

Joseph's Character

(There is ALWAYS Purpose to our Pain as a Child of God)

Psalm 105:19 "Until the time came to fulfill God's Word, the Lord tested Joseph's Character"

Genesis 50:20 " But as for you, you intended evil against me, but God intended this for good, to bring about this present result, the saving of many lives

Hebrews 5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² *fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

James 1:2-4 "Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

God wants His children to be over comers, strong and mature in their faith, people who can face a challenge and stand firm. The testing process accomplishes this.

In addition, God allows various kinds of suffering to come our way in order to develop the qualities that are necessary for His servants: humility, obedience and an unselfish attitude.

God wants to develop in us the servant attitude which we see so clearly and beautifully portrayed in the life of our Lord Jesus, who "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).

1 Peter 1:7 gives us another purpose for testing and trials: "that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

God allows temptation. Nobody or Nothing can touch you unless God allows it. (remember Job, Daniel, Shadrack Meshack and Abendigo, etc.) Again when God allows temptation, don't look at the tempter, look at the Tester. "Submit to God (first and by doing this you:) and resist the devil(second)"

Trials refine and purify our faith, and a purified faith can bring greater honor to our Lord! When we pass our test of faith, God is pleased and Jesus Christ is honored--just knowing this should motivate us to be more like Joseph! Knowing this should also motivate us to stop complaining and questioning God's ways.

Joseph:

Sometimes when we read the ancient stories about Bible characters (especially in the Old Testament) it is easy to forget that they were real people just like us. They are not heroes of faith because they were perfect human beings but because they chose to follow God even while facing incredible pressure to do otherwise.

Joseph's life provides us with a beautiful example of a person who totally commits to living a godly life regardless of the circumstances encountered. Joseph exhibits the character of God through his faithfulness, integrity, purity, and mercy, even while he is forced to endure intense pressure and difficulty. In our everyday lives, we need to implement the principles modeled by these wonderful men and women of God as we remember that our choices have consequences too.

The story of Joseph is contained in Genesis chapters 37-50 and every incident of his life teaches us something about Godly character. For this study though, we will concentrate on chapters 37 and 39 because they provide we as Christians with instruction about attitudes, disappointment, dealing with temptation, and obedience.

The Bible tells us that Joseph was hated by his brothers who were jealous of him. He was only a teenager when they decided to kill him and cruelly threw him into a pit. Joseph must have felt deeply hurt and terrified when they did this but they went even further and sold him into slavery. Most of us could never imagine experiencing the betrayal and fear that Joseph must have felt as he was torn from his family, his home, and everything he knew only to be forced into slavery in a foreign land.

We are told in Genesis 39:1-6 that Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, purchased Joseph. We are also told that Joseph's master could see that the Lord was with Joseph and he eventually made him overseer of all his house and possessions. It is obvious that Joseph was a faithful and trustworthy slave or Potiphar would not have entrusted his household to him. But these verses also indicate something about Joseph's attitude even though it is not directly stated. In spite of everything that happened to him, Joseph maintained a grateful heart and trusted God absolutely - even in the painful circumstances he was forced to endure.

If you can, try to imagine Joseph's situation. It is obvious that most people in his shoes would be discouraged, angry, fearful, vengeful, and filled with self-pity. We could even understand that he might question God's goodness because the Lord allowed such terrible things to happen to a righteous person. Yet we do not read anything in these verses which indicates that Joseph's attitude was poisoned with any of these "understandable" feelings. Instead, it is clear that the Lord was able to bless and prosper Joseph in all that he did because his heart attitude was right. Everyone around Joseph shared in the blessings because he feared and obeyed God. Joseph's Godly behavior during his trials teaches us many things about how to live out our faith while under pressure - especially since things get even worse for him!

In Genesis 39:7 we are introduced to Joseph's next problem - Potiphar's wife. She lusts after Joseph and begs him to sleep with her. Joseph could have easily yielded to this temptation from a mysterious older woman. He was a young man far from home and she must have been very attractive to him. He could have used loneliness or bitterness or self-pity as an excuse for giving in to this woman. And since he was totally alone in a foreign land, no one would ever have known.

First Joseph makes the mistake of trying to reason with his seducer (verses 8 & 9). This is always a mistake because the Bible teaches us repeatedly that we must flee from sinful temptations. We are weakened whenever we stay and try to use intellectual arguments to justify our position. Joseph's words did not work and Potiphar's wife continued her attack and attempted to wear down his defenses by "speaking to him day by day." We are not told exactly what she said but it is likely that she used the same tricks the devil uses on all of us including everything from appealing to his need for love and comfort to ridiculing his "old fashioned values" to threatening him with punishment fit for a disobedient slave. But Joseph would not yield.

