

Growth in Affliction

Scripture Reading — Psalm 119:65-72

It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. — Psalm 119:71

We long for tranquil lives. We often pray for health, prosperity, and success.

And yet it is often times of struggle and difficulty that bring us closer to God, along with a greater desire to please him. That's a lesson the psalmist brings out in this section.

Afflictions can easily result in bitterness, robbing us of joy. As we have already seen in Psalm 119, the psalmist has experienced trials at the hands of his enemies. Instead of tumbling into the black hole of bitterness, however, the writer gives thanks to God for two things.

First, he has developed a trusting dependence on God. Despite his trials, the psalmist confesses to God: "You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees."

Second, the experience of affliction has driven the psalmist closer to God and more deeply into God's Word. I long to be obedient, he says. And his search for knowledge and good judgment leads him to affirm the priceless value of God's Word, saying it is more precious "than thousands of pieces of silver and gold."

How do we handle afflictions? We all experience them, and they are not easy. In difficult situations—whatever they may be—we can grow closer to God when we search his Word for the comfort and guidance we need.

Prayer

Lord, you are good, and what you do is good. Teach us your words. Amen.

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