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## Soaring Above the Problems of Life

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Just as pearls are produced through an oyster's pain, our Father can create a "pearl" from our adversities if we surrender to him with complete trust. A life of continuous pleasure and ease is like quicksand – it will eventually pull us under. We need to face adversity in our lives. If we learn how to respond to adversity based upon God's Word, this is good for us, not bad.

Many things that seem bad to us are good in God's eyes and many things that seem good to us are bad from His viewpoint. He can see so much that we can't see. We see trials. God sees blessings. He knows that the problems that we face often are the greatest things that could happen to us.

We are inclined to conclude too much based upon what we see and hear and how we feel. God knows so much more. Often he is working behind the scene in ways that we can't even begin to comprehend. Many times when everything seems bad, he is actually preparing to bless us abundantly if we'll just hold fast and refuse to waver one bit from the instructions he has given in his Word. Our Father risks allowing problems to break us down because he wants to use them to build us up if we'll just react to them the way that his Word instructs us to react to them.

Sometimes the problems in our lives end up bringing about the answers to our prayers. If we react properly to these problems, our Father often will turn them into blessings that will be the answer to the prayers that we have asked of Him. Often, we pray to God for relief for certain problems when we should be praying for His wisdom and His strength to bring us through these problems to the blessings He has for us on the other side.

Someday when we're in heaven we'll see that many of the greatest blessings in our lives were available to us based upon our reaction to what seemed to be our biggest problems. We'll also see that relatively small problems in our lives on earth could have won us glorious eternal rewards if we had reacted to them based upon the instructions that we have been given in God's Word.

Many of the seemingly worst problems here on earth contain a tremendous opportunity for eternal gain - a blessing that we'll enjoy for endless trillions of years in heaven in exchange for responding properly to a few months or years of adversity here on earth.

"These troubles and sufferings of yours are, after all, quite small and won't last very long. Yet this short time of distress will result in God's richest blessings upon us forever and ever!" (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:17)

We need to realize that God hides treasure in the midst of every problem. Will we look for the treasure? Will we find it? Or will we be so preoccupied with the problem that we miss the treasure that God has hidden in the center?

Adversity often causes us to seek the Lord, and as we draw closer to him, he draws closer to us. "Come close to God and he will come close to you..." (James 4:8, AMP) How can anything be bad if it causes us to draw closer to the Lord and Him to draw closer to us?

It is much, much better to go through the storms of life with a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ than it is to go through smooth sailing without him.

Jack Hartman