Finally, Potiphar's wife waited for the moment when all of the other men were out of the house and then made one last desperate attempt to bring Joseph down by seizing him by his clothes and commanding him to sleep with her. Joseph had only seconds to decide if he would maintain his integrity, righteousness and purity or trade them for a few moments of pleasure. Joseph's choice in this moment of testing and temptation would effect his future and the future of Israel forever. But he chose to flee, "got himself out of there" (verse 12), and left the disappointed temptress holding only his garment.

As often happens when a godly person wins a battle against sin and does the right thing, there was no parade or medal or applause waiting for Joseph. In fact, in her fury and embarrassment, Potiphar's wife proceeded to lie about him and accused him of attempted rape. And so, Joseph, a righteous man who trusted in God, was put in irons (Psalm 105:18) and thrown into a miserable prison until he was 30 years old - because he did what was right.

However, God did not leave his precious, faithful servant alone in that dungeon. "But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. The keeper of the prison did not look to anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper." (Ch. 39 vs. 21-23).

We know that in the end Joseph the Hebrew slave rose from the dungeon to the second highest position in the massive Egyptian empire which meant he had enormous power and riches. He was second only to Pharaoh so God did reward Joseph generously for his righteousness. But we cannot ignore the price Joseph paid before reaping his reward. He was mistreated, abused, hated, betrayed, enslaved, tempted, tested, lied about, unjustly imprisoned, and forgotten (though not by God) in a dungeon for many years. Many Christians today would have a difficult time relating to a person like Joseph who feared, loved, and trusted God so completely that he was willing to obey Him even if he never gained a single reward while on this earth. Sometimes we forget that the Christian life can often bring suffering and trials too. However, if we trust the Lord while we experience them, we will exchange our sometimes shallow faith for compassion, character, wisdom, patience, and a deep faith in Jesus that cannot be shaken. In Joseph we see a

person who modeled these traits beautifully because he walked in holiness, waited patiently, and maintained a soft and grateful heart before the Lord.

The story we have just read together encourages us and reminds us that our God is loving and just. We can trust Him completely no matter how hopeless our circumstances appear because He has promised that nothing can separate us from His love. And God keeps His promises.

2 Timothy 3:12 "Indeed, all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted**"

1 Peter 4:12-13 ¹²Dear friends, don't be surprised at the **fiery trials** you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³Instead, be very glad--because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterward you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory when it is displayed to all the world.

Romans 5:2-4 ²Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

³We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and **trials**, for we know that they are good for us--they help us learn to endure. ⁴And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation.

1 Peter 4:1 "...for if you are willing to suffer for Christ, (saying no to your flesh) you have decided to stop sinning. And you won't spend the rest of your life chasing after evil desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.

James 4:7 "Submit yourselves to God (first), resist the devil (second) and He will flee from you" God blesses those who are **persecuted** because they live for God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5:11 "God blesses you when you are mocked and **persecuted** and lied about because you are my followers.

Matthew 5:12 Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were **persecuted**, too.

Mark 10:29-31 ²⁹And Jesus replied, "I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, ³⁰will receive now in return, a hundred times over, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property--**with persecutions**. And in the world to come they will have eternal life. ³¹But many who seem to be important now will be the least important then, and those who are considered least here will be the greatest then"

John 15:20 Do you remember what I told you? 'A servant is not greater than the master.' Since they **persecuted** me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you!

2 Thessalonians 1:7 And God will provide rest for you who are being **persecuted** and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels,

2 Corinthians 12:10 Since I know it is all for Christ's good, I am quite content with my weaknesses and with insults, hardships, **persecutions**, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 But God will use this **persecution** to show his justice. For he will make you worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering,

Revelation 14:12 Let this encourage God's holy people to endure **persecution** patiently and remain firm to the end, obeying his commands and trusting in Jesus."

James 1:2-7 ²Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face **trials** of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

2 Peter 2:8-10 Yes, he was a righteous man who was distressed by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day. ⁹So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their **trials**, even while punishing the wicked right up until the day of judgment. ¹⁰He is especially hard on those who follow their own evil, lustful desires and who despise authority. These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at the glorious ones without so much as trembling.

Acts 14 :22-23 ²²where they strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that they must enter into the Kingdom of God through many **tribulations**. ²³Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church and prayed for them with fasting, turning them over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had come to trust.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace In the world you have **tribulation**, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Romans 5:2-4 ²Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

³We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and **trials**, for we know that they are good for us--they help us learn to endure. ⁴And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation.

Romans 12:10-13 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

¹¹ not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ²rejoicing in hope, persevering in **tribulation**, devoted to prayer, ¹³contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

1 Peter 4:12-13 ¹²Dear friends, don't be surprised at the **fiery trials** you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³Instead, be very glad--because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterward you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory when it is displayed to all the world.

