

Life Management 101: Trials

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Date: 13 January 2019

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[0 : 00] have a seat, please, in your Bibles, take out, turn to the book of James. As you know, we've been taking a little bit of a hiatus from our study in Ephesians. Two things that I kind of like to do just as I've been preaching for 10 years, I tend to like to use September as a time to remind ourselves as a church what we should be mindful of. And in the new year, January, I like to take some time to remind ourselves of certain truths that God gives to us personally that is lived out as individuals, yes, within the body, but certain things that help strengthen us.

As many of you know, just kind of talked about it, new year, I tabled this sermon, the new year, renew you, just keeping in mind those things that we need to be mindful of. Last week, we talked about the challenge of being disciplined and discipling. That is what God has called us to. My prayer for you is you'd think deeply about this. So, I'm not sure a lot of people during this time set up this plan. They're going to read their Bibles. Some do it in 90 days. Some got people do it in a year. But as you start to read the Bible, you're more familiar with it. You start to come across passages that are tough. Now, there's certain passages which I call odd. A lot of them, no doubt, found in the Old Testament. A lot of times, we just don't understand the context, what's going on. So, we kind of have to dig deep.

But when I'm talking about tough passages, I'm not talking about those type of passages. I'm not talking about the ones that are tough to understand. Today, I want to address a passage that is tough because we can understand it.

There's some passages that are so clear and they're so tough. Just cite a couple as an example. Hebrews 4, 12 to 13. If you know, it's a passage on God's Word.

[2 : 22] And I'll read it for you here. It says, For the Word of God is living and active. Which is great, right? We know we have this Word of God that is living and active. It's actually sharper than any other two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

On one hand, it's very positive. We understand we have this Word of God that is living. It tells us that the teaching are for today. It is relevant. It's active. It still has power. It has purpose. It's still doing something. But then it gets to this other adjective. It's sharp. It's sharp. It's sharp. So sharp that it discerns our thoughts. It discerns our motives. And it says here that all are naked and exposed to him to whom we must give account. That's not easy.

This cut costs. If we are not being obedient and serving after God and we're playing pretend Christian, the Bible is actually the most hurtful thing that we have.

We tend to avoid it. We'll put aside our devotions. We will kind of come to church a little bit more spontaneously. We will avoid listening to sermons online. And sometimes we even get annoyed when people talk to us about God's Word because we know it's true. But sometimes we don't want to be exposed for who we are. Here's another verse. That's a tough verse. 2 Corinthians 13, 5.

[4 : 31] tells us that we are to examine ourselves to see whether you are in the faith.

Test yourselves, Paul writes. Or do you not realize that this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is indeed in you? Paul's command is to take stock of your life. Are you living a life, as Jesus Christ has called you? Are you living a life as if you were truly indwelt by the Holy Spirit and being drawn to things of the Spirit? Or do you find yourself more being drawn to the things of the world? That's a tough passage. Who wants to test ourselves, right? Sometimes we're not sure. Tests make us nervous, scared. But the question that always asks is, what is the test? That's the question that should be in your mind. What is the test? So take a look at James 1 here. James 1 is where we're going to spend some time. And there's also this other tough verse. So we're looking at James

chapter 1.

James 1. This is the passage that Carl read to us today. But check out this verse. Count it all joy when we are blessed with many blessings and God's love is shined upon us. No, that's not what he's saying here. It says, count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds. Really? Count it all joy? Let's be honest. This is the kind of passage it's easier to teach someone else than to teach yourself, right?

It's hard in the midst of the trial to say, count it all joy. God, are you missing something?

Did the scribe who was in charge of writing James' letter, did he really mess up, you know? Did he mix the words up? Like, how can this be that God is asking us to be joyful when we go through these trials? Let me give you a little bit of context to the book of James.

[7 : 21] James is the half-brother of Jesus. He became a leader in the Christian church. They said he was kind of like the head pastor of the church of Jerusalem. And then there was this scattering as Christianity began. They started persecuting Christians. It sent Christians all over the known world at that time. So Christians scattered. And a lot of these Christians, when they would get together, they would be Jewish Christians. And they would get together into these enclaves, right?

So the book is written to first century Jewish believers that are no longer living in Palestine. They've been chased out. Now, how do we know that they're believers? First, we're going to get to it.

