have died. Things like "Well, God wanted another 'angel' in heaven, so that is why God chose to take your baby." How horrible and how heretical!

I held a double funeral service for a young couple whose car was hit head-on by a drunk driver. This young father and mother left behind several children to grieve the tragic loss of their loving Christian parents. Was it God's "perfect will" for this couple to die on that sunny Saturday afternoon, as they were enjoying a relaxing ride in the country and who suddenly were killed as an oncoming vehicle (driven by a drunk driver) hit them head-on at the top of a hill on that country road?

What about the several children who died from one cause or another, from cancer or from some other 'defect'? I as their pastor tried hard to comfort them in their grief. Would it have helped those sorrowing parents for me to have told them they should not grieve too much, for the death of their children was a manifestation of God's

mysterious, sovereign, and "perfect will"? Was it God's "perfect will" (if not "pleasure") to take the life of my beloved, godly fifteen year old niece - who died in 1981 from a seizure as she was happily riding on a roller coaster in an Amusement Park?

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

God is able to transform tragedy into triumph, to change a Dark Friday into a Good Friday, to make Death produce Life, to turn a despised Cross into a cherished symbol. Through the fearful death of crucifixion, God cleansed away fear and brought life.

Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying, could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.

Only in this way could God set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. "Since we, God's children, are human beings—made of flesh and blood—he became flesh and blood too by being born in human form; for only as a human being could he die and in dying break the power of the devil who had the power of death". (Hebrews 2:14, 15)

The believer must train himself to ask, when facing problems, "What good does God intend for me to salvage out of this problem and trouble?"

How is this problem to be used for the development of my character?"

Susanna Wesley, who had nineteen children in a span of only twenty years (two of whom were John and Charles Wesley) was no stranger to suffering. She lost nine of her children in infancy. But Susanna Wesley sought to make tragedy a cause for spiritual formation: "Help me, Lord, to make a true use of all disappointments and calamities in this life, in such wise ways that they may unite my heart more closely with Thee. Cause them to separate my affections from worldly things and inspire my soul with more vigor in the pursuit of true happiness."

"And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear." (Philippians 1:12-14)

If Paul's prison experience resulted in Roman pagans being converted, and in timid Christians being encouraged, and in the Gospel message being spread, what do you suppose your 'prison' experience could result in? Surrender your losses, disappointments, and tragedies to Almighty God, and allow Him to use them to glorify the Savior.

***To produce Christlikeness within your character,
and to bless other persons!***

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, as your infallible Word (Bible) acknowledges, we humans (even believers) see only a small part of your 'total reality'! There is so much that we do not see, and there is a vast amount of your truth (reality) that we do not now understand. While we dwell here on earth, 'we see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror'. "In the same way, we can see and understand only a little about God now, as if we were peering at his reflection in a poor mirror; but someday we are going to see him in his completeness, face-to-face. Now all that I know is hazy and blurred, but then I will see everything clearly, just as clearly as God sees into my heart right now". (I Corinthians 13:12) Someday we believers (followers of Christ) will understand a whole lot more - in our heavenly home.

Someday (praise God) our 'question marks' will be straightened out into glorious 'exclamation marks'! The knowledge we experience in that 'homeland' will be immeasurably greater than what we experience here on earth. It is likely, however, that knowledge in heaven will be progressively unfolded to us! The joy of 'becoming' more like Jesus in every way - with all of our potential gradually and wonderfully 'realized'!

It is highly likely that our most sincere questions (troublesome questions) that occupy us on earth will be kindly answered in heaven - with an elevated mind suited for a Heavenly Environment! However, one thing is certain (seen here on earth) - God is not the author of tragedy (what we humans consider senseless deaths). In addition, God is the Great Compensator, i.e., He will make-up to those persons who died prematurely - because God is both just and loving. O God, I desire to surrender my questions to You! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

The Christian answer to suffering is not to explain it or to explain it away, but to allow God redemptively to use suffering. It is possible to take broken pieces of colored glass and to shape a beautiful colored cathedral window. It is possible for God to take the broken pieces of man's life - his broken dreams, disappointments, tragedies, losses - and to produce a beautiful life.

10.

"WHAT KINDS OF SUFFERING SHOULD I ANTICIPATE THROUGHOUT MY LIFE?"

First: *There is the suffering of 'Infirmities'. While it is true that both Christians and non-Christians experience this kind of suffering, the Christian is best prepared successfully to face this kind of suffering; when the apostle Paul asked God to deliver him from his physical affliction, God refused to deliver him. Instead, God answered Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness".*

Second: *There is the suffering of 'Chastisement'. Wrote the writer to the Hebrew Christians: **"And have you quite forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to his child. He said, "My son, don't be angry when the Lord punishes you. Do not be discouraged when He has to show you where you are wrong. For when He punishes you, it proves that He loves you."***

Third: *There is the suffering of persecution. The apostle Paul was cast into jail for his faith in Christ, whipped times without number, faced death again and again. Five different times the Jews gave Paul their terrible thirty-nine lashes, and much more! Christians may rejoice amidst persecution, for whatever men may do to the believer, the believer remains 'free in Christ' and 'free in His spirit'. The external circumstances of life cannot remove the inner*

peace and joy in the believer's heart.

Corrie Ten Boone, whose entire family was killed in concentration camps during the Second World War, once said: "There is no pit that is so deep but what God is deeper still!"

