



REFLECTIONS

October 31, 2021

**In his heart a man plans his course,
but the Lord determines his steps.**

Proverbs 16:9

Unexpected Trials

Who would have expected? A vibrant, five-year old boy, full of life and a bright future took a fall during a moment of crisis. Mephibosheth lived the remainder of his life with crippled feet. (2 Samuel 4:4)

Unexpected events shake, even shape, our lives. They happen to everyone. Your foot slips on a wet wooden footbridge and your homebound for six or eight weeks. Or your body suffers serious injury by a car ignoring a red light, or a serious illness strikes you down for several months. For some the events are life changing, sometimes course altering; but almost always impactful. As we've heard before, we have no choice concerning the events that strike. They happen. But we *can* choose how we deal with them.

Job's wife chose to rebel: [She said to Job,] *"Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"* Job replied, *"You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"* (Job 2:9-10)

Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, complained, *"The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."* (Ruth 1:21) And from his trials, Job expressed submission, *"Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty."* (Job 5:17)

God is always at work in our lives. He may allow bad things to happen, but even as Jeremiah lamented the death of Jerusalem, he clung to a ray of hope. *For men are not cast off / by the Lord forever. / Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, / so great is his unfailing love.* (Lamentations 2:31-32)

Still, we shudder at the thought of facing those painful trials. Jesus sweated blood at the thought of his destiny on the cross; and the prophet Malachi wrote: *But who can endure the day of [the Lord's] coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years.* (Malachi 3:2-4)

God allowed a slip on wet wooden footbridge to sit me down for the season to reshape my self-driven life to fit his purposes. Now, for whatever God may have in store for me, I feel both assured and blessed to be given a part in his plan.

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 1:2-4)

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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