1Peter 1:5-7 ⁵And God, in his mighty power, will protect you until you receive this salvation, because you are trusting him. It will be revealed on the last day for all to see. ⁶So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many **trials** for a while.

⁷These **trials** are only to **test** your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold--and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by **fiery trials**, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

James 4:7-10 ⁷So humble yourselves before God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you hypocrites. ⁹Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. ¹⁰When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on him, he will lift you up and give you honor.

2 Corinthians 4:10 Through **suffering**, these bodies of ours constantly share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies

2 Corinthians 1:5 ⁵ For just as the **sufferings** of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

James 5:11 ¹¹We give great honor to those who endure under **suffering**. Job is an example of a man who endured patiently. From his experience we see how the Lord's plan finally ended in good, for he is full of tenderness and mercy

James 1:12 ¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under **trial**; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Matthew 5:12 ¹² "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they **persecuted** the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6:22 ²² " Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

1 Peter 3:14 ¹⁴But even if you **suffer** for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't be afraid and don't worry. (nlt)

1 Peter 3:14 ¹⁴ But even if you should **suffer** for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED. (nasb)

Acts 5:41 ⁴¹ So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to **suffer** shame for His name

Acts 5 ⁴¹The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to **suffer** dishonor for the name of Jesus.

1 Peter 4:14-16 ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁶ but if anyone **suffers** as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

1 Peter 1:6 ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various **trials**,

Philippians 3:10 ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His **sufferings**, being conformed to His death;

Romans 8:17 ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we **suffer** with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

2 Cor. 4:16,18 "Therefore we do not lose heart. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

2 Corinthians 1:5-7 ⁵ For just as the **sufferings** of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. ⁷ and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.

2 Timothy 2:12 ¹² If we **endure**, we will also reign with Him;

1 Peter 4:13 ¹³ but to the degree that you share the **sufferings** of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

1 Corinthians 10:13 ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 NLT ¹³But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

1 Peter 4 ¹So then, since Christ **suffered** physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you are willing to suffer for Christ, you have decided to stop sinning. ²And you won't spend the rest of your life chasing after evil desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.

Job 1 *Job's First Test*

¹There was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was **blameless**, a man of complete **integrity**. ⁶One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan the Accuser came with them. ⁷"Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan. And Satan answered the LORD, "I have been going back and forth across the earth, watching everything that's going on."

⁸ **The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job?** For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

⁹Satan replied to the LORD, "Yes, Job fears God, but not without good reason! ¹⁰You have always protected him and his home and his property from harm. You have made him prosperous in everything he does. Look how rich he is! ¹¹But take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

¹²"**All right, you may test him,**" the LORD said to Satan. "Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don't harm him physically." So Satan left the LORD's presence.

¹⁹Suddenly, a powerful wind swept in from the desert and hit the house on all sides. The house collapsed, and all your children are dead. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

²¹He said, "I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be stripped of everything when I die. The LORD gave me everything I had, and the LORD has taken it away. Praise the name of the LORD!" ²²In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.

Job 2 Jobs Second Test

¹One day the angels came again to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan the Accuser came with them. ²"Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan.

And Satan answered the LORD, "I have been going back and forth across the earth, watching everything that's going on."

³**Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth--a man of complete integrity. He fears God and will have nothing to do with evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you persuaded me to harm him without cause."**

⁴Satan replied to the LORD, "Skin for skin--he blesses you only because you bless him. A man will give up everything he has to save his life. ⁵But take away his health, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

⁶**"All right, do with him as you please," the LORD said to Satan. "But spare his life."** ⁷So Satan left the LORD's presence, and he struck Job with a terrible case of boils from head to foot.

Psalm 115:3 "For our God is in the Heaven and He does whatever He pleases

TESTED BY THE WORD : Joseph

Psalm 105:16-21 He called for a famine upon the land; He broke the whole staff of bread. He sent a man before them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. They afflicted his feet with fetters, he himself was laid in irons; until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him. The king sent and released him, the ruler of people, and set him free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler over all his possessions.

The story of Joseph is one of the most captivating and challenging narratives in all the Old Testament. Joseph is one of the few biblical characters about whom nothing negative is reported. From his teenage years in Genesis 37, until his death at 100 in Genesis 50, Joseph's exemplary life confronts us with encouragement and conviction. The life of Joseph is not only an excellent topic for every Christian to study, it is an excellent model for every believer to follow.