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

*Fourth: There is the suffering of temptation! Says Hebrews 2:18: "**Because He (Jesus) Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.**"*

*One rugged and discerning believer said: "I used to say the devil is tempting me; now I say the Lord is testing me." It is possible for the believer to experience joy amidst the suffering of temptations and trials. "**Consider it pure joy my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.**" (James 1:2)*

*Fifth: There is the suffering from life's losses. Perhaps the hardest experience in the life of a Christian comes when they are called to experience a sorrow or a disappointment, the explanation to which defies reason. Jesus experienced such deep sorrow in the Garden of Gethsemane when He cried out, "**Let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.**" Later, on the cross, Jesus cried out, "**My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?**"*

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, as someone (casually) said, 'life is not a bowl of cherries!' Life has it's 'mountain top' experiences, and it also has its 'low valley' experiences - both gains and losses, both successes and failures, both companionships and great loneliness, both sorrows and pleasures, both illness and health, both vigorous youth and crippling old age, both questions and answers, both satisfaction and discontent, both recognition and rejection, both harmony and deception!

No one knows 'what a day will bring forth'! Such as sudden unexpected emergencies, heart-rending family breakdowns (divorces), unveiling of long-concealed deceptions, and schemes and plots.

Friends forsake long-time loyalties, because of unresolved misunderstandings. "Change and decay', all around I see, O God, thou who changes not, abide with me!" Some of my suffering comes because of my simply living in a 'fallen world' (sudden physical illness).

Some of my suffering comes because of the wrong moral choices of those around me (a divorce I never thought could happen to me). Some of my sufferings come because of my own spiritual negligence (God must chastise me, to bring me to 'my senses'). Some suffering comes to me because of the devil's attack on my godliness (like as in the case of Job). Aid me, O God! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Many times, during your many painful losses, your mind may be confused, while your heart feels like it is broken. However, try to remember that Jesus is the 'sympathizing Jesus'! He was (like you) 'a man of sorrows, who was acquainted with grief! He cares for you, and (in time) He will heal you. Joy comes in the morning, after the dark night. Trust Him!

11.

**"WHY MUST I EXPERIENCE
CONSIDERABLE PAIN IN MY MATURING PROCESS?"**

Have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." (Hebrews 12:5-6)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." (John 15:12)

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a

huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially sin that so easily hinders our progress."
(Hebrews 12)

Problems and suffering, successfully met, can perfect ones character. In the world of nature, pearls are the product of pain.

Beautiful character may be the product of suffering! A trial successfully met produces stronger character, and inspires greater hope for further progress towards the realization of final maturity in Christ.

***"When through fiery trials thy pathway
shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be
thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee,
I only design
Thy dross to consume, and
thy gold to refine."***

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The 'athlete of God' must undergo rigorous training, and necessary 'correction'. The 'coach' (God) has a right to expect submission from the trainees (Christians). "An athlete who runs in a race cannot win the prize unless he obeys the rules." (2 Timothy 2:5)

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with

patience the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1)

Training and laying aside unnecessary 'weights' may be painful, but there is great joy in winning the 'crown' at the end of the race! The 'soldier of God' must be disciplined, and some of that discipline involves suffering. "Take your part in suffering, as a loyal soldier of Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 2:3)

But there is joy amidst the suffering because of the anticipation of victory! The branches of the Vine must be pruned, if there is to be a fruitful harvest. (John 15)

The pruning process in the life of the believer is often 'painful', but there is joy because of anticipation of a fruitful harvest! The potter must mold the clay if beautiful pottery is to be the finished product.

Believers must be made moldable and soft in the hands of the Great Divine Potter, but there is usually some 'pain' involved in the molding process. One great Bishop once told me: "God has given me enough success to keep me encouraged, and enough failure to keep me humble."

Susanna Wesley, whose soul was many times covered with 'sea billows of sorrow', sought to make her sorrows serve a redemptive and beneficial purpose. She sought to turn her eyes toward God and heaven when she was immersed in earth's sorrows and grief.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Dear God, I understand very little of your ways. I know You are all-wise (i.e., you know what is best for me); you are all-loving (i.e., you want what is best for me); you are all-powerful (i.e., you have power to do what is best for me!) What a great - magnificently great - God you are! Thank you for your revelation of your great character (power, knowledge, and love).

So I conclude that, when I experience 'pain' as a result of your 'dealing' with me, the 'pains' are absolutely necessary if I am to 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of my blessed Savior'! Help me to endure what I have to endure, in order that I may grow daily towards a greater Christlikeness, which admittedly is a lifetime process, inherent with much discipline. Help me to affirm at all times my total dependence upon you, and to submit myself to the many kinds of disciplines that are inherent in my life of dependence.

I am the 'bride', you are the Bridegroom. I am the 'child', you are the Father. I am the 'branch', you are the Vine. I am the 'stone', you are the Cornerstone. I am the 'subject' you are the King. I am the 'cell', you are the Head of the Body. I am the 'sheep', You are the Shepherd. I am the 'sinner', you are the Savior. I am the 'creature', you are the Creator! I am the mortal, you are the Immortal! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

The Christian Life knows nothing of ease, complacency, drifting, indifference, self - satisfaction, smugness, slothfulness, carelessness, disobedience!

Though you are saved by grace (which finds its origin in God alone), you will demonstrate your love for God and your new life in Christ, by a life of diligence, discipline, obedience, submission, and careful attention to God's Word and accountability to God's caring People! Expect to experience 'redemptive pain' as you seek a dynamic new life!