It says that. It says, to the Lord, to the 12 tribes of the dispersion. So we know they're Jewish believers who he's writing to. But one of the strategies that the disciples used, the same one that Jesus used, is they went to their own people. So when the missionaries traveled, they would go into the synagogues because then they would argue from the Old Testament to the relevancy of Jesus Christ and that he was indeed the Messiah. A lot of people got saved. So it was one of the strategies that the disciples and missionaries used. What's interesting is whether they left Palestine forcibly or by free will, they congregated in these communities. And we actually see them all over the world today. Any of you guys from Toronto? Right? Toronto, you know Bathurst Street?

You drive down. You drive down. You're like in Israel. Right? It's an entire segment of blocks. It's an entire Jewish community. All the writing. You see all the fishing line crossing over the street. And the fishing line is actually so you can go visit friends on the Sabbath because the fishing line denotes that you're still under the same household. Right? Because in the Old Testament, you're not supposed to travel so long. But if you have a fishing line, it's considered you're still in the same household. So it goes all over. So on the Sabbath, you can still walk to all the shops and see all your friends and families. That's kind of their work around on the laws of God. Right?

But you see it very clearly. I've got this friend of mine. She lived in Iran. She was a Persian Jew. She only knew a Jewish society. Her ancestors were remnants from the diaspora from 583 BC. And they'd always lived in that part of Iran. And it's very Jewish. So there's all these little segments. So these little pockets develop. And what happened in these pockets, a missionary would come in, start evangelizing, people get saved, and then they'd be pushed out of the Jewish community.

[10 : 23] So there's some very real trials that these first century Christians going after no longer to their mother, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their cousins, their friends speak to them.

Because they're not following the law. They're now following Jesus' consequences to life decisions. So Jesus, or James, begins teaching specifically on trials.

So today I want to answer some fundamental questions regarding trials for you. First one is, why does James teach on trials? The second question I want to ask for you is, what is the biblical definition of a trial?

The third, what are trials meant to produce? And fourthly, the ultimate question that we often ask ourselves is, why does God allow trials?

And next week, I hope to, Lord willing, preach on how are we to respond to trials in our life?

[11 : 33] So the first question, I've kind of already asked that question. Why does James begin with teaching on trials? He's teaching these brothers and sisters, and this is the foremost issue on their mind.

They're in a lifelong trial. As they become saved, they've lost friends, they've lost families, they've lost businesses, they've lost avenues of education.

You know, some people have this idea that when we become Christians, we inherit a lot of things, and it's really true. But there's going to be hardships.

It's going to be hard. I know when my mother first became saved, very large Roman Catholic family, and as kids, it was pretty simple for us to understand, we didn't get invited to the Christmas family

dinners anymore.

We weren't invited to the big Easter gatherings where all our cousins were. You know, at first, we thought some fight happened in the family. We were just young kids not understanding.

[12 : 35] But they knew that my mother was no longer Catholic and no longer really open to them. Now, in my mom's blessing, several of her brothers and sisters through the years, guess what, became saved.

And through that, relationships were mended and relationships restored. So, if you know the book of themes, many of the themes in James deals with those who are persecuted.

Persecuted to many Christian families, their brothers, their sisters. We will later read that the saints were slandered in the name of Christ.

They were exploited because of their name in Christ. And they were actually dragged into courts and everything taken from them. The lesson, the primary lesson that James teaches is by becoming a slave of Christ.

There is no guaranteed an easier life. So, I want to give you what I'm going to call a pastoral moment. Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials.

[13 : 48] I find one of the most difficult aspects as a pastor is to pastor people going through trials. And I'm not talking just me as a pastor, but me as a person.

Because when a person is going through a trial, how many of us say, be joyful? Right? Try it. Go to your friend whose child has been diagnosed with leukemia and tell them, hey, be joyful.

It's going to get better. A better day will come. This is going to make you stronger. Okay? The instructions I'm going to give you on trial, this is not what it's for.

In fact, it's the realization that life is painful. And some of you are going to go through very painful times.

And I'm going to give you an example of how to handle someone who's in pain. It's actually found in John 11, 19. We're going to examine Jesus Christ.

[14 : 57] Here's Jesus Christ. He's arriving in the town of Bethany, which is outside of Jerusalem. And he's met on the road by Martha, who informs him that Lazarus, her dear brother, is dead.

Now, this is information that Jesus had beforehand. They kept rushing him. Jesus, Lazarus is sick. Lazarus is sick. Please, come home.

Come home. Heal him. Jesus had a job to do, and he did it. And he then meets Mary, her sister, who tells Jesus that Lazarus has indeed now died.