Consider Joseph's steadfast faith. We never read about Joseph complaining or wavering in his faith in any way--even though he was **betrayed by his brothers, falsely accused of rape, cast into prison by his employer, and forgotten by those he helped.** Unlike us, young Joseph didn't have the benefit of the completed Word of God or the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit! He didn't even have the story of Joseph to encourage him! Would any of us have maintained an unwavering faith under such conditions? For teenagers as well as older believers, the life of Joseph is a life worthy of emulation.

The Providence of God

What was the secret of Joseph's unwavering faithfulness? It was his unquestioning understanding and acceptance of the providence of God. Joseph knew that "our disappointments are God's appointments." When Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers, he told them, "And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me ahead of you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance" (Genesis 45:5-8). After his father Jacob died, Joseph again stated his lifelong conviction to his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20). Joseph knew that everything that had happened to him, even all the terrible wrongs done to him, were within the sovereign plans and purposes of God for ultimate good. God was not the source of the evil perpetrated against him, but Joseph knew that God was in complete control and was working through the awful experiences and ungodly people to bring about His purposes in accordance with His providential design. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Joseph believed the truth of Romans 8:28 more than we often do! If only we could trust God as Joseph did. Too often we say that we believe that God is in complete control of all our circumstances, but do we really believe it? If we really believed it, we would accept life as it comes to us without complaining. How steadfast is our faith and trust in the providence of God? Does it measure up to the faith of Joseph?

The "Proving Process"

The life of Joseph is also a great example of what the testing of faith is all about. All the unpleasant and unhappy experiences in Joseph's life were a test of Joseph's faith. Joseph was not "reaping what he had sown" from mistakes he had made, nor was he being

disciplined for sins he had committed. No--Joseph's faith in God's word to him was being tested. Psalm 105:19 says, about Joseph, that "the word of the Lord tested him." The same Hebrew word which is translated as "tested" or "proved" is used in Psalm 12:6 and Psalm 66:10, where the testing process is likened to the refining or "proving" process of silver or gold. The "proving process" refines and tests the value and purity of the precious metal. (See also Judges 7:4.)

In Joseph's life the "proving process" took place over more than 20 years. Joseph had been given the word of the Lord when he was only a teenager. He realized that his dreams about the future had been communications from God--in fact, that's probably why he shared the dreams with his family (see Genesis 37:5-11). If Joseph was convinced that the dreams were sent from God Himself then it was his responsibility to share the dreams with his family, even though he probably suspected that the news would add fuel to the fires of his brothers' hostility. In any case, this word from the Lord tested Joseph for more than 20 long years filled with tragic betrayal, severe disappointments, and very little hope concerning the future. Joseph passed the tests--and the tests "proved" the value and purity of his faith.

Can you imagine the disappointment Joseph experienced when he was thrown into prison? When he was put in charge of Potiphar's household, and it seemed that there might be a little "daylight" ahead, his hopes were dashed by false accusations and imprisonment (Genesis 39:1-20). This test of faith must have been particularly painful for Joseph, who must have been anxiously scanning the horizon for some sign of how God would fulfill the dreams He had given. Joseph may even have worked out some scenarios in his mind--perhaps, he may have thought, if he continued to work hard God would arrange for him to gain his freedom from slavery and eventually become successful in Egypt, the greatest nation in the world at that time. When he became prosperous in Egyptian society he would return home for a visit, where his amazed and respectful family would have to acknowledge that the dreams had been from God! Both he and, more importantly, God would be vindicated! But this scenario was not to be--it was not God's plan! What a disappointment, and what a test of faith! Would we have passed the test?

Another great test of Joseph's faith came when the cupbearer finally remembered him and Joseph was called before Pharaoh (Genesis 41:1-36). Suppose we had been in Joseph's place, and we knew we could interpret Pharaoh's dreams? Would we have bargained for our freedom? Would we have taken credit for ourselves? Or would we have done as Joseph did--not even mentioning himself, but giving all the credit to God? Would we have been more concerned about the implications of the dreams and the preservation of life than about our own life and freedom? Joseph entrusted his life and future to God completely, and as a result he passed the test of faith with top grades. How is our "grade point average"?

As the word of the Lord tested Joseph, the word of the Lord tests us. Do we really believe that "in all things God works for the good of those who love Him"? Do we really believe that God will guide us in the decisions of life, in accordance with His promise in Proverbs 3:5-6? We can be sure that our faith will be tested in these areas. Disappointment with difficult circumstances is not a sign that we're failing the test, but doubt and complaining are!

A Perfecting Process

The question is often asked, "If God is omniscient, and not only knows if we have faith, but also the strength of our faith, why does He test our faith?" The Bible answers that question. In James 1:2-4 we read, "Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." God wants His children to be overcomers, strong and mature in their faith, people who can face a challenge and stand firm. The testing process accomplishes this. In addition, God allows various kinds of suffering to come our way in order to develop the qualities that are necessary for His servants: humility, obedience and an unselfish attitude. God wants to develop in us the servant attitude which we see so clearly and beautifully portrayed in the life of our Lord Jesus, who "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).

