

Trusting God in difficult situations

By Ross Callaghan
<http://rosscallaghan.yolasite.com>

We all go through difficult situations!

When we are faced with a difficult situation we have a number of different options. We can:

- worry
- pray
- hope things work out OK
- resign ourselves to what is going to happen
- let the situation happen
- anticipate what will happen and try to sort it out
- trust in ourselves
- trust in others
- seek help
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Probably we will do a mixture of all of these! Some of them will be helpful; some will not. But the best thing we can do is to trust God!

Trusting God

God is sovereign. This means that He knows what is going on, and is able to work in the situation so that ultimately it is for our good.

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. Romans 8:28.

This does not mean that God will sort out the situation and the difficulty will go away (but He can and often does!).

What it means is that we can know that God loves us; that He wants the best for us and will be with us in the situation, regardless of whether the outcome is what we desire. When we trust God our whole perspective changes! In drawing closer to Him we know His love; His joy; His peace; His hope. And then we will have a totally different view of the situation!

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5,6.

In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name. Psalm 33:21

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6,7.

Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7.

You love Him even though you have never seen Him. Though you do not see Him now, you trust Him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. 1 Peter 1:8. NLT.

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You. Isaiah 26:3.

Romans 8:28 is a wonderful promise but it does have two requirements:

- that we love God
- that we are called according to His purposes.

So for the promise to apply to us we must be living in a close, love relationship with the Lord; obeying Him and seeking to always do His will.

When we trust God it means we believe Him; accept His will in the situation; depend on Him, and do what he wants. We can do this because we know that He is completely trustworthy.

The more we trust Him the more we will experience a sense of comfort and hope in the situation. The situation will still be difficult, but now we can face it in a much better way because we are going through it with Him.

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:23.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them. Isaiah 42:16.

Going through a difficult situation with Jesus changes our view of the situation!

So how can we trust God when we are in difficult situations?

Before difficult situations

See Matthew 6:25-34

In this passage Jesus teaches us that God is trustworthy. He says:

- Don't worry about unimportant things (like food, drink and clothes). God knows that you need these things. Worrying about such things won't make any difference in whether or not you have them. God knows what you need so trust Him. Believe that He loves you and will provide for you.
- Recognise that life is much more important than things like food, drink and clothes (just the kind of things that we worry about!). *Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.* In other words focus on the important things of life: being what God wants you to be and doing what God wants you to do.
- God knows your situation. He loves you and will look after you, regardless of what troubles you may be going through. Look to Him. He is trustworthy!

See Psalm 56

In this Psalm David acknowledges the difficult situation he was in, shares this with God, recognizes that God is in control, and then hands himself over to God's care.

- He deliberately trusts in God. v3, 4, 10, 11
- He remembered that God had promised to see him through. v 8-11
- He remembered how God had brought him through in the past. v13

When I am afraid I put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise – in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? v3,4.

So when you are faced with a difficult situation it is not helpful to ignore God, worry, imagine the worst, or try to manipulate what will happen. It is much better to trust God. Invite Him into the situation. Open yourself up to Him. Focus on Him. Trust Him. And then see what this does to your fears, worries and concerns.

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You. Isaiah 26:3.

Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. Psalm 30:5.

During difficult situations

See 1 Samuel 21:10 – 22:21.

David was in a very difficult situation! He tried to run away from it; was *very much afraid*; pretended to be insane; asked for help, worried, got depressed, and got paranoid. Pretty typical! And none of this did him any good. Finally he realised that God was his only hope so he waited to *learn what God will do for me*. 22:2. When he obeyed the Lord he was delivered from the situation. God worked it out, not David!

When we are experiencing difficult times:

- it can seem there is no way out so we scheme and manipulate in an attempt to protect ourselves.
- we often leave God out (yet He is actually there and acting for our good. *Romans 8: 28*).

Difficulties don't mean God isn't there! He is always with us and working on our behalf whether we see it, feel it, experience it, are released from or continue in the difficult situation.

I will never leave you or forsake you. Hebrews 13:5.

Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:20.

We can trust God in any situation, knowing that He is with us. He loves us!! He will never forsake us. Circumstances don't affect His love for us.

See *Psalm 34*.

In the difficult situation *David sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears.* v4.

There is much we can learn from David's reactions as described in this Psalm that will help us when we go through similar difficult situations:

- He praised the Lord *at all times*. v1-3. Even during the difficult situation!
- He sought the Lord and called on Him *and the Lord heard him*. v4-6.
- The Lord was with him, setting His angels around him. v7. (even though David may not have recognized it at the time!).
- He took refuge in God. v8.
- He feared the Lord and turned away from all evil. v9-14.
- He knew that God was there for him. v15,16.
- He cried out to the Lord and knew that God heard him. v17.
- He recognized that God was protecting him. v18-20.
- He didn't feel any condemnation or guilt about coming to the Lord and taking refuge in Him. v21,22. He knew he didn't have to go through it alone! God was with him.

So difficult situations can turn around and be wonderful opportunities for us! We can learn to trust God. We can know the wonderful peace of God. We can experience His comfort, protection and provision. And we can grow.

We rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Romans 5: 3-5

All of this comes if we turn our focus from the difficult situation to the Lord!

After difficult situations

Hindsight is marvelous! We often look back and say "God was with me". And then we praise Him for His faithfulness. That's what David did after he had come through one of his (many) difficult situations.

See *Psalm 18*. In this Psalm David sings to the Lord after he had been delivered from his enemies. He reflects on the goodness of God, and how He had proved Himself trustworthy.

- David really loved the Lord. v1
- He recognized that his only safe refuge was in the Lord. v2.
- He remembered how he felt in the situation, and how this had led him to call on the Lord. v3-6.
- He acknowledged that God heard his cry for help and answered in a powerful way. v7-15.
- He knew that it was the Lord who had delivered him and supported him. v16-19.
- He recognized that this was because he was in a right relationship with the Lord. v20-24.
- He valued God's faithfulness and help, and knew he could not have got out of the situation on his own. v21-36.
- He reflected on the difference between how he was on his own, and how he was when the Lord was with him. v37-45.
- He praises the Lord for what He has done. v46-50.

Just after you have come through a difficult situation you are in a great place to reflect on what has happened and to learn from it. This moment in time goes away quickly so make sure you take advantage of it!

You can learn a lot about:

- yourself
- how you react in difficult situations
- how you could react in the future
- trusting God.

After you have been through a difficult situation it's worth asking yourself some questions:

- What did I do well?
- Why did I do it well?
- What did I not do well?
- Why did I not do it well?
- How can I do things better next time?
- How can I trust God more?
- What have I learnt about myself?
- What have I learnt about God?

So before, during and after difficult situations – in all circumstances – we can trust God.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in time of trouble. Therefore we will not fear. Psalm 46:1,2.

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Romans 8: 28

That's because He loves us!!

Discussion questions

Are there any situations that we can't trust God in?

What difference does trusting God make, when you are going through a difficult situation?

Why does God sometimes sort out difficult situations for us, and doesn't at other times?

When we are in a difficult situation we often doubt God and question whether He loves us, cares about us, or can do anything to help. Why is this?

Think of the major difficult situations you have been through in your life. What did you learn from each of these difficult situations? About God? About yourself? About life? Is your thinking about these situations different now (afterwards) than it was at the time when you were going through them?

Describe situations in which Romans 8:28 is relevant or not relevant. What are the conditions that make this promise relevant?

What have you learnt from your study on trusting God? How will you apply this in future?