

# ***Afflictions***

*Is any among you afflicted?  
Let him pray. James 5:13*

*Call upon me in the day of trouble  
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.  
Psalms 50:15*

Afflictions can come in many different ways such as physical pain, mental anguish, distressed by an oppressor, and natural calamities. The definition of affliction is any condition or problem that produces suffering or pain. The Webster's Dictionary defines it as, "to inflict physical or mental suffering." In the world today, people go through all kinds of distress or pain. The scripture tells us that God makes rain fall upon the upright and the wrongdoers alike. [Matthew 5:45] Many people question what is the reason or purpose for our afflictions?

During the years 1997 to 1999, I wondered myself why our family was going through pain and suffering when we lost just about everything in a house fire except for a few personal belongings. Did we pass the test? Going through a disaster is not an easy experience to live through. We had numerous roadblocks that impeded our progress for getting our house rebuilt. It is difficult to take care of your physical bodies needs when you are homeless. Relying on friends and family can be difficult as well, for it puts a strain on relationships even if they have good intentions and a sincere heart to help. I realized myself that I had fallen short in patience and endurance. When we go through these afflictions it seems like we are the only one going through them at the time, and everyone else is pointing fingers at you personally for your failure. Like Job in the Bible we can truly say, "my heart was in turmoil, and rested not; the days of affliction came upon me," Job 30:27. In Job's case we can learn an important lesson. First, those who are proud in their righteousness need to take heed on how they convey their righteousness. One of the Hebrew meaning for afflictions is to lower, humble, or deny oneself position. A person who loses status or freedom is impeded in some way. This means that a person is hampered from normal conditions of living. Job realized he missed the mark when he suffered the indignation of his friends telling him to repent of sin after he lost his wealth, sons, and his health. In Job's case it was not a matter of punishment for breaking a law or commandment, but an understanding about God's sovereignty. God has complete power and authority and we ought to take heed and pray for wisdom in all circumstances knowing that God can do anything and no thought [conceived in the mind] is withheld from him as Job exclaims in Job 42:2.

We also have the example of Moses in Acts 7:29-35 when God told him that He has seen the affliction of His people and that He heard their groaning; therefore He has come and sent Moses to Egypt to be a ruler and a deliverer. Here we see how God uses individuals to bring others out of afflictions. Here the children of Israel were crying out to God for deliverance from their oppressors. Even David was delivered when being pursued by Saul and sought refuge through Abimelech a Philistine King. In Psalms 34:17-19, David exclaims that the Lord hears the cry of the righteous and comments that there are many afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will deliver them out of all afflictions and troubles. The cause or source of our afflictions can have different revelations in how we perceive them. We need to realize that these afflictions can build our faith, correct us from our sin, and give us wisdom into the character and knowledge of who God is. We must also realize that in the world today moral evil proceeds from the will of men who are not true Christians. The human condition is seen by the degradation of society were greed and selfish ambition in organized

institutions ruled over those who are in a lower status. We are not to be envious of these people, but rather to pray that their hearts would be changed. David in Psalms states, “rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass” Psalms 37:7.

After our house fire in July of 1997, we lived for six months in an 18’ trailer on our property. We did not know that there was a city ordinance that prohibited people from living in their trailer/RV on their own property. After explaining this to the neighbors who were sympathetic about our situation, they told us that they did not object to us living in the trailer on our property, and they agreed to sign a petition for us to do so; however, it had to pass the city council vote. Our situation was in God’s hands, and we prayed for God to intervene on our behalf. It was a matter of expediency that the council voted on this issue. As we sat in the meeting along with some of our neighbors, almost nothing happened until the end of the meeting. One of the council members brought the subject up for discussion and the urgency of voting on passing a law for emergencies such as ours for temporary living on the individuals own property. They were going to wait another month to vote which would leave us no where to go, and or violate the law. After some objections, they passed a new law for any individual in town who had a fire, flood, or any other disaster can live in their RV on their property for six months. This law not only helped us but everyone in our community. In Proverbs 16:9 it states, “a man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure,” [The Amplified Bible]. We can glorify God for answering our prayer and for moving on the hearts of the people in our community.

When going through afflictions remember that you do not stand alone in your sufferings. We have a High Priest who is able to sympathize with our sufferings and that is Jesus Christ. Jesus gave us the promise of a comforter, which is the Holy Spirit “whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance” John 14:25. Whether it is the rod of correction or the acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God, our God is ever present in every situation. Do not allow afflictions to harden your heart; but pray for God to intervene and you too will glorify God for answering your prayer. Our Lord wants us to have a sensitive and responsive heart that would reflect His love and character. In Proverbs 16:2-3 Solomon speaks wisely in regards to the plans of man, “all the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirits (the thoughts and intents of the heart). Roll [submit] your works upon the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him; He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will, and] so shall your plans be established and succeed,” [The Amplified Bible]. My friends come boldly to the throne of grace and cry out to Him to intervene on your behalf. Allow God to answer you prayer and you will receive his peace and blessings.

**Written by Inge Schultz © 2009**