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VCL International  
**VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING CONFERENCE**

***PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS, WHY PROBLEMS?***

**Lesson Transcript by Rob Sundholm**

Turn with me in your manual to the section, “Problems, Problems, Why Problems?” Why do we experience so many problems in life? What’s the point? Well this lesson reveals God’s purpose in trials, tribulations, and problems. It helps us to see why, as it says in James 1, we can “consider it all joy” in the midst of these things.

And it’s not just seeing it. That’s not the only point. It’s coming to the place of being able to experience His life, the fruit of His Spirit. Joy in the midst of circumstances and trials and problems. So Jesus said in John 10:10, in the last part of that verse, “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.” You see, that’s His goal for us. That we would experience His life in the midst of the things that go on day, by day, by day.

On our opening page, there’s a box. In that box there’s a little piece of Romans 8:28. It says, “God causes all things to work together for good.” And as Christians we often know that verse and many times say it to each other in the midst of our trials, “God causes all things to work together for good, brother.” We know that. But do you experience it in the midst of your trials? Are you confident of that? For you see there’s a difference — a big difference between what you know and what you believe. What you believe you act upon. You make choices based on that. You view life through that belief. That truth becomes powerful when you believe it. When you walk in faith and trust the Lord, and that’s His goal. And that’s what we’re going to be looking at as we go through this. How we can walk in that way in the midst of life’s circumstances — trusting, believing, experiencing His life.

Look on your opening pages: there are two paragraphs and down at the bottom there’s a list of the kinds of problems that we’re going to talk about. Three are listed there, and we are going to add another one to it and make it four.

The first kind are problems that God allows for His own glory to reveal Himself to His people. John 9:1–3 says, “As He [Jesus] passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘It was neither that this man sinned nor, his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.’”

The second kind of problems that we’re going to talk about are problems that God allows because He loves us and He wants to bring us to a place of maturity.

The third kind are problems that are a result of our own wrong choices. You know any time when you walk after your flesh, you make a poor choice, oftentimes problems ensue.

And the fourth kind of problems that we are going to talk about in this message are problems that come into our lives because other people make wrong choices. They walk after their flesh; they do something that spills into our lives. And of all those four kinds of problems, it really comes down to one main point. There’s one main purpose that God has for problems and trials in your life as a Christian and that is statement number two, problems God allows because He loves us and wants to bring us to maturity.

Maturity is the goal. Because you see a mature

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Christian — that’s someone that has a deep intimate relationship with the Lord — that walks in faith, that trusts Him. It’s illustrated in James, chapter 1, and I talked a little bit about the first part of verse 2. I’m going to read through it because it illustrates God’s goal in problems and trials. Starting in James 1:2, it says, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials [problems], knowing that the testing of your faith [this problem, this trial that tests your faith and your trust in God as well] produces endurance.” (And it’s not endurance for you and me to do our own thing — to continue to live apart from God — no it’s endurance that comes as the result of the growing of our relationship with Him. The deepening of our faith and our trust.) “And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect [mature], and complete, lacking in nothing.”

I experienced this recently in my life. The Lord gave me or allowed me to have a trial that definitely grew me. And it happened on a Saturday. I got something in the mail from Chase Manhattan Bank. The letter said, “We received your credit application and we’ve approved it. We have a new address on the credit application and we want to know if we should send the credit card to your current address or to the address on your credit application.” And then, down at the bottom, it said, “If you did not apply for this credit, please call us and use this Reference ID Number.”

Well, I hadn’t applied for a Chase Manhattan Bank card so I called them. And as I was talking with the man on the phone, he said to me, “Well, you have a problem because somebody’s using your name and your social security number to apply for credit and we would have given him this card if you hadn’t called us.”

And as he laid out for me the process of what I needed to do — you have to call the 3 credit bureaus and do what they call a fraud alert and that’s really about all you can do, and then you have to wait — I started getting agitated. It

challenged me. That problem was testing my faith in the Lord. What do I believe in the midst of these circumstances? And I had to come back to, I don’t know how this is going to come out, you know, in the midst of the circumstances, but I do know what the Lord is doing in the midst of it. I do know His purpose and His point and because I understood that. I started to have a little peace.