Now, Jesus could do a lot of things. He could just snap his fingers. He's raised. He could say, hey, don't worry. It's going to get better.

And it really will, right? We're going to see that he will raise Lazarus from the dead. God can do that. But Jesus doesn't do that. Notice in verse 1133, he states, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly wept, greatly troubled.

[16 : 17] And he said, where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. And we then read the shortest verse in the Bible, Jesus wept.

We're to weep and mourn with our friends and loved ones when they're going through trials. That is often the best response.

He didn't say, hey, don't worry. You'll grow from this, right? Be joyful. He doesn't say, hey, I have a purpose for this.

Jesus does something. He gets down in the agony and in the pain with them. Even after telling them, he will raise them from the dead, which they did not understand, but he still weeps with them. That's supposed to be our response to our friends and loved ones, part of this body when they go through trials. So as a pastor, I instruct you.

[17 : 34] I'm going to be giving you some things that we gain by trials, but don't tell people this when they're in the pain. Okay? Second of all, what I'm teaching is teaching for you.

It's not for you to look to the person to the right, to the left, say, husband, this is for you to understand. Wife, this is for you to understand. Tap the person in front and say, hey, you need to be listened to this.

What I want you to do is to say, hey, this is what I need to learn. This is what I need to internalize. So here's the first question. Why does James... Oh, I already answered that. So the best thing we can do as believers in Christ is to just be there with them.

It's not a problem to solve. It's a problem to mourn and weep and love them. So my advice as a pastor is just love and serve those who are in the midst of a sincere life trial. So the second question is, what is the biblical definition of a trial? Trials are often defined here as tests. And tests are meant to examine yourself.

[18:47] So there's these trials that actually test us. Now, some people believe that trials are temptations. And it's true, a trial can turn into a temptation.

But that's not the trial we're talking about. That's not what James is referring to. James is actually referring to trials of life. Challenges of life that expose us for who we are.

The tense of the verb used here tells us this is a continuous process of testing. It's not going to be the same severity of trial, but life by itself is a series of tests.

And the reality is it's not going to end. And you ask why? Because life doesn't end, right? That's the reality. You continue to live.

You're going to be continued to try. So because of this, the trials James is writing about is not one specific trial, but various types of trials.

[19:53] These mostly are external trials. So James is simply talking about what's known as the hardship of life.

The very fact is we live in a fallen world and there will always be trials. I remember a young man thinking, I loved my time at university, but I couldn't wait to get done.

I'll tell you why. I was tired of being poor. I was. I was tired of having milk crates as shelves, right? You find the plank and that's what your books are on.

You got a futon maybe. If you had a few extra cash, you had actually the really nice futon that folded down really well, rather than one you had to wrestle with every night kind of thing.

You know, you would certainly take any kind of hand-me-down for your room. You just didn't have a lot of money because you were investing it. You didn't want debt.

[20:52] And I remember simply thinking, man, when I start making money and I have money, I'm going to have no problems in the world, right? That's what I thought. I can go out and buy anything I want. I don't have to worry about wearing this silly winter coat that was really fashionable in the 80s, but made me look a dork in the 90s, right?

Right? That's what I kind of looked like back in the 80s and 90s, right? But I kept thinking, when I get through this, I'm going to reach that next place. Then all my problems were gone.

Then I start working in the government and I have to go through a trial period. Can't wait until I get through this. Man, everything's going to be really rosy, right? And all of a sudden, every stage of life has a new trial, whether you went to school or not.

I'm sure some of you guys, I can't wait to get through the terrible twos, right? Got the kids. I can't wait until you get to the terrible twos. Then you get to the mayhem force, right? And you're just kind of, everything's a benchmark.

And you just kind of figure it out later after they're all gone, it never ended. Because now your parents, and you're still caring for your kids, right? So they never end.

[22:00] But trials can encompass a lot of things. They can encompass persecution. You could be in the workplace with friends, people persecute you. Could be bereavement over the loss of a loved one.

You could be just dealing with poverty. Work issues. You might have, and this might sound odd, actually have too much money. That can be a problem for some.

You could be dealing with illness. There might be an accident. Could be anxiety, loneliness, disappointment. Sometimes these trials are present issues.

Other times they are past ones. But let me make one thing very clear. They are unavoidable.

Another way to define a trial is an occurrence in life that may trip you up from following after Jesus Christ.

