

For Meditation and Self-reflection

Romans 8:28 *"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."*

Ecclesiastes 3:1 *"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."*

James 1:2-4 *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*

For everything there is a time and a season, a time for sowing and a time for reaping. Even in the most dire of circumstances lessons may be learned that will benefit us in the future. Setbacks and failures are necessary stepping stones towards future success. The price of long-term success is short term failure. Many valuable life lessons are best learned through a process of trial and error. Positive qualities of character, such as love, peace, and joy may not be fully appreciated unless we are able to first experience their opposites. To fully appreciate love and forgiveness we must first find ourselves in need of them. To fully appreciate joy and peace, we must know what it is like to experience sadness and anxiety.

Tomas Edison failed countless times when seeking a material (tungsten) for the filament in his light bulb. When a reporter asked, "How did it feel to **fail 1,000** times?" **Edison** replied, "I didn't **fail 1,000** times. The light bulb was an invention with **1,000** steps." "Great success is built on **failure**, frustration, even catastrophe."

The purpose of our earthly existence is to develop the "*fruit of the Spirit*" in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23). These qualities of character cannot be learned in a perfect Heavenly environment. Only in the crucible of negative human experiences here on earth can we truly learn the art of sacrificial (*agape*) love, forgiveness, and compassion. Our successes and rewards in life are most fully appreciated when they are hard won.

The Apostle Paul admonished us to "*give thanks in all circumstances*. (1 Thess. 5:18) In every trial of life there lies a hidden opportunity for self-improvement and progress towards future success and happiness.