

Lesson 6: How do Trials, Temptations and Trespasses Help Me Grow Spiritually?

Philippians 2:5

INTRODUCTION

The Bible tells us that God will sometimes give us dreams. God is a dreamer. God dreamed about you; before you were born, God imagined what your life could be like. God says, “I know the plans that I have for you . . . they are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope” (Jer 29:11). Until we discover God’s plan—His divine purpose for our lives—we will never see God’s dreams for our lives come true.

IN DEPTH STUDY

In order to achieve God’s plan for our lives, we have to go through His process of preparing us to become as He desires.

- Philippians 2:5 (NIV)

I Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

a) What is your attitude? It’s simply the way you think. God’s plan for your life has always been, to make you like Jesus Christ.

- Rom 8:29 (Msg)

God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son.

God wants us to learn to live our lives just like Jesus.

b) God created man in His image, and His desire and plan has always been to make human beings just like Himself.

This does not mean you are going to be a god. You and I will never be god. One of Satan’s first lies when he tempted Adam and Eve - a lie people still believe today - is that you can become just like god.

c) God doesn’t want you to become a god; He wants you to become godly.

He wants you to develop His character, the way He thinks, the way He acts, the way He feels—**GOD WANTS YOU TO BECOME LIKE HIM.**

God wants you to have His values, His moral character. God wants to make you like Himself; we are to think and act like Jesus. That is God's plan for putting you on this earth.

d) *We have a word for becoming like Christ; it's DISCIPLESHIP. Discipleship is the process of spiritual growth to make us like Jesus.*

• Eph 4:15

Discipleship is a LIFELONG process. You and I are to become more like Jesus everyday.

II God uses 3 tools of discipleship to shape us into the image of His Son Jesus

- When God uses these tools, growth is not automatic.
- These tools will either make us bitter or better.
- These things will either separate us from God, or draw us to Him.
- They will reveal either a heart still bound to sin, or being made to be like Jesus.

• Rom 8:28 (NIV)

And we know that in ALL THINGS God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

When we love God, we can have confidence that He will take even the most painful situation and use it to fulfill His purposes in our lives.

1. God uses TROUBLE to teach us to trust Him

a) *God wants to use the pain of our problems to draw us closer to Him.*

God does not use troubles to hurt us; trials are designed to help us.

• Rom 5:3-4

b) *God wants to use the troubles we face in life to build our character and faith.*

God is concerned about the person you are; God is more interested in WHO YOU ARE than in WHAT YOU DO. God wants to develop your character, not your career, to make you more Christ-like, not more comfortable.

Jesus too faced troubles, trials and problems in His life. (Mark 14:32-36) Whatever the situation, God wants us to learn to trust Him.

APPLICATION

How can we learn to trust God through your troubles and hardships?

i) Keep a spiritual journal. (Num 33:2)

A spiritual journal is about the lessons and insights learned in your life.

- ii) Remember to focus on your eternal reward. (2 Cor 4:17)
The reward will motivate you to keep on keeping on!

IN DEPTH STUDY (CONTINUED)

2. God uses TEMPTATION to teach us to obey Him

- God does not tempt us to sin, the devil does.
- Temptations are situations designed by Satan intended to harm us and lead us into sin.
- James 1:13-15 (NIV)
- Temptation NEVER originates from God; where then does temptation begin? OUR OWN EVIL DESIRE is the starting place.

a) God uses temptation to teach us obedience; temptation is a test to see how much we have grown to become like Jesus.

b) Temptation is a choice.

You don't have to give into temptation, you can say NO and choose to obey God.

1 Cor 10:13, Matt 4

c) Temptation is common to all of us; in other words, we all face the same things in life.

d) God is faithful; God will not let temptation destroy you.

God knows your heart; He knows you are inclined to want to sin. But God won't let Satan bring a temptation your way that will crush you. God is faithful!

e) Temptation comes with an exit; God wants you to pass the test.

God wants to use temptation to prove you—to show how you have become like Jesus through obedience.

f) It is not a sin to be tempted. Jesus was tempted but He never sinned. Sin is to yield to the temptation.

“You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.” Martin Luther

g) You will never outgrow temptation.

Satan is looking for an opportunity to attack us; he is a master strategist waiting for the best chance to get us to fall into sin.

- 1 Cor 10:12 (Msg)

Don't be so naive and self-confident. You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence.

APPLICATION

How can you deal with temptation?

i) Focus on good thoughts.

- Phil 4:8

ii) Get a spiritual partner. Be accountable.

Sin thrives in the dark, but dies when it is exposed to the light.

John 3:20-21.

IN DEPTH STUDY (CONTINUED)

3. God uses TRESPASSES to teach us to forgive

- Trespasses are situations when other people hurt us; whether you are hurt intentionally or unintentionally by someone, that's a trespass.
- God wants to use these trespasses to teach us to forgive.

Matt 6:12.

Forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.

- What did Jesus do? What was His response to trespasses?
Luke 23:34 (NIV)
Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
- If we are going to grow up spiritually and become like Jesus, we are going to have to learn the same thing.
All of us will be hurt at sometime in our lives. This is not heaven. This is a fallen world. Everybody sins. You hurt other people. Other people hurt you. We hurt each other intentionally and unintentionally. You are going to be hurt often in life. And if you're going to become like Christ, you have to learn to forgive.

APPLICATION

How can we learn to take trespasses and forgive?

There are 2 ways you can forgive the people who hurt you:

i) Remember God has forgiven us.

- When you are hurt, rather than focusing on the person who hurt you, begin to thank God for His forgiveness. As we are aware of God's forgiveness, we are then in a better position to forgive others.
 - Eph 4:32 (MsgB)
Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.
- None of us deserved to be forgiven. We are not better than other people. God has forgiven us because He loves us. We need to let His love fill our hearts and forgive as He has forgiven us.

ii) When others trespass against us, remember God is still in control.

- Joseph said to his brothers:
You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Gen 50:20)
- God is still in control. You may not see what God is doing yet, but trust Him. God will accomplish His purposes even through the hurt other people cause in our lives.
- "Faith in God offers no assurance against tragedy, but in every case suffering offers an opportunity for us to display God's work."
(Philip Yancey, Where is God When It Hurts?)

CONCLUSION

God uses troubles to teach us to trust Him. The Lord will use temptation to teach us to obey Him. And God will use trespasses to teach us to forgive. Discipleship is a process, but God will not leave the work He has started in you unfinished. He will complete it.

- Phil 1:6