But as the days went on, I think it was about 7 days later, I got my first credit report in the mail, because that’s what they do. You file your fraud alert. The credit bureau sends you a report, and once you get the report is when something can be done. You go through it and see the things that are on the report that you might have applied for, or not applied for. So I looked at it and I saw 3 things on there that I didn’t recognize, that I didn’t think were from me. And so I thought the next morning I’ll get up and I’ll take care of it as I have about an hour before I go golfing. The next morning I was going to go golfing with some guys here on staff at the ministry, one of whom I hadn’t spend time with in a long time, and I was looking forward to fellowshiping with him. I was excited about that, it’d been a while. And so that was my plan.

So I got up that Friday morning, and I started making phone calls. The first place that I called was this place called the Credit Bureau, Inc. in Allentown, Pennsylvania. As I talked with the man there, he told me, “Well, you realize that basically what we do are credit reports for mortgages.”

I said, “So you’re telling me that this person’s using my name and my social security number to try to get a mortgage?”

“Well,” he said, “he’s not trying to get a mortgage, he got the mortgage.”

“Oh…….man!!!” That freaked me out. I started getting anxious and agitated. He gave me a long list of phone numbers to call because the bank

that was initially listed was — you know, the mortgage was bought by another bank.

“You know,” he said, “they’re hard to track down.” And it was hard to track. I started making calls and in the midst of making calls, I tracked it down to a bank that’s affiliated with an investment institution that I’m involved in. And I started to think, what does this person know? Not only is he getting a mortgage on my name, on my credit record, but he’s messing around with the bank where I have investments. What does this person know? And I looked up at the clock and it was almost 8:00. I needed to leave at 8:00, and I hadn’t showered and I thought, you know there is no way I can go golfing. I have to take care of this problem. I’m going to have to call these guys and have somebody else pick them up. All these things to do!

In the midst of me thinking all this stuff, the Lord said to me, “Everything’s fine, son, go golfing.”

And I thought: “Everything’s fine! How can everything be fine? A person’s getting a mortgage. He’s messing around with our investments. You know he’s trying to get a Home Depot card. It looks like he bought a house and is going to fix it up on the Home Depot card on my credit. How can it be fine?”

“Everything’s fine, son,” He said to me again, “go golfing.”

And I started to think, well, even if everything is fine, I am so agitated there’s no way I could play golf. You can’t play golf when you’re agitated. You’ve got to be relaxed. You know, there’s no way I’ll enjoy it. That’s ridiculous. That seems so irresponsible.

“Everything’s fine, son, “He said to me a third time, “go golfing.”

And there I sat, you know, with a choice. And I decided, nah, that’s probably not the Lord. And I

made my phone call to have the other guy pick up, you know, the guys and they went without me. And I proceeded to continue to make my phone calls and I called the investment house and I had the executive assistant let the bank know not to sell anything or let anyone withdraw money because of what was going on. And then I continued to pursue other things, you know, about the mortgage and the bank and whatever.

After about 10 minutes or 15 minutes, she called me back and she said, “Well, that Credit Bureau in Allentown, Pennsylvania, well, the bank and the investment office, that’s the one that we use. And that mortgage there, that’s the line of credit that you took out for the investment strategy that we’re doing.”

And I said,” Oh, so you’re telling me that that was me, I did that? “

“Yes, that one’s fine.”

“Aahhhh, thank you,” I said to her and then I went on to the Home Depot card.

I called Home Depot and I spent a half hour going round and round with her because she couldn’t find the application, but I knew it was there because it was on my credit report. She finally said to me, it was found in the denied credit file.

And I got a little prideful over that, the Lord’s dealing with me here. “What do you mean you denied it? My credit’s perfect.”

And she said, “Well Sir, the address on the credit application was different than the address on your credit reports, so we denied it.”

“Oh, thank you,” I said.

And so I hung up the phone and as I sat there, the Lord came to me and said, “You know, son, I told you that everything was fine and you could

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have gone golfing. You didn't have to miss out on what you wanted to do."

And I realized that I had sat there all morning and leaned on my own understanding. I didn't trust the Lord. I didn't take Him at His word to me.

And He said to me, one of the many things that He said to me, one of the many things I learned from that circumstance, He said to me: "I want you to come to the place of being able to listen to me and respond to me even when it looks strange. When it might look irresponsible. When it might look totally opposite from what the normal thing to do would be. I don't want you to lean on your own understanding, I want you to trust me. I have good things for you."

And you see, that affected me deeply. It grew me in the relationship with the Lord and my faith and my trust with Him. It brought maturity.

And He said, "That's what God uses problems for."

