



REFLECTIONS

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**Sing to the Lord, you saints of his;
praise his holy name.
For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime;
weeping may remain for a night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.**

Psalms 30:4-5

Finding Joy

Pains from childhood still weigh heavily. Cooper bears the scars from them on his very soul. Thoughts of never again, never again drive his resolve to make life better for himself, for his family, and, ah ha! better still, for as many others as he can. Why should anyone experience life as he had as a child?

Cooper (not his real name) might have just as easily accepted a fate to a life of misery. Many do. He might have become angry with God, or worse still, rejected God. It's interesting that he even knew about God from his troubled life. But God opens and closes ears just as he opens and closes doors to opportunity. So might it be that God used Cooper's dark childhood days to shape him into the person he wanted him to become? Cooper would not be the first.

Joseph, Jacob's favorite son, comes quickly to mind. Out of jealousy, his brothers sold him into slavery then led their father to believe Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. Later though, after taking Joseph through many other trials, Pharaoh placed him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Distributing food to all the land and to Joseph's own family was right where God planned for him to be all along.

And then there is the question about the man blind from birth. Jesus explained to his disciples, *"this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."* (John 9:3-4) Jesus then healed the blind man. His story still lives as a powerful lesson two-thousand years later.

God has purpose for your lives and mine. So, as James wrote, *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."* (James 1:2-5)

One can't help but wonder if Cooper isn't right where God planned him to be all along. Though childhood scars remain, and new trials confront him in their various forms, Cooper finds joy in his life's purpose. His life verses might be these:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

(Galatians 6:9-10)

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