1 Peter 1:7 gives us another purpose for testing and trials: "that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." Trials refine and purify our faith, and a purified faith can bring greater honor to our Lord! When we pass our test of faith, God is pleased and Jesus Christ is honored--just knowing this should motivate us to be more like Joseph! Knowing this should also motivate us to stop complaining and questioning God's ways.

A Picture to Appreciate

The life of Joseph is not only a God-given model for us to follow, but also a God-given picture of Christ for us to appreciate. The person and life of Joseph is an Old Testament picture or illustration or "type" of the Person and life of the Messiah to come. Although the New Testament never specifically refers to Joseph as a type of Christ, Stephen's sermon in Acts 7 seems to draw a parallel between Joseph and Jesus Christ. Stephen mentions the unfair treatment, persecution and betrayal by the unbelieving "brothers" followed by the vindication and exaltation by God of Joseph and Jesus Christ (see Acts 7:9-10 and 51-53). The parallels between the life of Joseph and the life of Christ are so numerous that it's only logical to conclude that God intended us to see and appreciate the picture:

Like Joseph, the Lord Jesus was the special object of His Father's love (see Matthew 3:17, John 3:35 and John 5:20). Like Joseph, He was sent by His Father to seek and ensure the welfare of his brethren, but (like Joseph) the Lord was hated and rejected by His own people (see John 1:11-12 and John 15:24-25). As Joseph's brothers especially hated his prophetic dreams, so the Jewish leaders hated the Lord's claims to be their Messiah and King (see Luke 19:14). And as Joseph's brothers plotted to kill him, so the Jewish people plotted against--and killed--their own Messiah (see Matthew 21:37-39, Matthew 26:3-4 and John 5:18). Furthermore, as the brothers sat down and callously ate a meal while Joseph was suffering, so the merciless Pharisees prepared to sit down and eat the Passover meal as the Lord was crucified (see John 18:28). As Joseph's moral character was tested and proved by temptation and false accusation, so the moral perfections of Christ proved flawless as He was tested with temptation and false accusation (see Matthew 4, Luke 4, John 18:30, Luke 23:2-5, Mark 14:56-59 and Matthew 26:59-61).

In addition, the word of the Lord in Old Testament prophecy tested the life of Jesus and proved his qualifications as the Messiah. As Joseph did not defend himself when he was falsely accused, so the Lord Jesus "did not open His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7) when He was falsely charged and put on trial (Matthew 27:12-14, Matthew 26:62-62, Mark 14:60-61, and Mark 15:4-5.) As God vindicated Joseph and raised him to a place of supremacy over all Egypt, so "God raised Jesus from the dead" (Colossians 2:12) and "exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow....and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11). As Joseph's brothers repented for their sin of rejecting and betraying Joseph, and acknowledged him as their superior and savior, in a coming day the Jewish people will repent for their sin of rejecting their true Messiah, Jesus, and acknowledge Him as their Lord and Savior (see Zechariah 12:10-14). And as Joseph graciously forgave his repentant brothers and reconciled them to himself, so the Lord Jesus will graciously forgive and reconcile the repentant and believing nation of Israel to Himself (see Ezekiel 37:1-14, Romans 11:15, 25-26.)

All of these parallels--and more-- between the life of Joseph and the life of Christ are worthy of study. There are too many to be only coincidental. The Lord Jesus surely included the story of Joseph in His bible study with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Luke 24:27 says that "Beginning at [the writings of] Moses and all the Prophets, He explained what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Him." No wonder the disciples' hearts "burned within them" as Jesus opened up the Old Testament Scriptures to them (Luke 24:32)!

May the life of Joseph encourage us and convict us as we encounter the testings of our faith. Do we really believe the commands and promises in the Bible? We can be sure that we will be tested by the Word as Joseph was. May our faith, like Joseph's, "be proved genuine and result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed"