This man who was born blind. Well, when Jesus healed him and he could see, that was a banner day for him. That was a monumental event — life changing. He saw God. Was touched by God. All the people around him saw what God did. A little piece of who He is and how wonderful He is was revealed to them to help them to trust Him a little more. And even in the midst of a problem that's coming because I made a wrong choice or even if I'm in the midst of something really heinous because somebody else made a poor choice, God's goal is still the same. He said even in that, that He'll cause that to work together for good in my life and in your life, if we'll trust Him.

That doesn't mean we have a cavalier attitude and we can do whatever we want. That's not what I'm saying. But what I am saying, "God will use all these things for good just like He says in His Word." Maturity, intimacy, deeper faith,

that is the goal, because that's how His life is experienced.

## **DEATH TO LIFE (Diagram 140-A)**

Let's look at the first diagram — Diagram 140-A. At the top it says, "death to life." What this diagram illustrates are that the world's ways, over on the left, start out easy, but they get harder and they lead to death. And the Lord's ways, they start out hard, but they get easier and they lead to life. You see sin is easy, Satan's way — the way of the flesh, the way of the world, is easy to fall into, it's the easy way to go. That's often what he presents us with.

And you see, that Friday morning I picked the easy way out instead of listening to the Lord and trusting Him, you know, instead of leaning on my own understanding and I could have gone golfing. I could have been blessed with that and trusted the Lord with what He said to me. But I took the easy way out. I trusted in what I saw, what seemed right, what seemed logical, and it got harder and it led to death. By about noon that day the Lord used it to bring me to the end of myself. I understood to a new depth — to a new degree.

It's easy to get involved in things that lead us astray. Think about if you're at home and the hot water heater breaks. You don't necessarily have the money, but you need to get it done. It's so easy to turn to a credit card. And then the next problem hits, and you turn to the credit card again and again. It's easy at first, but it gets harder and it'll lead to death as the bills mount and the interest starts kicking in. You know, lying, when the enemy presents that opportunity to protect yourself and say something that's not quite true, that's the easy way out, but it'll get harder and it'll lead to death. People pleasing — same thing. It's so easy to say and do what other people want you to do, but it'll get harder and it'll lead to death as you end up overly busy, over committed, all kinds of things that ensue.



As you see, we pattern this diagram after Matthew 7:13–14, where Jesus says, “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.” And I believe there’s few, it says, “few are those who find it” because people are not willing to enter in through that narrow gate that leads to life, the experience of His life. Oftentimes we don’t like submitting to the process He has for us that brings about that life experience.

And you see, Jesus illustrated this process of experiencing life in Luke 9:23, “And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’” In the first part of the verse what He’s saying there is, “If anyone wishes to come after me,” He’s saying: “Do you want to be my disciple? Do you want to experience my life, the abundance of what I have for you? Then here’s how it works. It starts with denying yourself.”

The word “deny” in Luke 9:23, means to affirm that one has no acquaintance or connection with. And what the Lord’s asking you and me to affirm that we have no acquaintance or connection with is the flesh, the self-life, the ways of the world, the ways of the old life before we became a Christian, trying to figure it out ourselves, or leaning on our own understanding. Do what seems logical, He says: “Deny that! Deny your old ways. Deny your independence, depend upon me.”

Romans 12:2 starts out, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will” (NIV). Learning to live the way God says life works.

And then [in Luke 9:23] He goes on to say, “and take up his cross daily,” and I want you to notice

in your Bible if you’re looking, that, that “his” there — it’s not a capital “H”, it’s a small “h.” Jesus isn’t talking about His cross. He’s talking to you and I as Christians about our own personal crosses. And what is a cross used for? Well, it’s an instrument of death, an instrument of execution. And Jesus says: “You want to come after me, experience my life? Deny yourself. Deny the old ways and take up your cross daily — the instrument of death daily.”

What does God use in our lives as Christians to bring death, to bring us to the end of ourselves daily, moment-by-moment? Well, what He uses are problems, circumstances, and relationships. He uses, as we’re going to see in the next diagram, everything to bring us to the end of our own resources. Isn’t it true in your life, when you’re in the midst of a really hard problem and circumstance where you start to see that you don’t have what it takes, you don’t have the ability, you can’t figure it out, that you start crying out to the Lord for help, that you come to Him? You see, that’s what He’s after. “You want to experience life, deny the old ways, the independence, take up your cross daily. Let Me have My perfect work in your life through these trials. Because then you see, then you’re free to follow Me, to experience My life.”