12.

"CAN I BE ASSURED THAT GOD WILL FORGIVE ALL MY SHAMEFUL SINS?"

"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit." (Psalms 32:1-2)

Sin can be defined as 'transgression against the known Laws of God'. God's Laws are objective and real, and violation against God's Law incurs guilt.

The sinner stands guilty and defenseless before God and must confess nothing but moral bankruptcy. The sinner can plead nothing but God's unmerited grace and mercy. The sinner can only receive free pardon from the hand of a forgiving God. It is not because of works of righteousness, which we have done, but it is according to God's mercy that we are saved!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Not only are transgressions forgiven with pardon granted, but sins are covered with shame removed!

The Bible says that sinners are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we must deal - God Almighty. There is an 'all-seeing eye' that sees us at all times - our motives and desires and

intents and secret plans. We can hide nothing from God.

Adam and Eve could not hide their sins from God. Their shame was openly exposed. The shame, which the exposure of David's sins brought to David because of the brave prophet Nathan's rebuke, was almost more than King David could bear. However, David's confession of sins resulted in his sins being covered, and in his shame being removed.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O Loving God, I know that I have shamefully sinned against You, and this means that I have not only broken your Holy Laws (i.e., The Ten Commandments), but I have broken your heart (violated my sacred love relationship with you). So I am guilty on 'both counts': broken the Covenant of Holy Laws, and Broken the Covenant of Holy Love! Unfaithfulness, Rebellion, and the Pride of Selfish Independence! Going my own way, rather than going Your Way! Taking things into my own hands, rather than committing everything into Your Loving Hands!

Thinking I knew best, instead of acknowledging that You are all-wise, and that You alone know what is best for me! Taking the Sacred gift that You have given to me - 'Free Will' - and using it to pursue my own elusive 'happiness', instead of realizing that there is no lasting happiness for me outside of your Sacred and Satisfying Will for me!

How foolish I have been, and how spiritually blind I have been, to think that life outside of Christ can have any meaning! How can I go 'against the grain of reality', and not be hurt? My sinning has brought to me only temporary pleasure! Now I experience so much guilt, shame, bondage, fear, isolation, lack of meaning in my life! I am not worthy of your forgiveness and healing, but I am helpless and hopeless without You, O God! Have mercy upon me, and save me from guilt and from shame! I believe, and I now accept your new life in Christ! Thank you! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

What joy to know that God not only pardons the wrong, but that He also removes the shame and the embarrassment of sin, and that He restores dignity! Esteem, and honor to the sinner!

13.

"HOW MUCH DOES JESUS CARE ABOUT MY GREAT SUFFERING?"

Jesus came out of the 'Ivory Palaces' of Heaven into a world of woe - all because of His great love for a 'fallen race of people'! He who was invested with full powers of divinity, He who was co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, this powerful, eternal Christ became a lowly human!

The Sorrows and Sufferings of life are many and varied, but Jesus' life shows us that God is involved in all of them! There is never a sorrow that He doth not share, nor a woe that He does not feel. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He understands everyone who suffers pain and loss and persecution!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Picture Jesus as He makes His way into the desert to contemplate, following the beheading of His cousin John. Follow Him to the graveside of His dear Friend Lazarus, and listen to His deep moans and sobbing in the midst of Lazarus' broken-hearted sisters, Mary and Martha. Go with Jesus to the Mount that overlooks Jerusalem, and witness Jesus 'tear-soaked cheeks, as he offers grace and forgiveness!

Jesus knew how to weep with those who wept because of life's many burdens! Jesus was no

stranger to the brokenness of the world's losses and grief's and persecutions! No one understands more than Jesus who, as the good Shepherd, wants to take every sorrowing one into His comforting lap! He wants everyone to feel the 'heartbeat' of His love for them!

Jesus suffered more than any other human being, so He offers greater sympathy than any other human being! Let Him comfort you today and every day - through the 'Thick and Thin' of life!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Dearest Heavenly Father, my prayer today is expressed so well in the words of the great hymn writer, Charles Wesley: 'Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly. While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high; Hide me, O my Savior, hide, Till the storm of life is past; Safe into the haven guide; O receive my Soul at last!' O my God, do you care when my days are weary, and my nights are dreary, when my heart nearly breaks with sorrow? O yes, I know you care, even when I do not sense your presence near me! In the Gospels, I see you often, dearest Jesus, moving among suffering humanity, applying your touch of healing and sympathy! Let me today abide under the 'wings' of my blessed Savior! Enable me, in my present sorrow and loss, to 'feel' the heartbeat of your love for me. Let me to Thy refuge fly! Take me into your arms divine, my loving Shepherd! Wipe away my tears of grief, give me a new vision

for the future, and enable me to be steadfast in my love for you! Let me always remember that you, all-wise God, never allow me to 'shed needless tears'. Because of my deep grief and my heart-breaking sorrow, enable me henceforth in my life always to better help carry the burdens of my hurting fellowmen. You do all things well! Blessed be the name of my Loving Lord! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Remember the fact that there is no one who understands your sorrow better than Jesus Christ, who suffered the loss of everything on this earth! But resurrection follows the crucifixion - for you as well as for Jesus!

14.

"DO I HAVE A SHELTER DURING MY STORMS OF LIFE?"