Daily with the King Tuesday August 26, 2003 **Displayed by God** : Whether I like it or not (and I like it!), I am in "show business." The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on earth" (Job 1:8) Disciples are for display, saints are for spectacle. God the Master Artist does not ply His talents to a raw sinner for nothing; He wants His chief enemy, Satan, to observe and understand what happens to a man when he become pliable in God's hands...the very opposite of what Satan was when he sinned. But God must display me; I cannot display myself. The chief end of His masterpiece in me is not only for the eternal ages (Ephesians 2:7-10), but for now in the midst of this "crooked and perverse generation" (Philippians 2:15). The bumper sticker "Please be patient, God isn't finished with me yet" is true, but only partly true. There are elements of a finished product within me, and God wants those elements displayed for others to see. Remember Daniel? The den of lions was not for Daniel's benefit, but for the king's. "Daniel...has your God...been able to deliver you from the lions?" Daniel 6:19-20 Looking into the den, the pagan king Darius saw a servant of God displaying the victory over the lions that his faith had made possible. He was astonished and impressed, so much so that he issued a decree; "the God of Daniel...is the living God (who) delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders" 6:25-27. Daniel was an actor in a living drama, and the result was applause to Almighty God. Have you seen my servant _____? Dare I put my name here as one whom the Lord can display? I see now what Paul meant when he called himself God's exhibition and God's "spectacle" to the world (1 Corinthians 4:9. What a glory to be a chosen showpiece of God! "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" Ephesians 2:10 (There is always purpose to our pain) df

God allows temptation. When He does, don't look at the tempter, look at the Tester. "Submit to God (first) and resist the devil (second)"

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith, **who for the joy set before Him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 Cor. 4:16,18 "Therefore we do not lose heart. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal

glory that far outweighs them all."

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NASB ³For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with: (prayer, speaking scripture, praise, love, obedience, serving, fruits of the Spirit) are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

2 Cor. 10:3-5 NLT "We are human, but we don't wage war with human plans and methods. ⁴We use **God's mighty weapons**: (prayer, speaking scripture, praise, love, obedience, serving, fruits of the Spirit) not mere worldly weapons, to knock down the Devil's strongholds. ⁵With these weapons we break down every proud argument that keeps people from knowing God. With these weapons we conquer their rebellious ideas, and we teach them to obey Christ.

Romans 4:17;20-21...God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist ²⁰ yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

Genesis 45 *Joseph Reveals His Identity* ¹Joseph could stand it no longer. "Out, all of you!" he cried out to his attendants. He wanted to be alone with his brothers when he told them who he was. ²Then he broke down and wept aloud. His sobs could be heard throughout the palace, and the news was quickly carried to Pharaoh's palace. ³"I am Joseph!" he said to his brothers. "Is my father still alive?" But his brothers were speechless! They were stunned to realize that Joseph was standing there in front of them. ⁴"Come over here," he said. So they came closer. And he said again, "I am Joseph, your brother whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵**But don't be angry with yourselves that you did this to me, for God did it.** He sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives. ⁶These two years of famine will grow to seven, during which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷God has sent me here to keep you and your families alive so that you will become a great nation. ⁸Yes, it was God who sent me here, not you! And he has made me a counselor to Pharaoh--manager of his entire household and ruler over all Egypt.

Genesis 50

²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Psalms 66 ¹⁰ You have tested us, O God; you have purified us like silver melted in a crucible.

Genesis 37 ⁵One night Joseph had a dream and promptly reported the details to his brothers, causing them to hate him even more. ⁶"Listen to this dream," he announced. ⁷"We were out in the field tying up bundles of grain. My bundle stood up, and then your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before it!" ⁸"So you are going to be our king, are you?" his brothers taunted. And they hated him all the more for his dream and what he had said. ⁹Then Joseph had another dream and told his brothers about it. "Listen to this dream," he said. "The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!" ¹⁰This time he told his father as well as his brothers, and his father rebuked him. "What do you mean?" his father asked. "Will your mother, your brothers, and I actually come and bow before you?" ¹¹But while his brothers were **jealous** of Joseph, his father gave it some thought and wondered what it all meant.

Genesis 39 *Joseph in Potiphar's House* ¹Now when Joseph arrived in Egypt with the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, a member of the personal staff of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was the captain of the palace guard. ²The LORD was with Joseph and blessed him greatly as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. ³Potiphar noticed this and realized that the LORD was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. ⁴So Joseph naturally became quite a favorite with him. Potiphar soon put Joseph in charge of his entire household and entrusted him with all his business dealings. ⁵From the day Joseph was put in charge, the LORD began to bless Potiphar for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs began to run smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished. ⁶So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't have a worry in the world, except to decide what he wanted to eat! Now Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man. ⁷And about this time, Potiphar's wife began to desire him and invited him to sleep with her. ⁸But Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. ⁹No one here has more authority than I do! He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I ever do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God."¹⁰She kept putting pressure on him day after day, but he refused to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible. ¹¹One day, however, no one else was around when he was doing his work inside the house. ¹²She came and grabbed him by his shirt, demanding, "Sleep with me!" Joseph tore himself away, but as he did, his shirt came off. She was left holding it as he ran from the house. ¹³When she saw that she had his shirt and that he had fled, ¹⁴she began screaming. Soon all the men around the place came running. "My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to insult us!" she sobbed. "He tried to rape me, but I screamed.

