

DECIDING TO GROW

James 1:2-4 – Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

1. Develop the right attitude

Romans 12:2 – ‘Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.’

We do not have to simply think whatever falls into our minds, but we have the power to take each thought captive and think things on purpose that line up with Christ.

Philippians 4:12-13 – I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.

Being content in our situations encourages us to find our inner peace in God and embrace the mindset that we can do all things and get through all situations in His strength.

Jeremiah 29:11 – “*For I know the plans I have for you,*” declares the Lord, “*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future*”.

We need to remember that God’s plan for us is good; He knows what is best for us and he has our best interests in mind.

Hebrews 12:2 – *Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Let’s not give into short-term thinking. We must remain focused on the bigger picture and maintain a healthy attitude when dealing with challenges that arise in our lives.

2. Focus on building endurance

John 16:33 – *I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in*

this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”

Although the severity of our struggles may differ, there is one thing that remains the same for all of them – each one is significant in the growth process God has for each of us.

Hebrews 4:16 – *Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.*

Psalms 34:18 – *The Lord is near the broken-hearted; he saves those crushed in spirit.*

In our darkest days, some of the most spiritually significant moments happen in our lives.

Romans 8:28 – *We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*

God uses all of our experiences in life to shape us – not just the good things. God has the ability to bring good out of our struggles if we submit to Him and follow where He leads us.

John 14:16 – *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever.*

If we make a conscious decision to lean on the Holy Spirit in times of great difficulty, we will have the supernatural strength needed to endure life's greatest pressures and learn valuable lessons from them.

1 Peter 1:6-7 – *You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Romans 8:17 – *Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

If we truly want to be like Jesus, God will more than likely take us through similar experiences that Jesus went through.

We must remember that our troubles are temporary, but our character will last forever.

Develop endurance and allow God to mould you into the person He desires for you to be.

3. Choose to mature spiritually

Romans 8:29 – For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

If we go through life ignoring the fact that character development and maturing spiritually are one of God's great purposes for us, our struggles will frustrate us and cause us even greater pain.

2 Corinthians 3:18 – We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

We must make the conscious decision to grow spiritually. Effort has no impact on our salvation, but it has a significant amount to do with our ability to mature spiritually.

Ephesians 4:22-24 – to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

Spiritual maturity is an ongoing process, it is not a destination that we will all of a sudden arrive at one day. It is an intentional commitment; it does not happen automatically. You must want to grow, decide to grow, make an effort to grow and be committed to ongoing growth.

We can choose to remain the same as we are now, or we can make the most of our struggles to grow and become all that God has created us to be.