

LESSON 25 - TESTIMONY INCREASE

Why Tough Life Experiences Are Opportunities For Your Testimony

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Why does God give us free will even though He knows we’ll use it to sin against Him? Why does God allow Christians who have already been saved by Jesus to remain on earth to deal with all the consequences of living in this broken and sinful world? Why does God allow us to be able to sin, and to still struggle with the temptation to sin? Why does He allow us to deal with human evil, persecution, famine, natural disasters, demonic oppression, witchcraft, mental illness, disabilities, frailty, disease, and death? The answers are found in the following three truths: 1) the reason we exist is to bring glory to God; 2) the purpose of this life is to determine and prepare us for eternal life; and 3) all our tough life experiences are opportunities to increase our eternal testimony.

1. We Exist To Bring Glory To God. When you’re struggling in a tough season it’s common to feel like you’re cursed and question why God allows bad things to happen. The Bible records many of God’s people struggling with similar challenges and even their prayers crying out to Him for help. Sometimes God saves and delivers people *out* of their problems, and other times He just helps them *through* their problems. When we’re struggling with something it’s helpful to stop looking at it from our own narrow, short-sighted perspective, and view our lives from *God’s* perspective. God created the universe and everything in it—including us—to bring Him glory and *this* is why we exist: for *His* glory, not our own. Romans 11:36 says, “*For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever!*” It’s sinful to be self-centered so as a general rule we shouldn’t be. But when we’re going through tough trials others may come alongside to support and comfort us. This is good, but only seeing our trials as hindrances—rather than opportunities—is not the most empowered, mature, or beneficial way to view life. It’s better to take our eyes off of our problems, and as Hebrews 12:2 says, fix our eyes on Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of our faith. 1 Peter 4:14-16 teaches that if we suffer for being a righteous Christian we are blessed and glorify God. Since the purpose of our existence is to glorify God, it’s better if we *focus on using* our tough life experiences to bring glory to God *with* them.

2. This Life Determines and Prepares Us For Our Eternal Life. Psalm 103:15-16 says, “*The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.*” Life is short: typically 100 years or less, and they’re difficult, fleeting, and uncertain. Your future is not promised. Many people live as hedonists, meaning they make the most out of their lives by enjoying temporary worldly pleasures. They have no concern for whether or not there’s life after death, or if their lives bring glory to God. Romans 2:7-8 says, “*To those who by persistence in*

doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.” Through Jesus, God invites all of us into eternal family relationship with Him as His sons and daughters (Ephesians 1:5). It’s this eternal glory and purpose that we’ve been created and predestined for. The *purpose* of *this* life, and the struggles in it, help determine which of these two paths we love, want, and pursue. The struggles in life also help prepare Christians for eternal life. They help us learn to seek God for help, to trust Him, to become more like Jesus, grow spiritually, and serve others in their struggles. God also uses our struggles to refine and *test* us. In Isaiah 48:10 God says, *“I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.”* Hardships are also used by God to *discipline* us. Hebrews 12:5-8 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. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.”* Verses 10-11 continue, *“God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”* Let your struggles serve as ways for God to discipline you. 2 Corinthians 4:17 reminds us, *“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”*

3. All Your Life Experiences Are Opportunities To Increase Your Testimony. Revelation 12:11 describes the Church this way, *“They triumphed over him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”* This is our universal testimony: we are rescued from death to life by God’s grace, forgiven and cleansed of our sins by the blood of Jesus, and then persevered in our faith until death. You also have a unique testimony; the story of your life, how God met you where you were, saved you, and took you through the struggles you faced. This is *your* life’s story, but it’s also *God’s* story *with you*. Your testimony is part of God’s testimony, too. It includes the things God did with, for, and through, your life. Every testimony is different. Every experience is an opportunity to give it to God and let Him be glorified through it. Every storm you go through is an opportunity to trust in Jesus, who’s with you, sleeping in the boat (Matthew 8:23-27). Every weakness is an opportunity to trust in God’s strength. Every illness is an opportunity to seek God for healing and perseverance now, and trust for a life without illness to come later. Every offense against you is an opportunity for God to help you forgive and love your offender. Every sinful temptation you forsake to be obedient and holy adds to ways you become more like Jesus. *Everything* that you are, do, or go through, can add to your eternal testimony. If you allow God to take your ugly situation, and make it beautiful, it will glorify Him and be something that you will always have as part of your testimony for the rest of eternity. If you don’t, then it’s a wasted opportunity. It will have served no greater purpose at all, and will merely be something bad. Take all you can into eternity. Use as many experiences you can to increase your testimony. Every single struggle you face can serve this purpose.

Let’s pray. Heavenly Father, be glorified in my story. Use my struggles to test, refine, discipline, and prepare me for eternity with You. Help me increase my testimony for Your glory. In Jesus’ name. Amen.