



## Stewarding the Challenges

Reflection Question:

***What have been the pivotal moments when have you grown in your faith?***

***What circumstances surrounding those growth moments?***

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### Types of challenges:

#### 1. Opposition & persecution - Joseph

*'You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.'* (Gen 50:20)

#### 2. Mental & Spiritual turmoil - Elijah (1 Kings 19)

*'...he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."' (1 Kings 19:3-4)*

#### In the midst of this, after being fed, rested & exercise - The presence of God:

*'Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.' (1 Kings 19:11-12)*

#### 3. Circumstances (health, loss, disaster)

James - quite possibly the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church

*'Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.'* (James 1:2-4)

Paul the apostle who planted many churches, was imprisoned, persecuted and beaten.

*'I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 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." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.'* (2 Cor 12:7-10)

*"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Rom 8:28)*

## 5 Biblical Principles:

1. **Trust God** - build a life of trust now - example: Joseph - God had been with Joseph through it all.
2. **Be honest** - scrupulously - example: Elijah - said exactly what he felt no holding back!
3. **Worship / be thankful** in all circumstances - example James saying 'Consider it pure joy'
4. **Find or recall a sustaining word** (Bible or prophecy) - example: Paul praying 'Your Grace is sufficient'
5. **What is God doing in this situation?** - example: Paul stating that God works for the good...

## FINAL THOUGHT

***"God does not use pain in your life to define you,  
but he will use it to refine you."***

Malcolm Duncan

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Reflection Question:

***Which of these passages or principles encourage or challenge you & why?***

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