

THE LIFE GOD USES AND BLESSES

“How God Shapes A Man”

Jeremiah 29:11

1. GOD SHAPES US THROUGH TROUBLE. If there is one thing that none of desire in our lives is “trouble”. Trouble has a way of working on us mentally, emotionally and spiritually. But to look at the men who were used and blessed greatly by God, there is one powerful reality in their lives- they faced trouble.. Job, though blessed by God with abundance was not without his share of trouble. Natural catastrophes and enemies took away his most precious possessions. David the King faced trouble. During one particular season of his life, he faced the reality that Saul was out to kill him because of his rising popularity among the people. David didn’t ask for trouble but none the less it came. Paul in the New Testament was shaped through trouble. He faced troubles from those inside the church, those who desired to attack him for being a traitor to the Jewish way of life when he came to faith in Christ.

The sobering reality is that God blesses and uses a life, by shaping it through troubles. But why? Before God can use us greatly, God must expose us to ourselves, and teach us reliance, and dependence upon him. It is in the troubles of life that we say such things as “I don’t know what to do!” The truth is, that is exactly where God wants us, because He wants us to depend on him, and cry out to him. Troubles are those tools that God uses to teach us the life lesson of “crying and calling on Him”. Troubles are not designed for us to stand idly by and watch what takes place. But rather they are a time to cry out to God. Consider King David’s prayer in **Psalms 77:2, “In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord...”**

In the life of David, many of his prayers were the overflow of some trouble that he was facing or about to face. We are never genuinely made and developed the way God desires until we have faced troubles in life. Troubles are not accidental though we may not like them- they are purposeful, planned events from God’s hand to develop, mold and shape you into what He desires. Without stresses and troubles in your life, you can never be used to the maximum as God desires.

2. GOD SHAPES US THROUGH UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES. God not only shapes us through trouble, but often times God will shape us by allowing us to face unusual situations either positively or negatively to shape our future. A wise person never thinks for one moment that his life is a random series of events, but rather all things are orchestrated by God for an ultimate purpose- His glory. In the life of Moses, he faced an unusual situation after being born by being placed in the bulrushes to be found by Pharaoh’s daughter. He was placed in the palace of Pharaoh to learn the ways of the Egyptians, and to be educated in ways that God would use later on in his life. Nothing from his birth to his death was without the orchestration of God. God was training Moses by the best minds of Egypt, because God knew that some day He would call Moses to lead the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and all the training and insight that he learned early in life would be beneficial.

However, on the other hand God allowed Paul the apostle to be placed in unusual situation in order to advance the gospel of Christ. Often times it was the lot of Paul to be in a prison for seasons of time but in those prisons it was the plan of God to use Paul to pen letters to the churches. Paul faced approximately 3 years of imprisonment on one occasion where he wrote: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Some of the most famous Bible verses come from these letters that were penned in a dreary prison.

“For by grace are ye saved and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God.” (Eph. 2)

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4)

“And my God shall provide all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4)

Only God knows what can happen in our lives when we are willing for Him to place us in the unusual situation. One reality is true- we will be an awesome blessing to others, and to those who come behind our lives.

3. GOD SHAPES US THROUGH OUR PAST. One reality that we all share is the fact that we each have a past. Some individuals have a past that is relatively pain free, while others were raised in homes where there many hardships to be experienced. Countless Christians have deep within them emotional scars and some even have physical scars based on a less than desirable past. For other Christians, the mere thought of thinking of their past creates a sense of nervousness. Some individuals face the reality of growing up being sexually abused, and verbally abused. Others face the reality that they have hurt another person in ways that are beyond mentioning. Yet, the reality is that God has walked with each of us through our past.