Jesus demonstrated this with His own life. In Matthew 26, it talks about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane before He went to the cross. You remember when His sweat was like drops of blood, it was intense, He knew what was coming. The pain, the grief, the ridicule, the separation from God the Father that was coming. Matthew 26:39, “And He . . . prayed saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; [You know, do I need to go through all this pain and this grief and hardship and ridicule and beatings and scourging and all these things? Let this cup pass from me.] yet not as I will, but as Thy wilt.’” [Not what I want but what You want.] You see, He denied Himself. He became willing to do what the Father wanted Him to do. He was willing to do what the Father wanted

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Him to do through His whole life. He denied Himself.

And as He went through all the problems and the trials that ensued before He made it to the cross, He picked up that cross, He carried it up the hill and then He let them bring Him to an end. You see, He didn't have to die on the cross. He willingly laid His life down. He willingly did what His Father wanted Him to do. And, you see, He illustrated that to Peter in the beginning of the whole thing. When Jesus met His betrayer, Peter pulled out his sword and he cut off the high priest's slave's ear, and Jesus healed the man. Matthew 26:52-53, "Then Jesus said to him [Peter], 'Put your sword back into its place; . . . Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?'"

He [Jesus] wasn't forced to do that. It was His choice. He wasn't forced by the crowd and the people carrying Him away. He could have stopped that. He could have called the whole thing off. He let them bring Him to an end. And you see, the reason why the Lord is illustrating this to us is because He's encouraging us to let God do the same thing in our lives with our trials and our problems. Let God be God. Let Him bring you to the end of your own resources, to the end of yourself with this trial, with this problem — daily. Because then you're free: to follow Me, to walk in My life, to experience Me. And you see, what happened with Jesus after He let them bring Him to an end, He denied Himself, He let them bring Him to an end, He died.

Three days later He rose again. He experienced resurrection power, raised to the newness of life, seated at the right hand of God the Father, victory over sin and death. He made the way for you and me to be once again restored into intimacy with the Father. Awesome things happened because of His willingness. And it's the same thing that happens in our lives as we're willing to deny the old ways and, instead, trust

Him in the midst of our trials and let Him do what He wants to do in our lives.

What happens is we come into a place of experiencing what we already have. Second Peter 1:3 says, you and I as Christians have everything pertaining to life and godliness, but it's this process of walking through trials that brings us into a place of experiencing what we have. Experiencing His life. And Jesus said, illustrating the significance of this once again, in Luke 14:27, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." You see, a disciple is someone who's intimate with the Lord and experiences His life. It's the way it works.

And that's why as the diagram illustrates, as Christians it starts out hard. It's challenging to learn to walk by faith, to trust Him with our circumstances and our situations, but as we take those steps of faith and we come more and more willing to let Him do what He wants to do in our lives, what happens is life gets easier and we start to experience life. It doesn't mean our circumstances change necessarily; our circumstances might even get worse. But what happens is our life experiences change in the midst of those circumstances. And that's God's goal.

### **GOD USES EVERYTHING (Diagram 140-B)**

Go to the next diagram. It says, up at the top, "God Uses Everything," and it's Diagram 140-B. God does use every circumstance, situation, and thing in your life — past, present, future. And some of the things that it says on this diagram: He'll use the Scriptures, He'll use caring pastors, He'll use job changes, physical problems, negative circumstances, and marital difficulties. He'll use a Christian upbringing, spiritual seminars, or family conflicts. He'll use all kinds of things. He'll use unemployment. He'll use the new job that He gives you — the promotion and the raise — a nice blessing and then as you start doing the job and new pressures ensue, new responsibili-

ties, and you see you are way over your head, it becomes a trial, even that. What's God's goal in that? That you would come to Him. That you would see your need for Him. That you would trust Him in the midst of that circumstance because in the center of the arrow in your diagram it says, "God's purpose — to bring each person to the end of the self-life, to the foot of the cross daily."

It's not a one-time event, it's a day-by-day, moment-by-moment thing that God's doing in our lives. He wants to bring each one to the end of the self-life, so that Christ's life may be seen. And you see, even before Christ's life can be seen, it must be experienced. You can't counterfeit the life of Christ. See, when I'm intimate with the Lord and I'm experiencing and I'm trusting Him, people will see Jesus in me as I walk in faith. And we take this from Romans 8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." You know I did a deep study of the word "all," looked it up in the Greek, read commentaries, all kinds of things about that word "all" and you know what it means in Greek? It means "all." It means "everything." God causes "all" things, even the things that come in your life because someone else made a rotten choice and it's affecting you. Even that He says, He will cause to work together, He will cause it to work together for good in your life. Everything.