Simple. A simple can be something small. It can be something big. But it could be something that could trip you up from following Jesus.

[23:10] Third question I want to answer is, what are trials meant to produce? What are trials meant to produce? James tells us quite clearly here in verse 2.

He says, for you know the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Easy enough, right? What does that mean? The fact is, as we will dig into later, the ultimate goal is to produce maturity in Christ.

The simple reality of our life is, how we respond to trials reveals greatly about our relationship with God. Did you know that?

How we respond to trials reveals how we are before Jesus. And there's one thing that we need to understand from the book of James.

[24 : 16] He wants us to mature. He wants us to handle these trials. He wants us to take responsibility for what's going on. But the greatest thing that he doesn't want to happen is that you are not saved.

He doesn't want to see you have what it's called a counterfeit faith. So what he's trying to teach these early disciples is that they would have a real faith, because to have a counterfeit faith, think about that counterfeit ticket you're given.

You guys know anything about counterfeit tickets? I remember before in the days when I was young. I say in the days when I was young, because that's the only time I ever sinned. But, you know, sometimes, you guys might not remember this, but the Toronto Blue Jays used to be a really big thing.

They were. From 1985 to 1994, you couldn't get a ticket to get into the Dome. You couldn't. It was a big event. And often my times would go into town, hey, let's go to the Blue Jay game, and we'd have to buy from scalpers.

And it was so nervous, because some guys, guess what they'd get? Counterfeit tickets, right? Some sucker sold them the wrong ticket. They'd get to the aisle. Denied. And that was always your fear.

[25 : 29] So James isn't so worried about you not getting into the Toronto Blue Jay game. He's worried about you not getting into heaven. That's his main concern.

So he wants you to be assured that your faith is real. It's interesting, as I slowly begin to know you, I'm getting to know your stories and seeing how your faith has shaped your life.

It's great for me just to sit back. I like writing kind of notes about who you are. I'm starting to know the expanse. It's a great and beautiful thing that God has done in your life.

Sometimes it wasn't easy, but I love hearing these stories, these testimonies, what God took you through. The reality is maturity of character is not the result of the number of trials in life, but it's the way we face these trials.

So James wants to produce steadfastness, which will lead to perfection and completion.

[26 : 37] The ultimate question is, why does God allow trials? What are these tests supposed to receive?

So this morning, I want to go over with you eight reasons why God allows trials. Scripture actually tells us what they are. I don't want you to lean over to the next person and say, hey, the one that BK is going to talk about on humility, yeah, this is all you.

That's not how to approach this. I want you to write these down and just ask the Holy Spirit to check your heart, your soul. What are the ones that speak to you?

The first reason why God allowed trials is he wants to know how strong your faith is. He wants you to know how strong your faith is.

Exodus 16, 4 writes, Then the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them whether they will walk in my law or not.

[27 : 50] The context of this verse is that God dropped enough bread that sometimes they would take extra bread. Why? Fearing they would not have bread for tomorrow.

But God was teaching his people that you have to rely on me today and today only, and are you willing to trust me that I will provide for you the same goodness tomorrow as I am today.

It's a simple test. I guarantee you, I'm one of those guys, I'm shoving a little bit more under the bread, right? Under the bed. That just kind of, we ask ourselves those questions.

If God was good yesterday, is he not good today? 2 Chronicles 32, 31 reads, God left him, who is King Hezekiah, to himself in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart.

Integrity says, who are you when no one else is looking? It's what God wanted to do to this King Hezekiah who ended up doing great things.

[29 : 02] Fact of the matter is, God uses spiritual trials for us to take stocks of our heart, to allow us to do spiritual inventory of ourselves.

This demonstrates to us our strengths and our weaknesses of our faith. The question in, when in the midst of times of trouble, do you rely on yourself or on God?

The question ultimately is, am I saved? Am I responding as someone who believes in Jesus Christ? Or am I responding as someone who does not know Him?

It's hard to trust God tomorrow when you don't trust Him today, isn't it? Ultimately, as I said, is your faith real or counterfeit?

Second question is, how humble are you? Really? So trials are meant to humble us.

[30 : 08] Second Corinthians 12, 7 reads, So to keep me from becoming conceited, this is Paul writing, because of the surpassing greatness of the revelation, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

Now this is one of the greatest men who ever walked the earth. Who knew? He wrote out 14 different letters to us. And God loved him so much, he actually put a thorn in his flesh so he would not become prideful.

