

# THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE SERIES

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

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THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

## THE DISCIPLINE OF **DIFFICULTY** – PART 1

*A PRACTICAL SERIES ON CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES  
AND HOW WE SHOULD BE LIVING IN THE WORLD AROUND US*

Week 18a of a 31 Week Series

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

**Christianity 101, Faith, Wisdom, Discipleship**

Introduction to the Text;

**Matthew 9:9-11**

**The Theme and Textual Summation of the Passage**

# THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE SERIES

DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

### Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **:19 Go therefore and make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **:20 teaching them to observe all things** that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

### Matthew 9:9-11

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "**Follow Me.**" **So he arose and followed Him.** **:10 ¶** Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. **:11** And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

## “Followed”

ajkolouqe÷w akoloutheo, ak-ol-oo-theh´-o;

to be in the same way with, to journey with or to accompany another by entering into his travels – pilgrimage.

### Noah Webster’s Dictionary Defines...

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#### DIFFICULTY

That which is arduous. a thing that is hard to do or hard to understand; that which occasions labor, perplexity, hardship and requires perseverance. Something that is to be to overcome, solved, defeated.  
any obstacle which is between you and your intended goal.

*“The greater the goal, the greater the level of difficulty”*

### No One Wants To Sign Up For Difficulty – I Think?

It’s Human Nature to Ask:

“Why Do **People** Have to Suffer Difficulty?”

It’s Also Our Christian Nature to Ask:

“Why Do **God’s People** Have to Suffer Difficulty?”

**No Man is Exempt from Difficulty – *Even The Most Favored !***

#### **Genesis 47:7-9**

Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed Pharaoh, :8 Pharaoh asked him, “How old are you?” :9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers.”

*“**∩** come from a long line of people  
who’ve had a lot of troubles”  
- **∩**acob*

What if the very things that we despise the most;  
are actually the things we need the most for heaven?

THE DISCIPLINE OF DIFFICULTY  
DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

**1.) Discovering God in the difficulty**

**DISCOVERING GOD IN THE DIFFICULTY**

**1a.) Discovering *the purpose* of difficulty**

**The Bible is The Book on Deliverance**

Counselors, Philosophers, Physiologist and Priests, where do they go when they need real help and real healing?

**Matthew 9:10-12**

Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. :11 And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" :12 When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, "**Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.**

**"Those who are sick"**

for those who see their need, Jesus Christ is the sweetest of Comforters.

**No one loves their eye-sight more**

than the man who has lost it.

Our Difficulty's Produce within us a **Depth of Purpose** and **Sagacity**  
That otherwise would have never entered into our hearts or minds.

**Philippians 1:12-14**

But I want you to know, brethren, that **the things which happened to me** have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, :13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; :14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, **having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.**

How could this man Paul think like that?  
What made him different in the face of difficulty?

## I Knew Bible – Bible *thru and thru*

### Psalm 34:4

I **sought** the LORD, and He heard me, And **delivered** me from all my fears.

Comfort & Ease will never Ignite Faith.  
(It can't cause the spark that drives the flame - - **only difficulty can**)

### And Here's a Great Example

### Psalm 95:4

In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.

AP: When at least 24 miners climbed out of their rescue cage, they wore T-shirts that said, Gracias Señor. Which is “Thank you Lord” while on the back of shirts was printed Psalm 95:4 which says, “**In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him.**”

Imagine knowing that you are over 2,000 feet down in the bowels of the earth.  
And for the first 17 days you have no evidence that the people on top think you're alive. - - **THE LAST MAN OUT**

## DISCOVERING GOD IN THE DIFFICULTY

### 1b.) Discovering **the fellowship** in the difficulty

### 2 Corinthians 1:8-9

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of **our trouble** which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, **so that we despaired even of life.** :9 Yes, **we had the sentence of death in ourselves,** that **we should not trust in ourselves but in God** who raises the dead,

## DISCOVERING GOD IN THE DIFFICULTY

### 1c.) Discovering **the depth** to difficulty

What do we do when we're **hit with difficulty**?

(As a Christian, I'm never hit with one – **it's special delivery** from His hand)  
Do we go to the Word of God?

**There's a depth to understanding this...**

**Philippians 1:20-21**

according to my earnest expectation and hope **that in nothing** shall I be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. **:21** For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

**Philippians 1:28-29**

do not in any way be terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. **:29** For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

**What did Paul know that we can know? – everything !!!**

**Isaiah 26:3-4**

You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on You*, Because he trusts in You. **:4** Trust in the LORD forever, For in **YAH**, (*The ROCK, SALVATION*) the LORD, *is* everlasting strength.

