

Thank God For Struggles

2 Corinthians 4:8-10

- I. Why do we need struggles?
 - A. Discipline
 1. See Hebrews 12:11.
 2. Self-discipline, self-control, patience, and more are learned through problems.
 3. In the face of struggles, behaviors are cultivated that will shape our soul.
 - a. Do we lash out?
 - b. Do we bail out?
 - c. Do we stick with it?
 - B. Testing and Proving
 1. God expects progress.
 - a. 2 Peter 1:5-11
 - b. Luke 13:9; John 15:8
 2. With no test, how can we know our aptitude? See Genesis 22:12.
 - C. The Greatness that can Come
 1. Each struggle gives us an opportunity to be victorious. A pessimist sees an opportunity to fail in every struggle, but an optimist sees an opportunity to succeed.
 2. 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - a. There is a temptation to view temptations as the devil's attempt to pull us down.
 - b. Instead might we view temptations as God's attempt to lift us up? See Genesis 22:1 and James 1:13-17.
 - D. Fortitude
 1. God wants us to have deep roots.
 - a. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jeremiah 17:7, 8).
 - b. Psalm 1
 2. Being unmovable (Psalm 62:6; 1 Corinthians 15:58) is a virtue; unnecessary stubbornness is not!
 - E. To Help Others
 1. The problem you face today may give you a ministry opportunity tomorrow.
 2. "And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

- II. What struggles might we face?
- A. Betrayal (Just like Jesus)
 - B. Persecution (Matthew 5:11; 2 Timothy 3:12-by the way, isn't the opposite true?)
 - C. Lies (See Matthew 5:44.)
 - D. Financial problems (See Luke 12:15.)
 - E. Accidents (See Philippians 4:11.)
 - F. Sickness
 - G. Disappointment
 1. Isn't it strange how life's biggest disappointments can be our greatest blessings?
 2. Study the life of Peter (Luke 22:62; 1 Peter 5:6-9).
 - H. Death
 - I. Prosperity
 1. We don't think of wealth as a problem as much as we should.
 2. People are tempted to leave God when they feel He is not needed. Remember the rich fool (Luke 12:16-20)?

Think on These Things

You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it.

[Margaret Thatcher.](#)

There are several good protections against temptation, but the surest is cowardice.

[Mark Twain](#)

John Piper says that sin (lust for example) "gets its power by persuading me to believe that I will be more happy if I follow it. The power of all temptation is the prospect that it will make me happier."

[E. Lutzer, Putting Your Past Behind You, Here's Life, 1990, p.54](#)

It is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it.

[Benjamin Franklin](#)

Satan will seldom come to a Christian with a gross temptation. A green log and a candle may be safely left together, but a few shavings, some small sticks and then larger, and you may bring the green log to ashes.

[John Newton](#)