¹⁵When he heard my loud cries, he ran and left his shirt behind with me."¹⁶She kept the shirt with her, and when her husband came home that night, ¹⁷she told him her story. "That Hebrew slave you've had around here tried to make a fool of me," she said. ¹⁸"I was saved only by my screams. He ran out, leaving his shirt behind!" *Joseph Put in Prison* ¹⁹After hearing his wife's story, Potiphar was furious! ²⁰He took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king's prisoners were held.

Acts 7 ⁹"These sons of Jacob were very **jealous** of their brother Joseph, and they sold him to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with him ¹⁰and delivered him from his anguish. And God gave him favor before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God also gave Joseph unusual wisdom, so that Pharaoh appointed him governor over all of Egypt and put him in charge of all the affairs of the palace.

Mark 15:10 ¹⁰Pilate knew that the chief priests had brought Jesus to him because they were jealous. (Contemporary English Version)

Matthew 27:18 Pilate knew that the leaders had brought Jesus to him because they were jealous.

When you follow the wisdom of the world, you end up warring like the world. James 3:13-18

"Having begun in the spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh" Gal 3:3

Once you stop fighting with God and with ourself, you will have an easier time not fighting with others. The first step toward reconciliation with others is getting right with God. Our battles among ourselves are caused because we obey our three enemies; the world (James 4:4), the flesh (vs 1), and the devil (vs 7) How can we expect to be at peace with God and each other if we are living for the enemy! "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God Js.4:6-7

Satan wants us to think that our "disobedience detours" must become the permanent road for the rest of our lives; but this is a lie. 1 John 1:9 is the Truth.

"The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings."

When you are allowed by God to be tempted, (just like with Job) know that it is because you are being TESTED by Him. **Look at the Tester, not the Tempter.** "Submit to God and resist the Devil" God says. When you submit to God first, you are resisting the Devil. Why is God allowing you to be tempted? First of all think of all the times that He doesn't allow you to be tempted (express your gratitude to Him ☺). He allows us to be tempted because He is testing us. why is He testing us? According to Dt. 8... "to see what is in our hearts". But we reason, "But God you already know what is in my heart....Yes, but God wants us to see what He see's....which is exposed when we talk to Him about whatever is on our minds. When we see what He see's we come "runnin' home to Pappa" We hear ourselves very differently when we are telling God the same thing we were conversing over with our flesh. There is no conviction in the presence of our flesh...because the flesh is never satisfied. But when we have this same conversation with God, our audience is different: it is "Almighty God"...being in His presence having the same conversation that we were just having with our flesh humbles us, leads us to confession and repentance. (Think of how different it might have been if David, a man after God's own heart, would have had the same conversation he was having with himself, instead with God. It may have sounded something like this. "O.K. God, I really don't want to talk to you about this right now, cause' I know what you are going to say, but I have to tell you, I am so attracted to Bathsheba over there...you sure did a fine job creating her...yes, I know that I am lusting after her and it feels so good, but I also know there will be great consequences if I do what I want instead of what you want etc God is approachable read Hebrews 4:15-16

When the flesh is poured out the Spirit fills us up and now we are ready to pray for our circumstances or our offender...which by the way is what He had in mind all the while, not to mention John 3:30 "He must increase, I must decrease"...it humbles me to hear what sound like apart from Him. We have the "mind of Christ now!" For me to be humbled and to join Him in intercession. That is one big reason He allowed the circumstances or the temptation, because He is showing you things to pray about and inviting you to join Him in intercession. We often derail because we forget to remember to go and talk with Him ("Come to Me."), so often instead we go and talk with ourselves/our flesh...and the flesh is never satisfied and there for because we don't capture our thoughts, they capture us and we end up being disobedient. That is why 2 Cor. 10:3-5 is so clear..."we don't wage war like the world does...we use God's mighty weapons (prayer, praise, the Word, obedience, love). We take every thought captive that we might obey Christ. So if we don't capture the thought, it WILL capture us and the result is disobedience. So why does God allow temptation...because He is testing us. Why is He testing us? Another reason is to see who we really love. Do we love our pleasures or His pleasure. Our choice will demonstrate who we love more: me or Thee. How do we show God our love? Here is His answer "**He who has my commandments and keeps them**, He it is who loves me and He who loves me shall be loved by my Father and I will love Him and disclose myself to Him"

Also regarding testing: When you are a student in a classroom, after the teachers teaches you, they test you. The Test serves to let you and the teacher know what you understood when you were being taught. It also aids the teacher in knowing what area's to work on to strengthen you in your weak areas. Then another test is given to see if the student has learned what they were taught. God is also our teacher and He tests us on what He has taught us !