See, trials are given to us to remind us to not let our trust in the Lord turn into presumption and spiritual self-satisfaction. The greater our blessings, the more Satan will tempt us to look on them as if they were our accomplishments rather than God's.

That's where he wants us, on him. It's easy to become proud rather than humble. One of my mentors reminded me a very few years ago, which has stuck with me, he's always said, BK, as you set out, I'm going to tell you the greatest lesson I've ever had over 40 years of pastoring is don't believe your own press coverage.

Don't believe how great people tell you you are. Always dig into God's word to discover who you are, not what others are telling you.

[31 : 39] The third element that why God brings trials into our life is do you rely on God or do you rely on your stuff?

He does it to remove our reliance on worldly things. Here's this interesting verse. It's John 6, 5 and 6. So here we are, Jesus' disciples, and he says, lifting up his eyes then and seeing that a large crowd was coming towards him, this is Jesus, Jesus said to Philip, one of the disciples, right? He says, where are we to buy bread so that these people may eat? And it tells us he said this to test him. For Jesus Christ knew what he was going to do.

Remember Jesus Christ took the loaves and the fish and multiplied them and multiplied them and was able to feed a crowd. It says 6,000 crowds were usually men. Double that with their wives, spouses, you got 12,000.

Add another three or four kids per family. You know what we're talking about? We're talking about a great mass of people. But before that, he's like, hey, hey, Philip, what do you think we're going to do here? What do you think is going to happen?

[32 : 52] And Philip answered him. He obviously had access and he just says, 200 denarii would not be enough bread for each of them to get a little. So he's doing the math calculation, right?

I'm hoping to run to independent and I can grab all their bread, but it's not going to be enough, Jesus. You see, Philip wanted to trust the worldly resources rather than Jesus Christ to meet their needs.

The fact is, the more we accumulate material possessions and worldly knowledge, worldly experience, in some of us, we will accumulate recognition.

We will have the temptation to rely on those things rather than the Lord. these things can include education, work success, important people we know, honors we have given and other worldly benefits that are often not wrong in and of themselves, but they can quickly turn into burdens to us spiritually.

I'm going to share you a funny story. My friend has given me permission to share this story. My buddy loves, above all things, I met him at seminary. He's around my age.

[34 : 16] The most important thing to him in the world was his credit rating. I kid you not. He had the perfect credit rating. He came from a very successful career in finance.

And if you're in the States, I know they do so here, but your credit rating depends on a lot of loans, car loans, house-like. It's not that good or bad. They got this whole point system and man, his was perfect.

And like me, he's single in seminary. He's praying for a wife and he meets the perfect girl. Right? And he's starting to go, man, she's cute.

You know, he's like loving every minute of that. And she's wickedly smart. She actually works with young kids for counseling. Then Kim's the big bomb.

Yeah, she's got like over 100 grand in debt. And she hasn't been making every payment. Every month, right? So this is like huge for him, right? Man, I want to marry her, but if I marry her, I'm inheriting this bad debt thing, right?

[35 : 19] So this is huge. It took him months and months. So he finally marries her. And he works really hard and he cleans up that debt. Then they get pregnant. And they didn't have the right medical insurance.

There's a complication. Next thing you know, there's several hundred thousand dollars in debt, right? And it's interesting. He trained with me and he still has yet to work as a pastor because he had to go back to the business field to cover these debts.

I think I'd be kind of bitter over that, but he will tell you he rejoices in the gifts that God has given them. And just recently, they were able to adopt three young children because their parents were killed in a car accident.

and his riches and he serves as an elder. But God had to work through that perfection, right? It was going to prevent him from marrying his wife and going down that life.

And now he will tell you quite easily he has no regrets. But he said it was hard to give up that idol. Trials reveal what we ultimately really love, don't they?

[36 : 30] Luke 14, 26 says, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Jesus Christ isn't talking about developing a hatred for his family. Jesus Christ is basically saying, Are you willing to follow me at any cost?

Are you willing to follow me at any cost? Abraham, I know there was a promise I gave you. You'd bear a son. His name is Isaac.

He's finally here. Guess what? You're going to build an altar for him and you're going to sacrifice him. That's a tough test. Right? Often many would give up following God, but God gave Abraham a supernatural faith to trust him.

my friends, it's easy trap for us to fall into. Our trials reveal our idols. It reveals what earthly reliance is on things that will ultimately pass away, but we elevate.