It is the Lord's faithfulness and the believer's faithful commitment to the Lord, which is the basis for protection from the enemy of the soul and from the false teachings of deceitful men.

*"He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart."
(Psalms 91:4)*

God will not forsake His own; He will shield

them from the fiery darts of the devil, and He will protect them against the subtle allurements of the Evil One who tries to lull the righteous away from the paths of truth and righteousness.

Many are the snares of the wicked, but the Lord delivers the righteous from them all! When the enemy shall come in like a flood to overwhelm the godly, the Lord shall raise up a defense against the evil forces of sin. Tenderly the Lord cares for His Own.

There is a wholesome cleansing fear, and there is also a debilitating, enslaving fear; one kind of fear borne out of deep respect and holy reverence and contemplation of the greatness of God in contrast to the smallness of man. Another kind of fear, which seizes the hearts of the believers when they think of the cowardly attacks of crafty men whose aim is to kill the righteous with their deadly arrows of slander and hate.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

There is fear, which comes to the hearts of believers, because of the cunning schemes of evil, but this fear is matched by the Lord's power, which brings protection to the trusting believers.

Sudden temptation, unexpected sorrow, heartbreaking loss, and overwhelming persecution - these are some of the circumstances of life, which could constitute 'the terror of night' and 'the arrow that flies by day.' The one who finds

soul security under God's wings will be able to endure the severe trial, and will not become the victim of the cruel arrows of wicked men and demonic powers. Ten thousand around him who fail to trust the Lord may fall, (Psalms 91:7), but the God-trusting soul will not fall or fail. Under His wings and protected by God's armor, the believer may be severely attacked, but he will not be destroyed!

Wrote Paul to the Ephesians, "So use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks, and when it is all over, you will still be standing." (Ephesians 6:1)

God protects the righteous from ultimate and spiritual harm. The believer can rest secure under the wings of God, full of reverential respect and holy awe, but free from the terrorizing fear of the enemy.

"Under His wings, O what precious enjoyment!

***There will I hide till life's trials are o'er;
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me;
Resting in Jesus I'm safe evermore."***

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O my loving and protecting God, I am so very grateful to You for freedom from terrorizing fears! "You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A

*thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.” **“Now you don’t need to be afraid of the dark anymore, nor fear the dangers of the day;”.** (Psalms 91:5)*

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Dear Loved One and Friend: To place your trust in God is to place your trust in One who is altogether worthy - in One whose promises have never been broken, whose strength has never failed, whose love has never grown old, whose fortress has never been destroyed by all the powers of hell!

15.

***"CAN I EXPERIENCE SWEET PEACE AMIDST LIFE'S
TURMOILS?"***

He who makes himself a 'friend of worldliness' (sinful practices), makes himself an enemy of God!

A person is an enemy of God, until he appropriates the work of Christ on the Cross! "And all who trust him—God's Son—to save them have eternal life; those who don't believe and obey him shall never see heaven, but the wrath of God remains upon them." (John 3:36) Only then can he truly experience the 'sweet peace' of God!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Remember, you were made for greatness in Creation. You lost your greatness in the Fall. You can regain your greatness by accepting the reconciling work of Christ on the Cross. The rebel can be made the reconciled. The enemy can be made the friend.

"Now we rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God making us friends of God." (Romans 5:11)

When you 'get right with God' (by repentance and trust), God actually indwells your little life, bringing you phenomenal significance to your everyday happenings!

The Intellect becomes the center where the

Holy Spirit forms the 'mind of Christ' within you.

The Emotions become the center where the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love and compassion of God within you.

The Will becomes the Center where the Holy Spirit works to accomplish His will for your life.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God of grace, I humbly acknowledge that the source of true and lasting peace is the atoning and the reconciling work of Jesus on the Cross. Your Word notes that, in the Garden of Eden, Adam walked with You, in the cool of the day.

I have walked with life's sorrows too long! I have long tasted the fruits of my own sins, and they are bitter! Let me know forgiveness that my heart may rejoice! Let me walk and talk with You, as a Friend with a friend! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Always remember that the 'world's peace' is fragile, but the peace that God gives to a believing person is solid and lasting. The Christian peace is like the peace of the bird that is nesting secure on a nest overhanging a mighty waterfall. Amidst the roar and confusion, the bird is peaceful, just as the Christian is tranquil as he rests secure in the Arms of Jesus, amidst the turmoil of life around him!

16.

**"WHAT CAN GOD DO WITH ALL MY
SUFFERING?"**

**Does Jesus care when my heart is pained
Too deeply for mirth and song;
As the burdens press, and the cares distress,
And, the way grows weary and long.
O Yes, He cares; I know He cares,
His heart is touched with my grief.
When the days are weary, the long nights
dreary,
I know my Savior cares, He Cares."
(By Frank E. Graeff)**

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

How do you know that God cares for you when you are suffering (regardless of the source of your suffering)? Because Jesus (the Son of God) perfectly demonstrates the 'Heart of God'.

Everything Jesus was, while He was on earth (for 33 years), God has always been eternally! Because Jesus' earthly life was filled with acts of compassion (soothing and comforting the broken-hearted), you may be assured that God is also "touched with the feelings of your infirmities"!

The Tri-une God, (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) truly cares for you! The miracles of love and kindness and healing, which Jesus performed

along the shores of Lake Galilee so many years ago, He is performing still in our world today. He continues His works of Compassion in your own precious life!