We need "eye surgery" to turn our eyes back on Him...so we can see clearly ! "Fix your Eyes on Jesus, the Author and perfecter of your faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross" Hebrew 12:1-2

I'm fighting the wrong battles if I am fighting to maintain my baggage
Baggage Maintenance

Aaron and Hur : Pray together, help each other:

Exodus 17:12 "Moses' arms finally became too tired to hold up the staff any longer. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side, holding up his hands until sunset. "

Exodus 34:14 "You must worship no other gods but only the Lord, for He is a God who is passionate about His relationship with you."

Obedience always defeats the enemies plans !

Submitting to God always defeats the enemies plans !

The devils plan is to stop God's order of things. Obedience always defeats the enemies plans!

Psalm 44 ¹ O God, we have heard it with our own ears-our ancestors have told us of all you did in other days, in days long ago:²You drove out the pagan nations and gave all the land to our ancestors; you crushed their enemies, setting our ancestors free. ³They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their own strength that gave them victory. It was by your mighty power that they succeeded; it was because you favored them and smiled on them. ⁴You are my King and my God. You command victories for your people.⁵Only by your power can we push back our enemies; only in your name can we trample our foes.⁶I do not trust my bow; I do not count on my sword to save me.⁷It is you who gives us victory over our enemies; it is you who humbles those who hate us.⁸O God, we give glory to you all day long and constantly praise your name.

His Food for thought:

2 Corinthians 2:14 "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place! And, who doesn't want to walk in Victory and be a sweet aroma!

NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT SOME REAL LIFE THINGS:

1. When you are in the middle of a difficult circumstance: Is God worried about what He will do or what will happen to you? Is He wondering what He should do? Is He out of control? Is He saying, "Oh no, what am I going to do ?". No! He knows what's happenin'! Don't resist Him, Trust Him...He is worth waiting for !

2. Being a Christian will be a "bed of roses," but not without the Thorns! It will cost you a lot to follow Jesus, but it will cost you a lot more not to! Only one life it will soon be past only what's done for Christ will last! This is not our home! We are "strangers and aliens" here. But don't be a "stranger and an alien" in your relationship with God.

3. The World has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in one man or women who is fully and wholly committed to Him. D.L. Moody asked God to make him that man and the Lord gave him his request. God used Moody in a marvelous way and his work is still being blessed around the world !!! "Father like D.L. Moody I ask You to make me that woman" ! (And hang on for the ride of your life, because He will....He is just waiting for you to ask!)

4. Matthew 6:33 NLT "God will give you all your need from day to day, if you will live for Him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern"

5. "Hurry" is the death of Prayer. Rev. 5 says that our Prayers are an incense to Him
6. When men work, "men" do the work. When men "pray", GOD does the work "through" men!
7. Not every storm in life is the result of rebellion. Jesus sent His disciples straight into storms on more than one occasion, not because they were sinning, but because they had need of strengthening...not to destroy them, but to develop them!
8. Ever since the fall we have been malfunctioning. But ever since the resurrection of Jesus Christ we have been Revived!
9. God's grace is greater than man's sin and can accomplish God's best even when men do their worst."
10. The "law" says : "Do what it says and you will be Righteous." JESUS says, "You are already righteous, (through Christ) now live to PLEASE Me, by doing what I say! It is the heart of the matter!
11. While we are here, Satan accuses us, our sin condemns us and the law convicts us. But when we enter the courtroom on the arm of our Bridegroom, everything changes...all charges are dropped for lack of evidence! (Why? Because we are justified because of what Jesus did for us!)
12. Obedience always defeats the devils plans.
13. Satan's plans is always to stop God's order of things. Surrender and submission to God always defeats satans plans.
14. Team Work: The fuel that allows common people to achieve uncommon results." (Ephesians 3:20) "We are better Together"
15. **What you don't know CAN hurt you!**
16. As God's beloved children we live on promises, not explanations!
17. We should all be concerned about the future, because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there!
18. If my will is out of harmony with God, a miniature Hell is set up in my heart. Hell is God giving to men what they have wanted all their lives, freedom from Him.
19. Pray for non-Christians to read the Bible – It will scare the "hell" out of them! (Romans 10:17)
20. Colossian 3:16-17 "LET the Words of Christ richly dwell in your hearts and minds and make you wise. Use HIS WORDS to teach and counsel each other. And let everything you do or say be as a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ"
21. "Be transformed by the renewing of your MIND!" Romans 12:2
22. 2 Chron 7:14 "If My people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and heal their land. Now My eyes are open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place!"
23. There is no Comfort when you are in a growing zone and there is no growing when you are in a comfort zone
24. When we enter the courtroom on the arm of our Bridegroom, everything changes! Because we are justified, all charges are dropped for lack of evidence!