



# FAMILY STUDY

Pilgrim's Progress: From Bad to Good

EPISODE  
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## "Pilgrim's Progress: From Bad to Good"

### What You Meant For Evil, God Meant For Good... (Genesis 50:20)

All of us at one time or another have faced trials, hardships, heartache and such, and have often wondered what good can come from them. As we look in Scripture, however, we see that God can turn terrible things into something new and beautiful. Take for instance the story of Paul. Here was a man who had one thing after another happen to him. He persecuted Christians until he was converted to Christianity himself. When he tried to tell the Jews that he had been wrong and Jesus was the Christ, they tried to kill him. He turned to the church in order to help them, but they were afraid of him and didn't trust him at first. Paul was put into prison numerous times. He was beaten or whipped at least eight different times. He was shipwrecked twice. Yet, through all of Paul's sufferings, God built up a church in every city Paul preached in. Paul probably had more converts to Christianity than any other apostle. He also was used by God to write most of the New Testament.

#### Called According to HIS Purpose

What can we learn from this story? God is able to take your circumstances and turn them into something that will bless you and glorify Him. But there's a catch. Our response to what happens to us plays a big part in how God can use it. Romans 8:28 tells us that in ALL things God works for the good of those WHO LOVE HIM and have BEEN CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. The first thing to remember is that the promise that all things work for good is not for everyone. It is a promise for those who love God and have been called according to HIS purpose. In other words, you need to have first placed your trust in Christ for the promise found in Romans 8:28 to be applied to your situation.

Romans 8:29 continues by saying that God has called us to be conformed to the likeness of His son. What we deem as "good" may not be what God sees as good. The good He wants to see is for us to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus. That may mean that we will face many trials and tribulations in our lives; but as Paul learned, if we faithfully follow Christ, whatever happens to us is for the good of the kingdom.

This Family Study includes several passages that are meant to encourage and challenge you to rethink the trial you may be facing. Look for the good God is trying to do. We encourage you to look up and study these Scripture passages with your family. Don't be a hindrance by producing a sour attitude. Allow God to work through the circumstances in your life to produce a world of good!

#### **Trials May Be a Form of Discipline or Testing**

When we face hardship, as believers we should ask ourselves what it is we may need to learn through this circumstance. Maybe our hardship or trial is caused by sin (Not all trials we face are because of sin, but it is a cause we should always consider). If the trial is because of sin, then we need to get things right with the Lord. When we accept the testing and discipline from the Lord, we will in turn be blessed.

Job 5:17      Job 23:10      Deuteronomy 4:30      Hebrews 12:4-11

#### **Trials Bring About Growth For Our Good**

Every trial or hardship we face can bring about good if we let it. When faced with difficult circumstances, try to find ways to grow. Count your blessings. Look for ways this circumstance can be used for the glory of God.

John 15:2      2 Corinthians 4:16-18      James 1:12

#### **Blessings For Obedience Even In Trials**

If we try to obey and be faithful even in difficult circumstances, God promises us blessings. This is one of the ways that God works things out for our good. Focus on your blessings rather than on your complaints. This is not only helpful to you, but will also be a wonderful testimony to others as they see how you face your trials.

Deuteronomy 5:29      Deuteronomy 7:12      1 Kings 3:14  
Job 36:10-11      James 1:25

#### **Proper Response to Suffering**

Our attitudes toward our circumstances matter. Below are passages that will help you to have the proper response to trials you face.

##### Read Philippians 4:4-9

This well-known passage beautifully illustrates how we should respond to trials or worries. The Lord is near—He hasn't left us, and we should rejoice in that knowledge. Furthermore, we should pray—with thankfulness—about our struggles and should focus our minds and hearts on the blessings of God. And, lest you think, "easy for you to say," remember that Paul was in prison when he wrote Philippians!

##### Read James 1:2-8

We should remember that the trials we face are not beyond God's control and that they will help us to grow. This passage shows us the proper way to think about our trials, and the proper response to them.

##### Read 1 Peter 4:12-19

When trials come because of the name of Christ, we should continue to rejoice so that we may be overjoyed when Christ's glory is revealed.

#### **Character Studies:**

Below are three examples of Bible characters who faced many trials, but who saw those trials used for their good. Read the stories of these characters and ask yourself what you can learn from these people.

**Joseph** - Genesis chapters 37, 39-50

**The Disciples** - Acts chapters 3 and 4

**Paul** - Acts chapter 16-28 and 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, 11:23-27