Therefore, in faith and trust, 'reach out' to Jesus, and let Him touch your body and spirit and heart! He is waiting for you to "cast your cares and worries and suffering" upon Him!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"My redeeming God, whose ways are higher than my ways, as high as the heaven is above the earth, help me to use all my sufferings for redemptive (useful) purposes. I cannot always explain my sufferings, and I dare not try to explain away (deny) my sufferings, but I ask for wisdom, dearest Lord, that I may better understand how I can use my sufferings to glorify You and to advance my own spiritual growth. Even though it is very hard for me, please help me to realize that the pains of love are as important as the pleasures of love. As one great (suffering) Christian requested, help me to know that You, O God, never allow me to "shed needless tears", and that sometimes I must accept your bestowal of suffering as a kind of "severe mercy". However, the "hand that hurts" (in correction) is also the "hand that restores" (heals)! You always act in love - whether your love brings pain or pleasure. Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Remember that God loves you with an everlasting love, whether you are on the 'mountain top of 'pleasure' or in the 'valley of pain'! Remember, God will enable you to salvage good out of all your life's experiences (good or bad)!

17.

"HOW CAN I TURN A TRAGEDY INTO A TRIUMPH?"

"God's Power Alone Is Capable of Changing Human Nature!"

To make a corrupt man clean, to make a deceitful man honest, to make a self-centered man Christ-centered, to make an indifferent man loving and caring for others.

Of course, man's part in this wonderful transformation is faith (trust) in God's provisions. God mightily transforms man's moral nature!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

What about the circumstantial tragedies of life? Can God also transform these outward problems? Yes, but not always in the ways we would choose! God, of course, is the only All-wise One, and therefore He handles problems (that we surrender to Him) in His all-loving way.

He might outrightly remove the problem. He might use the problem in the life of a believer to mature him. But, in one way or another, the surrendered believer can be assured that the 'tragedy' will be turned into a 'triumph' (when and how our all-wise and all-loving and all-powerful God chooses)!

God loves to turn tragedies into triumphs, but believers must "be in step" with God to experience a great victory in his/her life!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"My mighty transforming God, give me the courage to accept what I cannot change. Give me the power to change what must be changed. Give me the humility to accept my positive blessings without pride, and to learn from my negative experiences without bitterness. Help me to creatively use my bad experiences to serve the higher purposes of good. By your enabling power, I do not want circumstances to master my soul; rather, I want (with You as my guide) to be the master of my circumstances! Through your transforming power, I want to turn my tragedies into triumphs. When life hands me a 'lemon', I want to learn to turn it into 'lemonade'! Through Christ's Name and for His cause! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Always remember that it takes both sunshine and rain to produce 'fruit' - the fruit of a Christlike life. You probably recognize that some of the 'best fruit in life' is produced in the 'valley'!

18.

***"CAN JESUS UNDERSTAND MY MANY HUMAN
FRAILTIES?"***

God, in the person of Jesus, knew what it was to pass through childhood, adolescence, and manhood - with all of the temptations unique to each stage.

Jesus, like us, felt the pull of materialism, the pull to popularity at any cost, the pull to accomplish the right ends with the wrong means. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Jesus understood what poverty was all about. After Jesus had entered into His public ministry, on one occasion He said, *"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."* (Matthew 8:20)

Jesus understood the challenge of involvement with people, for he worked with all sorts of people - religious and profane, literate and illiterate, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, healthy and sick, Jew and Gentile, urban and rural. He understood the complexities of human relationships and the subtleties of human nature.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, you know all about my strengths and my weaknesses, my 'uprisings' and my 'downsittings', and my 'successes' and my 'failures', and my 'aspirations' and my 'despairs', and my 'moral' life and my 'godless' life! You know my ways 'afar' off! Nothing is hidden from you - my thought life, my emotional feelings, my inner motives, my secret wishes, my joys and heartbreaks, my abilities and my potential! Yes, you know my background, my feelings of inadequacy, my frustrations and resentments, my fears and my confusions, my personality and my temperament! Everything!

Of course, because you created me, You know me better than I know myself! Yes, You know the degree of my personal response to your countless overtures of love to me, during all the years of my life! You know the extent of my responses to Your call to me - to use my spiritual gifts in loving service of needy persons around me! Thank You for knowing me so well! Your 'All-Seeing Eye' both frightens me, and comforts me! I am frightened when I realize how many faults You discern in me! I am comforted to know that your mercy towards me is from 'everlasting to everlasting'. Your justice is always tempered with your mercy!

If I confess my sins, You are faithful and just to forgive my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness! "But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. And it is perfectly

proper for God to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins". (I John 1:9)

You are touched with the 'feelings of my infirmities.' You will never 'despise a broken and contrite spirit'. You are the sympathizing God who became a Man! You know what it is like to be a Human Being! Thank you! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Nothing less than the total giving of yourself to God is worthy of God's infinite love for you!

19.

**"WHAT ALL-CONSUMING PURPOSE SHOULD
CONTROL MY PERSONAL LIFE?"**

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The direct outpouring of God's blessings is promised to those faithful pilgrims who have learned to face trials optimistically and creatively. "The autumn rains also cover it with pools." (Psalms 84:66)

"There shall be showers of blessings." This is the promise of love; There shall be seasons refreshing, Sent from the Savior above.

