



TEEN TREE OF LIFE

Having Joy When Facing Trials

Part 3

September 1, 2019

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1JOHN 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

So, here we are at our final week of study, trying to understand how it is we get to a point at which we can enjoy happiness in the face of difficulties. It's essential to note, here and now, that this is a goal that takes time to reach. It's part of the progression of growing to Spiritual Maturity, as a Christian. It's not going to happen in a week or a month – although you will get glimmers of it, at first. You have to keep at it – keep seeking God and studying His Word. You have to put Him first and make sure the demands of the day – Satan's tricks to distract you – don't get you off track. Satan is the master of deception, the master deceiver, and he loves to blind God's people, especially from what He is doing for us behind the scenes when we are faced with trials.

You have to continually strive to be a true Christian of consistent doctrine and prayer. But one day, you will face Satan trying to, and eventually succeeding in, wearing you down! DAN 7:25 warns us of this: *He [Satan] will speak out against the Most High [God] and wear down the saints [believers] of the Highest One...* Satan keeps working at wearing us down, gradually and continuously, so that little by little he may potentially succeed. So, beware!

Maybe Satan will use someone of the opposite sex like he did against Samson in JUDGES 16:16 (The Message Bible): *She kept at it day after day, nagging and tormenting him. Finally, he was fed up—he couldn't take another minute of it.* Samson was born a

Nazirite and was set apart with supernatural strength from God to do His work in the nation of Israel. But sadly, Samson became arrogant and began to pursue women outside of God's Plan for his life. If we could see the invisible realm, we would be shocked at the satanic plots in place to cause Christians to get out of God's Plan for their lives. Satan has the ability to tear our minds apart, destroy our emotions and bring in false concepts as truth. Satan tells people to live by those false concepts and promises them that they will be free. But as they begin to live by these false concepts, they actually lose their freedom. Because only God can give us true freedom: ***Then Jesus turned to the Jews who had claimed to believe in him. "If you stick with this, living out what I tell you, you are my disciples for sure. Then you will experience for yourselves the truth, and the truth will free you."*** (JOH 8:31-32 The Message Bible) Our Lord's message here is to stick with His Word through the trials and trouble and you will enjoy happiness and freedom in every area of your life.

Let's look more closely at what that happiness actually is. It can be described as the deep-down sense of well-being that comes from knowing that all is well between you and God. We covered sharing God's Happiness last week. This kind of happiness is a reaction that doesn't only occur during favorable experiences. It even occurs when circumstances are unpleasant, and even painful. It's hard to imagine that until you've experienced it but once you do, it will make you want to jump up and down! It's a truly incredible feeling.

Now, let's look at **ACTS 9-20-22 The Message Bible: *Then some Jews from Antioch and Iconium caught up with them [Barnabas and Paul] and turned the fickle crowd against them. They beat Paul unconscious, dragged him outside the town and left him for dead. But as the disciples gathered around him, he came to and got up. He went back into town and the next day left with Barnabas for Derbe. After proclaiming the Message in Derbe and establishing a strong core of disciples, they retraced their steps to Lystra, then Iconium, and then Antioch, putting muscle and sinew in the lives of the disciples, urging them to stick with what they had begun to believe and not quit, making it clear to them that it wouldn't be easy: "Anyone signing up for the kingdom of God has to go through plenty of hard times."***

The apostle Paul put one of the most important messages for us in this passage: ***"Anyone signing up for the kingdom of God has to go through plenty of hard times."*** The Christians, who accept the fact that trials and difficult times are the normal condition of the Christian life, will find happiness in everything. This is especially true because if you look around you at unbelievers, they're facing the same trials and difficult times, as believers. The difference is that we have a relationship with God, and He has given us the Bible – a How-To Book on how to get through those times with a smile on our faces and true joy in our hearts. Everything that God plans and performs here on earth – the good, the bad and the ugly – is actually preparation for the incredible life He has in store for us in Heaven. Life on earth is a school in which God trains us for our life on earth and our future life in His Heavenly presence.

Our trials and difficult times, as children of God, are not by accident. We have a loving Heavenly Father who controls the affairs of this world and who has a purpose behind everything that happens in our lives. Let's go back and look again at **JAM 1:2**

again, but this time at **The Amplified Bible Classic Edition** translation: **Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations.** In this verse, the word “**fall**” means “to fall into the midst of, to fall into a hole; to fall into so as to be encompassed by something.” That tiny word describes the difficult events in our lives which we must expect but which we must welcome because they are essentially blessings from God!

Remember back in part one of our study, when we learned about Joseph and his Spiritual Growth? Joseph's life also stands as an amazing example of how God tests us as a way to bless us, if we trust in Him through the testing. Joseph was the son of Jacob and Rachel. He was her firstborn and Jacob's eleventh son. Out of all his sons, Joseph was his father's favorite, so he gave him a wonderful gift: **And he made him an elaborately embroidered coat. When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than them, they grew to hate him—they wouldn't even speak to him. (GEN 37:4 The Message Bible)**

Now, in addition to the “**elaborately embroidered coat,**” Joseph had two dreams that caused his brothers to “**hate him**” and plot his ruin. These dreams symbolized Joseph's obvious superiority and resulted in his brothers betraying him out of jealousy. Once they found out about the dreams, his brothers then plotted against him and would have even killed him, if the eldest brother Reuben hadn't stepped in. Reuben convinced the other brothers to throw Joseph into a pit and secretly intended to rescue him later. But, while Reuben was away, the others decided to sell him to a group of Ishmaelite traders. When the traveling Ishmaelites showed up, the brothers pulled Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver. The brothers then soaked Joseph's coat in goat blood and presented it to their father, declaring that Joseph had been killed by wild beasts.

Joseph's life was one filled with wrongful accusations and betrayals. During the latter part of it, he was falsely accused by his master's wife, thrown into prison and left to suffer there for years. Yet, when Joseph looked at his circumstances, he was able to proclaim with boldness that what others meant for evil, God had used for good: **As for you [Joseph's brothers], you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. (GEN 50:20-21)**

This reality can be as true for us in our lives as it was for Joseph. Because Joseph stuck with God's Plan, he had had genuine joy in his heart and eventually prospered. He kept the faith through the hard times and received God's Blessing! You have to constantly remind yourself, through the difficult times in your life, that the experiences that come to the children of God are not by accident. We have a loving Heavenly Father who controls the affairs of this world and who has a purpose behind each event He puts in our paths!

Every trial that God gives us is a masterpiece of strategy designed for good. The pressure He allows is often the fence between the narrow way of life and the broad

road to ruin: ***For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (MAT 7:14)*** The message here is to stick to His Plan and the narrow path!

It's our responsibility to respond to pressures in our lives with positive volition. Positive volition turns sound doctrine into sound practice. Endurance is an active quality that enables a person to persevere persistently through the most difficult and trying circumstances: ***It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes. (PSA 119:71)*** In ***2TIM 2:1-7 (The Message Bible)***, Paul explained this perfectly to Timothy: ***So, my son, throw yourself into this work for Christ. Pass on what you heard from me—the whole congregation saying Amen!—to reliable leaders who are competent to teach others. When the going gets rough, take it on the chin with the rest of us, the way Jesus did. A soldier on duty doesn't get caught up in making deals at the marketplace. He concentrates on carrying out orders. An athlete who refuses to play by the rules will never get anywhere. It's the diligent farmer who gets the produce. Think it over. God will make it all plain.***