But you might have done what I have done for many years, which is, in the midst of my circumstances I would remember this verse and I would say, "Well, woof, I don't see the good in this. How can this be good. This looks terrible." But you see, it's not what I think is good. It's not what you think is good. It's what God thinks and says is good. Well, what is it He says is good. He answers that for us in Romans 8:29, It says, "for whom He foreknew He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son that He [Jesus] might be the first born

among many brethren." You see, what God is saying is He uses every circumstance and detail and situation in our lives to bring about what He says is good, and what He says is good is that you and I become conformed into the image of His Son. But what does that mean? What does it mean, become conformed to the image of His Son? Well, what it's talking about, what He's saying, is He wants you and me to have a relationship with Him, just like Jesus our older brother has with Him. Well what kind of relationship do Jesus and the Father, the Creator of the universe, have? It's a relationship of intimacy and dependence and reliance and love and faith. Jesus said of Him and the Father, John 10:30, "I and the Father are One."

Intimacy and unity — you see, what He wants from you and me — us. He wants us. He wants a relationship with you moment-by-moment. He wants to show Himself strong in our behalf in the midst of life's circumstances. But we must trust Him, come to the place of being willing to take everything from His hand, every circumstance. Believing that He's going to accomplish His purpose in the midst of it. Whether I can see it or not, I'm going to trust you, Lord. And I don't know how many times I've said, "You know, Lord, I would never pick this, but I'll trust You." I wouldn't pick to have identity theft, someone using my name and my social security number and getting credit cards. I would never pick that. But you know, I am thankful for what the Lord has been showing me through that. How He's been drawing me to Himself in the midst of that. That identity theft has become a blessing to me because of how I've grown in my relationship with the Lord. You see, that's the point. The experience of Christ's life apart from circumstances. That's the goal.

**THE WELL-MEANING DETOURS  
(Diagram 140-C)**

Let's look at the next Diagram 140-C, entitled "Well-Meaning Detours." And you see, these are things that get in the way of you and me

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coming to the foot of the cross which is what the Lord wants, coming to the end of ourselves. And what happens is I might be in a problem or I have a trial and I seek help. I often seek help, because I don't understand the point of the trial. I want to get out of it. I want to fix it. I want to know what to do. So I look to a person or I read a book or I do something to try to figure this problem out. If I go and I ask for help, usually most people don't understand God's point and purpose in trials, and so, they give me a well-meaning detour. They do something to try to make it better for me, to try to ease my pain because they care about me. And they might tell me something, as it says in the diagram, like: "Well, change your daily routine. Get busy doing something creative. Start serving other people to get your mind off the problem. Don't take life so seriously. Go to church more. Get a hobby. Get a new job. Don't think about it." And they say that because they love us and they're concerned about us and it's hard for them to see us in pain. But you see, God's purpose is to bring us to the end of ourselves and He's using those trials and those circumstances to bring us to that place. What happens when we get these well-meaning detours is, as it says in the diagram, we feel better and we're more able to cope, but, what God wants to accomplish is never understood much less realized.

And so, the process will start again because God loves us enough to do what we need in order to do in our lives what is necessary to bring us to the point where He wants us. This is where we experience His life. That's the goal. Colossians 2:8 speaks to this issue, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world rather than according to Christ." No, don't buy into the worldly mindset of problems and trials. Don't see them as your enemies. See them as God views them. They're something that He's using in your life to bring you into the higher life, that deeper experience of Him.

They're actually our friends. They're a vehicle that God uses to take us where we all want to be anyway, with the Lord in intimacy. Right here. Right now.

### **DEAD TO THE SELF-LIFE AND ALIVE TO CHRIST'S LIFE (Diagram 140-D)**

Let's look at the last diagram — Diagram 140-D, "Dead to the Self-Life, Alive to Christ's Life." It's kind of a summary of what we have been talking about as we have been going through "Problems, Problems, Why Problems?" And this is a powerful page. When you are in the midst of a trial or a problem or a circumstance and you're struggling with it, come to this page and read through it, and talk to the Lord about it. It starts with seeing God in what is happening and that's mostly what we have been talking about. It's seeing God in what's happening. What's the point? What's the purpose? How is He using this in your life? See Him in what's happening. It means once again that you don't know what's going to happen in the trial or what the outcome is going to be, but you know what He's doing in the midst of it. He's using it to draw you to Himself. And He sees you start to believe that. That's being renewed in your mind.