**Job 23:10**

But He knows the way that I take; *When* He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.

**THE DISCIPLINE OF DIFFICULTY**

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

**2.) Developing maturity in the difficulty**

### Philippians 3:10-15

that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, :11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. :12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. :13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, :14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. :15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind;

## DEVELOPING MATURITY IN THE DIFFICULTY

### 2a.) Difficulty develops **faith**

Every "Faith-Lesson" in the Bible  
Was Prepared in Advance by a Difficulty.

What Do You Know About;  
Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Paul, The Disciples ?

### 1 Peter 1:5-7

who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. :6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, :7 that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Do This Next Time - Ask the Lord This;

*"Father, this could not have come upon me without Your Approval. So then show me the way out of it that Honors You..."*

**!!! GRAB A SCRIPTURE AND HANG ON !!!**

## DEVELOPING MATURITY IN THE DIFFICULTY

### 2b.) Difficulty develops hope

### WHEN HOPE IS LOST – WE CRASH.

But hope doesn't have to be lost – hope is never lost

For 3,000 years these verses have been free for the asking, in the Bible, God's #1 Best Seller...

#### Psalm 42:3-5

My tears have been my food day and night, While **“they”** continually say to me, “Where is your God?” :4 When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. **For I used to go** with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise, With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast. :5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.

#### Psalm 18:33

He makes my feet like the *feet of deer*, And sets me on my high places.

#### Psalm 16:8-9

**I have set the LORD always before me**; Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved. :9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.

**Set / shavah**, *shaw-vaw'*;

to bring to level, to equalize; figuratively, to adjust to counterbalance,

#### 2 Samuel 22:32-34

For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God? :33 It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. :34 **He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights.**

## DEVELOPING MATURITY IN THE DIFFICULTY

### 2c.) Difficulty develops love

It's in those times of difficulty that real love comes to our aid.

#### 1 Peter 4:12-14

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; :13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. :14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

#### 1 Peter 1:8

Him - whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

#### Psalm 34:17

*The righteous* cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. :18 The LORD *is* near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. :19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

## THE DISCIPLINE OF DIFFICULTY

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

### 3.) Distributing life through the difficulty

#### Christian - The "Lordship" of Jesus Christ

is defined by our submission to His rule & reign in the kingdom of our hearts and minds.

#### Matthew 16:24-26

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. :25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. :26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Have you ever thought that Life could actually have a "Perfect Purpose"  
- - *it's realized in the ending* - -

## DISTRIBUTING LIFE THROUGH THE DIFFICULTY

### 3a.) The life of Jesus is experienced thru the difficulty

#### John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

#### **Keys and Combinations unlock Doors and Windows.**

And difficulties are God's keys and combinations that unlock to us more of God.

#### 2 Timothy 4:16-17

At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. :17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

## DISTRIBUTING LIFE THROUGH THE DIFFICULTY

### 3b.) The life of Jesus is known in the difficulty

#### Ephesians 5:1-2

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. :2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

#### 2 Corinthians 2:14-16a

Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. :15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. :16 To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life...

# DISTRIBUTING LIFE THROUGH THE DIFFICULTY

## 3c.) The life of Jesus is depended upon in the difficulty

### Revelation 1-2

saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia..."

**Revelation 2:8** "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life :9 "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty... :10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

*Smyrna* - meaning "myrrh" meaning "bitter."  
**Bitter** to handle but sweet after its **crushed**.

Myrrh is a tree resin with a bitter taste **that was crushed** and used as a perfume, in incense, and as a preservative in burial. It is a symbol of death. It is interesting to note that it was one of the three gifts brought to Jesus by the Wise Men. (See Matthew 2:11) All three gifts pictured something about the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and His mission. The gold symbolized His deity and His kingship; the frankincense symbolized His priesthood and His offering of Himself for our sins, which was a sweet-smelling savior to our Heavenly Father (Ephesians 5:2); and the myrrh symbolized His suffering and death on the cross.

## Here in is the secret to

### THE DISCIPLINE OF DIFFICULTY

**It's recognizing your handicaps and weakness in the sight of an Almighty God.**

1. It is to receive encouragement and then getting up and facing the issues.
2. It's putting on your "war face", going forth while looking for his protection.
3. It's the total realization that we're all, already dead to the world – so live !

## It's Time to Acknowledge Our Difficulty's

By bring them to the altar, by thanking Him for it, by embracing Him with it.

*End of Study*