

REFLECTIONS

May 20, 2007

**Consider it pure joy, my brothers,
whenever you face trials of many kinds,
because you know that the testing of your
faith develops perseverance.**

James 1:2-3

Something Good

You remember the scene, the one from the *Sound of Music* where Maria and the Captain escaped from the rain to discover the love they had for each other. Maria looked at the Captain with warm affection in her eyes and sang, “*For somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good.*” There was such love between them and the circumstances that brought them together could have only been fostered by God. In a way, the song was a prayer of thanksgiving to God, praising him for the blessing that He bestowed on them; and the prayer supposed a reward for doing something good.

Most of us associate the blessings in our lives with rewards from God, and often the rewards are presumed to be for something good. It is also natural for us to associate the painful experiences of life with God’s punishment. And sometimes God *does* punish us for the wrongs we do; but sometimes punishment is not from God. Such was the case in the Old Testament story of Job, and it is part of the story of Lanell Armstrong.

Lanell Armstrong has devoted most of her adult life to a ministry to young people of the inner-city. Each day she opens her life to these young people to give them a sense of home when they have none, to care for them when no one else will, to be their friend when they have no place to turn, and to give them love when no one else even cares.

But sometimes bad things happen to good people. And indeed something bad did happen to Lanell. One day she received a phone call from one of her children that their home had been burglarized. She hurried home and when she arrived she calmly looked at the mess that was made and observed that some precious things were missing. Then guess what she said? It was her version of, “I must have done something good.”

When something bad happens, we ask God, “Why?” But Jesus told us that in this world we would have trouble (John 16:31). There is a war going on, a spiritual war between God and Satan, and just like Job in the Old Testament and Lanell Armstrong in present times, we are right in the middle of it. And sometimes we get hurt. But maybe those are times for prayers of thanksgiving. When Satan inflicts the pain, well...

We must have done something good.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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