There shall be showers of blessings. Send them upon us, O Lord; Grant to us now a refreshing; Come, and now honor Thy Word!

There are so called 'dry periods;' in every believer's life. Every Christian goes through periods of trials when he doesn't feel the closeness of God or when the blessings of God seem to be withheld. It is during these times that Christians must keep their appetite for God alive and their quest for God in earnest.

As a creative pilgrim, the single-minded Christian must seek to use every problem as a stepping stone for spiritual growth.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The direct outpouring of God's blessings is promised to those faithful pilgrims who have learned to face trials optimistically and creatively. "The autumn rains also cover it with pools." (Psalms 84:66)

"There shall be showers of blessings. This is the promise of love; There shall be seasons refreshing, Sent from the Savior above."

There shall be showers of blessings. Send them upon us, O Lord; Grant to us now a refreshing; Come, and now honor Thy Word!;

There are so called 'dry periods;' in every believer's life. Every Christian goes through periods of trials when he doesn't feel the closeness of God or when the blessings of God seem to be withheld. It is during these times that Christians must keep their appetite from God alive and their quest for God in earnest.

As a creative pilgrim, the single-minded Christian must seek to use every problem as a stepping stone for spiritual growth.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Dearest Lord, there is so much I need to learn, when I am experiencing adversities, of one kind or another. Although I, of course, don't know the 'infinite mind of the Almighty' (whose thoughts are higher than my thoughts, s the heavens are higher than the earth), but allow me, dear Lord, to

receive an answer from you, on the following questions that have come to my mind, after much contemplation. Here are the questions and answers (relating to possible benefits to me of having various adversities): Can illness give you something? It can give you an appreciation of good health, and an appreciation for those who help you during your illness, and a sympathy for those who endure a similar illness. Can sorrow give you something? It can draw you close to God and let you experience, as never before, the comforting presence of God, which shall in turn, enable you to be a better comforter of other sorrowing people. Can financial loss give you something? It can give you a better realization of the perishability and unreliability of material things and make you value the permanent and eternal possessions of life more. Can temptation give you something? By resisting the Devil and finding victory over temptation, you can come out a stronger and more mature Christian. Can loneliness give you something? It can give you time to pray and to learn to cultivate a sense of God's constant abiding presence, and it can bring you opportunity to meditate without the distractions when being in a group brings. Help me to see, as You God, perfectly see, possibilities in all my problems! Wipe the tears from my eyes (from grief), and perspective which declares that 'all things work into a pattern for good' for those who love the Lord! Help me to cooperate with you, as you gradually bring 'sunshine' out of the rain,

and 'good out of the 'bad, and 'triumph' out of the tragedy!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

God will not leave the weary traveler to fend for himself. He will pour out 'showers of blessings' upon the barren land and will turn the deserts of life into rose gardens of sweet fragrance.

20.

"WHY SHOULD CHRIST'S CROSS BE CENTRAL IN MY LIFE?"

The goal of every earnest soul is to enjoy constant fellowship with God ("dwell in your house") and to engage in a life of constant praises of God ('they are ever praising you'). The fulfillment of this life-time goal must be the craving of every wholehearted soul. Those who find God - who enjoy sweet fellowship - are those who seek God with their whole heart.

The persistence and intensity with which one pursues the knowledge and the fellowship of God is determined by the degree of passion with which one feels his need for God.

One does not easily or quickly come to know God intimately; there are hurdles and obstacles on life's pathway that cause many to become lukewarm in their response to God or to become diverted from God altogether. There must be a set of the mind and a determination of the will if one is to come to know God truly and deeply.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

"Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you." (Psalms 84:4)

How can the goal of the righteous man best be described? Constant abiding in God and praise of God! 'Dwelling in God's House' is an Old Testament

way of describing what the New Testament says about constantly abiding in the Son.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, when I understand something of the glory and the splendor of knowing and fellowshiping with the Living God on a moment-by-moment basis, I am filled with a soul craving to find God! Taking one step towards You, You take a thousand steps toward me! Your great love always reaches out to me. You are the Lover of my soul! Create within me a passionate desire to know and love you more each day! Thank you, my loving and caring God! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

He who is determined in his soul to know God does not depend upon his own strength to sustain him in his noble pursuit of God. God is the source of sustaining strength for the otherwise weary pilgrim, who, without God's imparted strength, would surely fail and faint and abandon his pursuit of God. "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit", saith the Lord Almighty. He who started a great work (of grace) within You will complete it!

Said Jesus to His disciples: "Maintain a living communion with me, and I with you. Just as the branch is unable to be bearing fruit from itself as a source unless it remains in a living union with the vine, so neither you, unless you maintain a living communion with me. As for

myself, I am the vine. As for you, you are the branches. He who maintains a living communion with me and I with him, this one is bearing much fruit, because apart from me you are not able to be doing anything." (John 15:4-5; Wuest)

21.

"DOES GOD CARE FOR ME PERSONALLY?"

Throughout Jesus' ministry, He was always concerned with individuals. It is true that He was moved with compassion on the multitudes, but His compassion went beyond the multitudes to the lonely individuals. He saw each person as unique and worthy.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Surrounded by a crowd, Jesus healed the woman who had been sick for twelve years with an incurable disease.

As the crowds thronged Him, Jesus saw Zacchaeus, and he became the object of Jesus' special attention and love within the privacy of Zacchaeus' home.

