

All Things Work Together for Good



Upon High
Places

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INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH REFORM MOVEMENT General Conference Youth Department

My dear youth:

All human beings are going to have to face complicated situations in which our faith will be tested. There is no one who is free from this dramatic process; the Word confirms it: **“The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the Lord tests the hearts.”** Proverbs 17:3. The Testimony says: **“In this life we must meet fiery trials and make costly sacrifices,** but the peace of Christ is the reward.... We must be partakers with Christ of His sufferings if we would sit down in triumph with Him on His throne... Those who have yielded to circumstances rather than engage in this conflict will not know how to stand in that day when anguish will be upon every soul...” *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, pg. 69.

But God has left us a very important promise in his Word so that we cling to it: **“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”** Romans 8:28.

Hate in the hearts of brothers

We will take the example of Joseph to illustrate our theme. He was very loved by his father, but his brothers hated him. Here begins Joseph's litmus test. It is somewhat difficult to understand how it is possible that blood brothers could hate one of their brothers so deeply. Many times, the worst tests come from the carnal family, and we will have to be prepared to face them. Sometimes the fault lies with the parents themselves. The way of educating and treating children can be so negative that it causes complicated situations in the lives of the children and the whole family.

The hatred of Joseph's brothers grew greater and greater and reached its highest level when his father gave him a colored tunic as a gift: **"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors."** Genesis 37:3. Let's notice what happened in the hearts of Joseph's brothers: **"But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him."** Genesis 37:4. To this fact of receiving a special gift, Joseph dreamed that his brothers and parents were going to prostrate and bow down before him. This was the straw that broke the camel's back: **"... and they hated him even more."** Genesis 37:5.

Calvary begins

One day, Joseph's brothers were in the field taking care of the cattle and the young man's father sent him to inform him how his brothers were, which was very imprudent knowing the situation. But Jose went and found them. When they saw him coming they plotted to kill him (Genesis 37:12), what a terrible trial by fire for Joseph, now his Calvary was going to begin. His brother Reuben interceded for him and asked that he be thrown into a well, thinking that later he could get him out of there and take him back to his father. Always, in the test, true brothers and friends manifest themselves.

They threw him into a well but here comes a miracle from God that confirms that everything works together for the good of the children of God. They threw him in a well, but **"...the pit was empty; there was no water in it."** Genesis 37:24. It might have been full of water and he might have drowned, but it was empty, dry. In this situation, Judah suggested that they sell the young man to a caravan of Ishmaelites heading to Egypt, which they did. Who decided that the well was dry? Who put that caravan of Ishmaelites near where they were? God, God, only God. Joseph was in the litmus test of his life, but God was acting, everything was foreseen, that's why we don't do well to despair when tests come. God knew the end from the beginning, He knew where he wanted to go and how; a journey drawn up very wisely, in which there were ups and downs with the aim of making Joseph's faith grow.

Sometimes, dear youth, the best things in our lives come wrapped in very ugly wrapping paper, really ugly; however, inside is a most beautiful present. Let's not stay entangled in trials, let's not lose faith, let's move on knowing that all things work for our good.

A great temptation

In Egypt, Joseph continued to face trials by fire. He was sold by the Ishmaelites to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer and captain of the guard. The Bible says that God was with Joseph and made him prosper in all the work he did for his Lord. God made Joseph prosperous (Genesis 39:3). Not everything is bitter in life. But this peace was not going to last long, Potiphar's wife noticed Joseph, because she was very attractive and she asked him to sleep with him over and over again, but Joseph was faithful to God and always rejected that indecent proposal. One day she, determined to sleep with him, insisted and was forcing him, so Joseph fled. She accused him to her husband of abuse and Joseph ended up in jail.

First, they deprived Joseph of his father's love, second, they threw him into a well, third, they sold him to the Ishmaelites, fourth, they sold him to an Egyptian official, fifth, he was accused by Potiphar's wife of something that was wrong and that he had not done for no reason, sixth they put him in jail. If someone complains about having trials, look at Joseph. Now, being in jail... how can we say that everything works together for the good of the children of God? Was the jail working for Joseph's good?

From prison to the throne

Now Joseph was in jail. It must not have been easy for him to endure this trial by fire, it was unfair, why did God allow it? Let us not forget, dear young people, what was mentioned before, that God traces the path of each one of us, knowing what end we are going to have and since God always desires the good for us and a blessed end, we must cling to His promises (Jeremiah 29:11). This is what Joseph did.

While in prison, God showed him mercy and infinite love because Joseph found grace in the eyes of the prison manager (Genesis 39:21). And Joseph became responsible for everything that was done there. In this situation Joseph also saw the hand of God move to bless him. In prison he met two people who had served Pharaoh and ended up in prison. They each had a dream and Joseph interpreted them. Joseph asked one of them to remember him when he was restored to his position, and when the time came to leave prison, that man forgot about Joseph. Another blow for Joseph.

Two years passed, how difficult it must have been for Joseph to suffer that injustice, but he did not despair, he thought about how God had been with him until then. And then Pharaoh had a dream, but he didn't know how to interpret it. Finally, the chief cupbearer—whose dream Joseph interpreted in prison—told Pharaoh that he knew a young man who could help him. This is how Joseph got out of prison; he interpreted Pharaoh's dream and became the second lord of the land of Egypt. You already know the subsequent story. **“All things work together for good.” “All things work together for good”.** **“All things work together for good.”** Isn't it wonderful, dear youth? A life full of bitterness, but they were nothing more than subjects that had to be passed to pass the course, to graduate in life.

Conclusion

When Joseph was in front of his brothers and they feared the revenge from the one to whom they had done so many years ago, Joseph told them: **“But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for**

God sent me before you to preserve life.” Genesis 45:5. These words sound like heavenly music. What a wonderful story. At this level we can say with complete certainty that God guided all things for the good of Joseph and Joseph himself recognized it.

It's not that we have to misbehave with others to get a Joseph-like effect. No. It is not about violating God's law, but about accepting life's blows with Christian resignation, developing patience and faith when they sell us or mistreat us, accuse us or lock us up in jail, because it may be that the devil is doing all this to destroy us, but God does not allow it, but draws a path full of obstacles destined for the throne of heaven.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had to go through Calvary, He was the most tested human, but his destiny was the heavenly throne, glory. All the suffering He had to go through was very complicated, difficult, and bitter. The Bible calls him a “Man of sorrows,” “experienced in brokenness”; but the final destination is our eternal salvation. It was worth it.

Cheer up youth and keep going, despite the trials or difficulties you may face. God is with you. Blessings. Amen.

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For personal reflection and group discussion:

1. What promise does God make to his children regarding trials?
2. Why is it not easy at all to face the tests that come to us?
3. What does a successfully endured trial produce in the human soul?