[37 : 42] For some people, it's our perception. I have to have the perfect perception. I have seen many Christian friends elevate this whole idea of marriage that they have pursued relationships with unbelievers.

It's tough. As they desire to marry, becomes their idol. They use it to excuse disobedient behavior. Well, my heart tells me I love him, even though Jesus Christ has said no.

The fact of the matter is, when you start making decisions based on your heart, Jeremiah 17, 9 says, the heart is deceitful among all things.

It's desperately sick. Who can understand it? If you're a person prone to making decisions with your feelings, using your heart, stop.

Nowhere in Scripture does it tell you to rely on feelings to make decisions. Our feelings are deceptive. This is a good reminder for us in this church who are married to think about the single married members of our church.

[38 : 53] That we would combine to pray that the Lord would provide godly mates for them. This is something that we're to do for one another. It reveals what we truly love.

Sixth thing, it reveals is what do you really value. Psalm 63, 3, 7 says, because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live. In your name, I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the fat and rich food and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips.

Our reason tells us to value the world and the things of the world. Our senses tell us to value pleasure and ease. Trials teach us to value the spiritual things of God which he has provided abundantly for.

His word, his care, his provisions, his strength, and ultimately his salvation. salvation. These final two, I don't have them in form of questions, but they tell us what trials do.

[40 : 11] It helps us develop enduring strength for greater usefulness. It helps us gain greater strength for greater usefulness. 2 Corinthians 12, 10, For the sake of Christ, then I am content with weaknesses, insult, hardships, persecutions, and calamities.

For when I am weak, then I am strong. Right? Thomas Manton once wrote, The worth of a soldier is never known in times of peace.

Sometimes God has taken you through a trial because he's got something greater for you. And he wants you to be ready, he wants you to be strong because he knows he's got a battle for you. The writer of Hebrews tells us that men and women of the faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises.

It says they shut the mouths of lying, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword from weakness made strong. All you have to do is look at any athlete, any great artist, someone who becomes an expert in their craft.

No one got there naturally. They had to work at it. They had to practice it. They had to invest themselves. Training adds strength, training adds skill, training adds ability.

[41 : 33] And ultimately, the last reason, which is sometimes the hardest, yes, best reason why we go through trials, is it helps us help others in trials.

trials. It's to better help others in trials. How easy it is to understand someone going through cancer when you've been there yourself.

How easy it is to be there for someone who's struggling with the wayward trial when God took you through that 10 years ago. You know, God expects you to do that.

He didn't just give you that trial to punish you. He actually expects you to have learned from that trial and be a blessing to someone else.

2 Corinthians 1, 3, 4 says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

[42 : 46] We learn something from that trial and God's calling us and what really makes it is so great in a church is not all of us have the same trial.

We don't. We're all different. Different lives. But I guarantee you there's no trial in here that is unique. I'd say maybe 2.7% chance.

Right? Somewhere, somehow, God has taken somewhere, someone else through that exact same trial or something close to it and their purpose is to relate, to help.

I don't know. I won't reveal any names of someone in here but someone here I remember when my friend Nathan came and he shared his testimony.

Can I share this, Linda? Nathan, my friend, lost his wife, became an incredible alcoholic, lost absolutely everything. Then one day while working, this is a professional, he's a speech language therapist, could not work, he was showing up to work drunk, lost everything, didn't see his kids for multiple years, he's building fence posts in the interior, here's a Christian radio station, comes on with the gospel, he gets saved and he gets saved out of it.

[44 : 16] So when he's here sharing this testimony, Linda comes up, speaks to him, guess what? I've got a son. Same issue. My friend Nathan today has now built a relationship with him over on the island and is sharing the gospel with him.

They talk. Nathan's not going to let that go because he knows God's grace carrying him through that. He owes it for the next person who's going through pain, a man who's lost his wife and his family and he wants to see that man made whole.

There is a cost to following our Savior and that is to be responsible for what he's given us. and for some of you, it's a trial.

He's given you a trial to use you for his glory. It's interesting, God took Peter, a man who denied Christ three times who would later declare who Jesus Christ was before the high council and was afraid of nothing to the point of the cross where they couldn't shut him up until they crucified him because he couldn't stop declaring Jesus Christ as Lord.

Next week, I want to, now that we know what trials are, next week, I want to spend some time in discussing what are some of the attitudes that we can start developing now in ourselves to prepare us for life's trials.

[45 : 50] Let me pray for you.