You can start letting, once again, God be God in what's happening. You can let Him be your Lord in the midst of it. You know, be willing to accept what He has for you. To take up that cross and let it accomplish its purpose. You know it says in Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." It's a very complete verse. How do you trust in the Lord with all your heart? Well, you lean not on your own understanding. You don't go your own way with your own, you know, insight. You trust God and take Him at His word.

And the next one is, thank God in what's happening. You see, if you believe in what He says in Romans 8:28 and 29, that He's causing all things to work together for good, that He's using these things in your life, even if it's because



somebody else made a poor choice, that He's going to use it for your benefit to deepen your relationship with Him, well, then you can thank Him for that. That's how trials become a joyous thing, when you realize what's going on. It's a relationship builder. That's joyous. You see, life is a training class for eternity. It's all it is. Seventy, eighty years maybe, compared to forever. It's training. It's getting us ready for what's to come. Thank Him for what's happening.

The two verses listed on this diagram, 1 Thessalonians. 5:18 says, **“in everything** give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” And Ephesians. 5:20 says, “always giving thanks **for all things** in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.” Thankful for what He's doing in it, through it, and with it.

And then the fourth one says, trust God in what is happening. And that's really the goal and that's really the point of this message, I believe, is to help you and I grow in trusting Him with what's going on. Taking it as from His hand. Letting Him do what He wants to do. Jesus said in Matthew 10:29, talking about trusting God, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.” Think about that. Think about on the whole earth, how many sparrows there are. Little birdies, they are in the whole earth, and He knows about every single one of them — and not one of them will drop apart from His say so. And see what that tells me, God is involved in the most minute insignificant details of life, let alone the big monumental ones. He has a plan. He knows what He's doing. Jesus goes on to say, Matthew 10:30–31, “And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So, don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.” Insignificant detail number one is, He knows about every bird on the earth. Knows what He's doing with it, what's going on with it. And then, the very hairs of your head are numbered. That means He

keeps up with you every day, by the way, because new hairs grow and old ones fall out. I bet that number changes from day to day. Every day He keeps a tally and a count on what's going on in the top of your head, let alone every other circumstance, what's going on in your marriage, your family, your job, at school. Whatever it is that's troubling you today, He knows about it and He has a plan for it. Jesus once again says, “So don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.” You see, you're worth to God at least one Jesus. You're precious to Him. He's training you. Trust Him. And if we trust Him, we can do the last one which is obey God in what's happening. Do what He's asking us to do.

And I want to end with two verses, I Corinthians 10:13 is the first, because it's something that I find as I meet with people that often is misunderstood. And it says, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.” You see, God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. “You know what happened here,” people will say, “well God won't give you more than you can handle.” You see, that's not true. With temptation it's true. He won't allow you to be overcome with temptation beyond what you're able. He'll always provide you with a way of escape that you may be able to endure it.

But with trials it's a very different thing. He will allow the circumstances of life to pileup. He'll allow us to make poor choices and work ourselves into a corner. Why? Once again, that we may come to the end of ourselves. That we come to Him — see our need for Him.

And the Apostle Paul illustrates this in 2 Corinthians 1: 8 – 9. Here's what he says, “For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren.” He wants us to understand. “For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction

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which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; [at the trials] indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves.” Why? He says, “in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead,” because that’s how life works. It’s all an issue of faith. God wants to build your faith. Satan wants to create doubt. That’s what it comes down to: Can you trust Him in the midst of your problems, your trials, your circumstances? Can you believe, make the choice of faith to accept that God’s using it for your good and let Him do what He wants to do with it? Be willing to be in it until He takes you out. That’s the goal.

## REVIEW

Well let’s review. “Problems in life cannot be avoided. God uses **everything** in our lives to accomplish His purposes. Often problems cause us to come to the point of weakness either physically, spiritually, financially, or relationally so we will give up doing things our way.” So we’ll deny that self-life—that’s doing it our way”. God wants us to trust Him because of His sovereignty, love, and power. And, “We can even thank God for the problems He permits, because they cause us to come to Him and totally depend upon Him.” And you see, thanking Him in the midst of it, well that is a step of faith.