

INTRO

- As summer approaches, what are your plans?

Faith is fundamental to following Jesus. This series explores faith as a journey and how our faith, like a muscle, can and must be exercised to grow and strengthen.

READ

Gen 50:15-21, James 1:2-4

REFLECT & RESPOND

Joseph's journey of faith involved many trials. Despite the difficulties and disappointments he experienced, particularly at the hands of his brothers, he could truthfully say to them, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

How can we have a similar perspective when we encounter our own trials?

1. God's Good Purpose *Behind* Trials

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. — Rom 8:28 (NIV)

We do not always understand what God is doing, but we can be assured that he is at work for our supreme good.

2. God's Good Purpose *Through* Trials

Our modern society has grown accustomed to viewing trials and suffering as entirely negative. Historically, that has not always been the case. Scripture, in particular, has a different perspective on trials.

Qu: How about you? What is your perspective on life's trial's and setbacks? Have you seen them used for your good before?

James 1:2-4 urges us to look at trials from God's perspective—not superficially making light of

life's trials nor delighting in the trial itself, but what it could produce and result in. Trials are tests that challenge our faith. God uses trials to test and to grow the quality of our faith.

Qu: according to James, what's the payoff for facing trials in faith, instead of running away from them?

3. Facing Trials and Choosing Trials

We can and must face the trials that come our way. But we can also choose trials by doing hard things. For example, Toronto is a great city but many are finding it hard to live here. So, it can be easier to decide to move away. Or...

If you like the city, but you're not sure if you want to stay in the city because the cost is too high, I'd like to ask you to pray about staying. Why? Because it's too easy to make decisions based on personal comfort and lifestyle. It may be that the place God can use you best is the place that is costly, that involves some sacrifice. — Darryl Dash (<https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/straight-paths/dont-give-up-on-the-city/>)

Qu: what hard thing/s do you feel stirred by God to embrace?

God works all things, even evil, towards his good purposes. The cross is the greatest reminder of that:

you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, **to bring it about that many people should be kept alive.** — Gen 50:20

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for those facing a trial to be filled with courage and faith, and to trust God to bring good out of it.
- Pray that we would not give up on our city, and to help those who want to stay to be able to!