The healing of the blind man near Jericho vividly shows Christ's personal compassion!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Loving Heavenly Father, my mind cannot comprehend, but my heart thrills, with the reality that You love each person in the world as if they were the only one person in the world to love! Such personal love! Apparently (if I properly understand Scripture) there is nothing that delights You more than to love humans, and to have humans love You in return! You love me (and everyone else) with an everlasting love! O God, it is your unconditional love for me (and for everyone else) that is the motivation for my love for You! Of course, Your love is infinite, while my love is finite (and at best fallible). But, You 'love me into loving You' - You shed abroad Your love into my heart, giving me true dignity and worth and confidence, and consequent humility and gratitude! I am so grateful that I am not 'lost in the crowd,' but that I am an object of your special love! You are so powerful that you can rule the

vast Universe, and yet so personal that you can care for me personally! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Always remember that God loves you, and knows you, and He has a special place for you in His eternal kingdom! You must never have an 'inferiority complex' or a 'superiority complex' - for you are neither a 'worm' nor a 'wonder'! You are a special creation, redeemed by Christ, called to love all around you, and empowered to use your special gift to serve needy ones!

22.

"WHY SHOULD I FEEL DEEPLY FOR SUFFERING PERSONS?"

We Are Commanded To Surrender Our Heart To Christ. Christ has commanded us to love God with all of our heart. Our 'heart' is the center of emotions and affections, the vehicle of feeling.

To love God with our heart is to respond to God with our affections, made possible because 'Christ is the Life'.

Through His Holy Spirit, Christ is able to shed abroad God's love in our hearts. "... and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Only the true Christian can have deep feelings of love and concern for others. A Christian has been defined as a person who really cares. Genuine feelings of care and concern for others is the trademark of authentic Christian experience.

A Christian must be a person with a tender heart. Able to 'feel with' other people. There is a great song entitled 'Blest Be The Tie That Binds'. Here are some of the words:

"We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bare, and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear. When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain; but we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again."

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, your Son was a man who was touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He wept with those who wept, and rejoiced with those who rejoiced. He was a man of sorrows who was acquainted with mankind's grief. Make me a person for others, tender in my heart and emotionally warm in my concern for people's hurts. In Jesus' compassionate name. Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Allow yourself to be touched in your heart by the sufferings of those persons whom God brings into your life! The Bible says that, as Christians, we are to be 'kindly affectionate one toward another!' Why? Because we are members

together in God's family! We are to 'bare one another's burdens', and thus 'fulfill the law of love'! To be tender-hearted is to be Christlike! Through God's grace, never allow your heart to become hardened! At times, be glad to weep with those who weep!

23.

**"WHAT CONDITIONS MUST I MEET TO ENJOY
SPIRITUAL SECURITY?"**

Promises to be claimed and benefits to be enjoyed should preoccupy our attention in living for God. However, there are also conditions to be met before the benefits can be enjoyed. Psalms is filled with promises and blessings and benefits, and it describes in beautiful and poetic form the great triumph of good over evil. In brief, we can say that this describes the soul security for the believer! But the continuing victory of believers in this present life and the final security of believers in eternity is determined by meeting certain important conditions here on earth. Psalms 91 mentions some of those conditions.

A person must choose to dwell in the shelter of the Most High if he is to experience and to enjoy the benefits of victory over evil. Some trust in money and some trust in power or in popularity for their security, but only those who trust in the Lord alone have a basis for security and soul rest. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." Only he who puts his trust in God alone. (Psalms 91:26) "...will enjoy God as his refuge and fortress. Trust in God alone and dwelling in the shelter of the Most High will bring the blessings of divine protection." (Psalms 91:3-8) "If you make the Most High your dwelling - even the

Lord, who is my refuge - then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent." (vss. 9-10) The condition is 'dwelling' or 'abiding' in the Most High.

Notes William Sangster, "That is where discipline comes into the holy life: not the toilsome, straining, failing effort to be good; but the faithful attending on God to receive. The fact of one high moment cannot secure holiness forever; it is a life of intimate relationship (which issues in mystic indwelling) and faithfulness which shows itself in our consistency in attending. There can be no continuance of the holy life in the soul of any man who does not continually wait on God." (Daily Readings pg. 188)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

A person must not only trust the Lord only, but he must love the Lord truly, if he is to enjoy soul security. Put in a more accurate form: the one who is trusting the Lord only as the source of his on-going life, is the person who loves the Lord truly, for such a person has put aside all other 'gods' and is serving and trusting the true God only. "Because he loves me, says the Lord, I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name." (Psalms 41:14)

To acknowledge the name of the Lord means to worship the Lord only and to recognize the true nature of the Character of God. What is the essence of God's nature - God's name -, which must

fully be recognized and affirmed? It is love! God is love and all of His works are works of love, including His works of judgment. To acknowledge the name of the Lord is to see God as a God of perfect love who is worthy of your fullest human response of love. God rescues from the snares of evil only those who truly love Him.