The God that created us has not abandoned us to a life of mediocrity. God declares in Jeremiah 29 that He has a plan for you and me of “prosperity and a future”. Moses realized that God could take him and use him even though he had committed murder. Peter realized that God could use him though at one time he was cowardly. David the King realized that he could be used even though sexual temptation was a weakness in his life. God doesn’t want us based on our past- He wants us in spite of our past. While many things in your life may have been less than enjoyable, God declares that He has been there all the time. **Hebrews 13:5 declares, “...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”** All the things that have happened to you have happened in order that you could be a blessing to others. Paul found in his life, whether good or bad that, **“... all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Rom. 8:28**

In the sight of God, you can’t have too rebellious, too sinful, or too difficult a background for Him to use you. If you have been guilty of deceit, robbery, hatred, racism, adultery, murder, or rebellion, you are in the same company as Moses, David, Paul, Abraham, Jacob, and others.

4. GOD SHAPES US THROUGH TESTS. Before God can use you and bless you in tremendous ways, He will make it His business to test your heart to reveal where the focus of your heart is. David the King said it like this in **Psalms 139:23-24, “Search me , O God...try me...and see if there be any wicked way in me...”** One of the keys to David’s continued usability before Holy God was the reality that he would allow nothing to come between his relationship with the Lord. God will allow us to undergo all manner of tests to reveal us to ourselves.

God will test us in the area of relationships. Salvation is more than “going to heaven”. At the point of salvation, we received a new relationship with the God of the universe in order to relate to Him in a personal and intimate way. God doesn’t make us develop a relationship with Him, but rather He will allow things to come into our lives that vie for our time, to reveal how “important” our relationship is to Him. We were never created for religion, we were created for a relationship. All the events in life are designed to teach us dependence, trust, and confidence in God. Critical, intense times are those situations that God creates to teach us turn to Him in total honesty, and trust.

God will test us in the area of finances. When you receive your paycheck at the end of the week, month, God is watching carefully to see how you use it. It may be that God allows you to almost financially sink in order to watch your dependence on Him. Sadly, for so many their route of escape in credit rather than developing a trust in Almighty God! Financial tests are God’s way of revealing whether we trust Him to come through in financial times or if we will take matters into our own hands.

God will test us in the area of faith. Faith is by its simplest definition, is “confidence in the word of another.” God speaks through His Word, but the ultimate question that we must ask is, “Do I believe that God will do what He says He will do! Our answer doesn’t alter God, but it does determine how much God can bless us with. God can never place a person any higher than his faith is. If there is little confidence in your heart in God, then there is little prayer, little trust, and therefore a small area of usability and blessing. That is never the plan of God. God’s plan for you is great- but faith, and confidence must be developed.

God will test us through commitment. The life of those used greatly of God reveal one truth- they remained committed in hard times, struggling times, grumbling times, complaining times, and hard times. God throughout the pages of Scripture never used a person with small commitment in a great way, or a person with great commitment in a small way.

5. GOD SHAPES US THROUGH HIS WORD. God has given mankind 66 precious books that make up His Bible. Each and every verse has been breathed from Almighty God to His servants to pen. While some verses are more relevant to our lives than others, all Scripture is God breathed. Often times our approach to God's Holy infallible Word is trivial at best. Some approach the Bible as an option for successful living. Others turn to God's Word during seasons of crisis. How we respond to the Holy Word of God declares much about our lives. For the person who refuses to be in God's Word, he or she can never fully understand all the events in their lives, therefore they can never become fully used by God.

Often times in the process of shaping us, God will cause a verse of Scripture to come into our lives that creates a crisis in the present way we are living. For example, God may cause you to think about the verse, "Do unto others as you do unto them." Your response toward God's Word will determine future usability and blessings. For the person who explains away his or her behavior, they will only be used by God in a limited fashion, not because God wants to but because they refuse the shaping through God's Word. However, for the person who desires God's best in his or her life, they will read God's Word and make necessary adjustments in order to follow God's plan of success. It is when we make adjustments to God's Word that God can bring about His infinite best. When we are willing to make adjustments to our lives- then the blessings must come into our lives, because God declared it. Consider David as a prime example. For a season of life after committing sexual adultery, he pretended that nothing happened. He attempted to live his life as usual, yet, it was only when he was willing to adjust His life to the truth, that his life began to flourish. If your life is not flourishing, and experiencing the blessings of God, ask yourself- "Am I really interested in adjusting my life to God's truth, or am I more interested in living life my own way?" The answer will determine what God can do in your life.