

Read 1 Peter 1:3-8. What does Peter say about problems in these verses?

What problems have you encountered recently? How has that problem strengthened and refined your faith?

Thank God today that pain is not pointless. Thank Him for the refining fire that strengthens your faith and character. Ask Him for grace in the problems you face today.

Saturday

Read any daily devotions you may have missed. Please pray for this weekend's services! Thanks!



Look Up: Seeing the Positive in My Problems

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In the Apostle Paul's life, I see God use problems...

1. To _____ me

"My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me."
Acts 22:11 (NIV) (See the whole story in Acts 9)

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. **A man reaps what he sows.**" *Galatians 6:7*

2. To _____ me

In the book of Acts, Paul is redirected by:

- Deportation (Acts 13)
- Mob action (Acts 17)
- Trials (Acts 24-26)
- Stoning (Acts 14)
- Another riot (Acts 19)
- Shipwreck (Acts 27)
- Riots (Acts 16)
- Murder plot (Acts 20)
- House arrest (Acts 28)
- Imprisonment (Acts 16)
- Attempted murder (Acts 21)
- Earthquake (Acts 16)
- 40-person assassination plot (Acts 23)

"We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life... But **this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God**, who raises the dead."
2 Corinthians 1:8,9

3. To _____ me

"...there was given me a thorn in my flesh... Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for **my power is made perfect in weakness.**'" *2 Corinthians 12:7-10*

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into **problems and trials**, for we know that they help us develop **endurance**. And endurance develops **strength of character**, and character strengthens our **confident hope**..." *Romans 5:3,4* (NLT)

4. To _____ the gospel through me

"Now I want you to know, brothers, that **what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel**. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. **Because of my chains**, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly." *Philippians 1:12-15* (NIV)

... but never to _____ me!

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? **Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." *Romans 8:35,37*

Daily Meditations

Monday

Look back over your message notes and all the verses. Which of the points really stood out to you?

Which of the points is most difficult for you to understand?

Which of the points have you seen to be true in your life? Give one example.

Read Romans 8:28-39. What is promised in these verses? How does this encourage you?

Thank God today that even though you will face problems in life, they will never separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus! Ask Him to help you move with a sense of that love throughout the day today.

Tuesday

One point of this weekend's message was that God uses problems to correct me. Read Hebrews 12:5-11. List three truths about God's discipline from these verses:

What is God's goal in disciplining you?

Why should you not lose heart when that happens?

Think back on Bill Dallas' faith story from this past weekend. What does this tell you about one possible result of problems in life? How have you seen this in your life?

Thank God today for loving you enough to discipline you through consequences and troubles. Ask Him to help you avoid the practices that bring about harmful consequences for you and those around you.

Wednesday

One point of this weekend's message was that problems redirect me. How have you experienced this in your life?

Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9. What good effect does Paul say his problems had?

continued 

How have you seen this to be true in your life?

Really, problems always redirect me — sometimes to different opportunities, and sometimes to a renewed focus on God. As Bill Wilson says, they point me away from trust in my resource and back to a trust in my Source.

Bring to God the problem with which you are struggling today. Ask Him to show you how you are to be redirected through this issue — perhaps to another opportunity, or perhaps to a deeper focus on Him.

Thursday

Read Romans 5:1-11. We all face different problems in life; however, the biggest problem we have is that we are all sinners in need of a savior. How is that problem solved, according to these verses?

One point of this weekend's message was that problems perfect me; that is, they help me grow. What do verses 3 and 4 tell you about the problems you face?

Recall a past problem. How did you see the progression of perseverance, character, and confident hope as you grew through your response to that issue?

Thank God today that your ultimate problem was solved when Jesus provided the sacrifice for your sin. Ask Him to help you with the problems you are facing. Ask for the gift of seeing your problems from His perspective.

Friday

Another point of this weekend's message was that God uses problems to advance the gospel — to project his message through my life. Read Philippians 1:12-15. How did the Apostle Paul's problems actually advance the gospel?

How did this happen in our guest Bill Dallas' life?

How have you seen this happen in your own life?



“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.” *Romans 5:3,4 (NLT)*

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