A person must not only abide in the Lord continuously, love the Lord truly, but he must also pray to the Lord fervently. "He will call upon me and I will answer Him; I will be with Him in trouble, I will deliver Him and honor Him." (Psalms 91)

Notes Spurgeon, "Not without prayer will the blessing come to the most favored, but means of prayer they shall receive all good things. (Treasury of David; vol. 2; pg. 237) Prayer is the Christian' lifeline to God. He who ceases to pray, is he who will finally cease to dwell with God! Prayer is simply communication with God, ad he who no longer communicates with God fails to receive strength and guidance from God. All who have backslidden from God have first ceased to pray to God.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O Lord my God, help me to abide in You continuously, to love You truly, and to pray to you fervently! I want to abide under the 'wing' of Your presence and protection, until my life is finished here on this earth! I want to obey you explicitly, to

trust you like a small child who holds his father's hand during the darkness of a blizzard! I want to listen carefully to the 'still, small voice' of the guiding Holy Spirit! I want to 'meditate on your Laws day and night'! I want to go where you want me to go, I want to say what you want me to say, and I want to think what you want me to think - to think thoughts of divine wisdom and discernment and understanding! I want to 'feel the heartbeat of your love for me' - as my Savior and Lord! I want to be filled with 'wonder, praise and worship' as I gaze upon the 'bloody cross' and the 'empty tomb', and I want to boldly and lovingly declare to my world that there is no soul salvation and no soul security (on earth or in eternity) without the atoning blood of Jesus! There is no salvation in any other name, except the name of Jesus! I want both boldness in my proclamation, and great tenderness and compassion as I reach out in love to the lost and suffering ones all around me! Lord, let me never become smug or over-confident in my relationship to you. Let me never forget that I am 'nothing' without you. So, help me always to look to you alone for everything. You alone are the 'author' and 'finisher' of my faith! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

When studying the Bible never become 'unbalanced' or 'shortsighted'. Remember there are always Promises to claim, Conditions to meet, and Warnings to heed. Every believer is secure from all evil (Psalms 91) as long as he chooses to

stay under the Wings of the Almighty One! That is the condition for Soul Security!

24.

***"HOW CAN I COPE WITH LIFE'S MULTIPLE TESTS
AND TEMPTATIONS?"***

The facts of life reveal that Christians, as well as non-Christians, suffer loss of all kinds. Believers, as well as non-believers, experience financial loss, disappointment, failures, sickness, sorrow, and death.

If life bares witness to the fact that believers, as well as non-believers, do experience 'harm' and 'disaster', then what is meant by the promise: "No harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent"? (Psalms 91:10)

This promise assures the Christian of two realities. First, no 'real' harm will come to the believer who experiences financial loss or physical adversities or some other such reverse in life. All things - even the losses and the sorrows - are used by God to bring ultimate and true good to the trusting believer.

Meditate carefully on the following perceptive comment by Charles Spurgeon:

"It is impossible that any ill should happen to the man who is beloved of the Lord; the most crushing calamities can only shorten his journey and hasten him to his reward. Ill to him is no ill, but only good in a mysterious form.

Losses enrich him, sickness is his medicine, reproach is his honor, and death is his gain. No evil in the strict sense of the word can happen to him, for everything is over ruled for good. Happy is he who is in such a case. He is secure where others are in peril, he lives where others die."

Secondly, this promise assures trusting believers that no moral evil will overpower and destroy them. Temptations there will be. The poisonous arrows of evil circumstances and demonic schemes will fly but, regardless of that power of evil men and demonic forces, the believer, who rests under the protecting wing of God, will be delivered.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Dear God, I realize that my will must be exercised in surrender and obedience, if I am to enjoy security and protection. I must admit that believers can fall into sin, during a time of subtle temptation when the 'guard' temporarily has been relaxed. Wrong moral choices bring hurtful consequences, and not even believers are spared the pain, which comes from making foolish decisions. However, I also know that it is true that God, who is merciful even when I sin, can use my mistakes and sins to teach me lessons and to discipline me.

David wrote about the benefits which he derived and the lessons he learned through the pain which he experienced because of his personal

moral failures; "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees." (Psalms 119:71) Help me to 'watch and pray' that I enter not into temptation. Also, help me to hide thy Word in my heart 'that I might not sin against Thee'. All in Jesus' name, who is able to keep me from falling! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

"Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy (victorious over sin) - to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey!" So, it cannot be denied that if believers fail to trust the Lord - i.e., if believers fail to keep themselves under the divine wings - they can suffer severe pain and even experience moral disaster! Most of the pain in the world today is caused because of wrong moral choices, and believers, as well as -unbelievers, must bear the painful consequences of their wrong moral choices. So, dear one, draw near to God each day! He is able to guard you against all evil, and to preserve you, blameless, until the day He Takes You Home!

**Booklets Of
"Effective Christian Living" Series.**

- | No. | Titles |
|------------|---|
| 1. | THE POWER OF PRAYER! |
| 2. | THE CROSS OF JESUS! |
| 3. | THE CHRIST OF EASTER! |
| 4. | PREPARING FOR DEATH'S |
| 5. | CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO OTHERS! |
| 6. | LIFE IN THE CHURCH! |
| 7. | GOD FOR ALL HOLIDAYS! |
| 8. | THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE! |
| 9. | PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE! |
| 10. | OUR ETERNAL HOME - HEAVEN! |
| 11. | CULTIVATING CHRIST LIKE CHARACTER! |
| 12. | CONFRONTING LIFE'S COMPLEXITIES! |
| 13. | LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE! |
| 14. | CONQUERING THE ENEMIES WITHIN! |
| 15. | GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION! |
| 16. | THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS! |
| 17. | COPING WITH LIFE'S HARDSHIPS! |

Author - Ron G. Christian -Designer//Typist - Shirley J Ruiz