

# God Meant It For GOOD!

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Starting in the book of Genesis, chapter 37, we read the story of Joseph. Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. In that chapter, we find that Jacob loved him more than his brothers, and this made them hate him; "Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him." (Genesis 37:3-4)

So, when an opportunity arose, his brothers plotted to kill him! "Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him..." (vs. 20) However, his brother Reuben stopped them from going through with that plan, but they did end up selling him as a slave to a caravan of Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelite took him to Egypt where they sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh.

Now, this already sounds like a bad story. Here was Joseph, a young man who believed in and trusted God, and yet his brothers almost killed him, and ended up selling him as a slave. That can't be good, can it? But look at Genesis 39:2-3 "The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian

master. His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands." Hmmm, Well, maybe things aren't as bad as they could be? But...just wait!

The next major trouble we find Joseph in, he is accused by Potiphar's wife of rape! A crime he of course did not commit. And so, we find him now in prison. "As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, 'This is the way your servant treated me,' his anger was kindled. And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. (Genesis 39:19-20)

We may argue, "Whoa! I thought He trusted God? This can't be good." And while I am sure it was certainly not "fun", we read in the next verse; "But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." (vs. 21) Again, God took a negative situation and made it positive.

It's possible that Joseph was in prison for several years! How can that be a positive we ask, and we have to remember that God does whatever He wants, and His time table is not the same as ours in

many situations. We can look at all that Joseph had to go through in the early stages of his life. Hated by his brothers. Sold into slavery. Falsely accused of rape. Put into prison for a long time. And, we are prone to ask; "How can any of that be any good? What was God doing all of that to him for? I thought He trusted God?"

And we could go on discussing all the additional details of his time in prison. How he was promised by the cupbearer and baker that they would tell Pharaoh about him, yet they seemed to conveniently forget about him, and all that he had to deal with over those long years. But then in Genesis 41, we read; "Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ' Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.'"

WHAT? Wait a minute! An Israelite, former slave and now prisoner became the second in command of all of Egypt? How is that even possible? Because if we jump ahead to Genesis chapter 50 we read; "Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are

today.'" (Genesis 50:19-20) Through all of those difficulties, all of those trials, all of those hardships - GOD WAS IN COMPLETE CONTROL! He had a plan and a purpose for everything that happened from the time Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery to the time when Joseph was installed by Pharoah as a ruler over Egypt.

Romans 8:28 tells us; "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." Notice it says all things "work TOGETHER for good", not all things are good or fun or exciting or what we want necessarily.

Now, you may argue; "Oh, that's just a story in the Bible. God doesn't do things like that!"

In fact, I spoke to the FCA at a middle school one time, and as usual I told my story about how God had placed cancer in my life to bring honor to Him. I got an email a year later from the teacher who had asked me to speak, and she wrote; "I remember your testimony including how God put this on you as a way for you to testify about Him. I disagree with that part of your testimony because God is a good God. He never inflicts pain and suffering on His children. Sickness and disease entered the world when Adam sinned. Sickness

either comes from sin or from accidents occurred in one's life. God does not beat his children up to then heal them. I will not be asking you to speak to our group again unless you can delete that portion of your testimony." Needless to say, I never went back to that school.

I thought to myself; "Have you not read the Bible? The stories of Joseph, Job, Daniel, Paul, and many others?" And we can find many stories of people in recent history as well whom God has sent through trials and difficulties in order to accomplish His plan! I saw a quote recently that said; "God's timing, not mine. God's will, not mine. God's plan, not mine. God's glory, not mine!" And that's the way it is in the true Christian life. Jesus said; "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) A cross isn't fun!

I could fill a multitude of booklets with examples of God's work in lives that seemed questionable but in the end was obviously for His glory. But, I'll just mention a couple examples and then mention a few things from my own life that prove what this booklet is about.

Many of you have heard of Oswald Chambers, and read some of his books including the daily devotional "My Utmost For His Highest".

Did you know that he actually didn't write most of the books and pamphlets bearing his name? His wife, Gertrude Chambers, "wrote" them by listening to him speak and taking short-hand notes of every word he said, and then when he died, she had them put into print.

You may ask; "Okay, what's so important about that? How does that show God's hand at work?" Well, I'm glad you asked, because to answer that question, we have to go way back to when she was just 13 years old. Gertrude as a 13 year old developed severe bronchitis. She had to spend several months each year in bed as other children continued their education. This unfortunate trial in her life led to many things and one of them was she became proficient at shorthand - taking a mail order course in it to further her education.

She became so proficient in shorthand that she could write over 250 words per minute, and later became secretary to the Major General of Woolwich Arsenal in the UK. One event led to another and she soon found herself on an ocean steamship along with Oswald Chambers. They soon became engaged, and Oswald would dictate to her his booklets, and she would also take shorthand notes when he had speaking engagements. All of these notes became what we now read in his published works.



You see, it may have seemed terrible for a 13 year old girl to come down with severe bronchitis. How can that turn into anything good? But as she was unable to continue her regular education because of this, she took up shorthand. And God used her advanced abilities in this area to take down hundreds of notes that would one day be published into books read all over the world!

And if you read about her life, you'll see how God used several what might be seen as unfortunate and difficult times to place her on the path of His choosing and bring glory to His name. This life is all about Him!

We could look at any number of people through out history who faced great trials and difficulties in their live, yet were greatly used by God because they kept their eyes on HIM! Let's look briefly at Hudson Taylor, who was a missionary to China in the 1800's.

Hudson Taylor arrived in China in 1854. The country of China was engulfed in civil war, and he faced trials and difficulties on every hand. Many people would have given up and returned to England, but He knew people needed to hear the Gospel no matter how difficult the road he traveled may have been.

While he traveled across the county of China preaching the Gospel, his medical supplies, stored in Shanghai were destroyed by a fire. And Hudson was robbed of nearly everything he had. He and his wife lost their first child while on the mission field, and he had to return to England with health problems of his own in 1860.

In 1866, he and his family returned to China even though difficulties abounded. He spent over 50 years of great trial and difficulty as a missionary there, reaching people with the Gospel. The mission society he founded brought over 800 missionaries to China and founded over 100 mission schools. He is quoted as saying, "I have found that there are three stages in every great work of God: first, it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done."

He faced many difficult times in his journey, yet his faith in God, and his realization that God had a perfect plan for all of the trials and all of the troubles, allowed him to reach countless thousands with the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hudson Taylor once said; "Difficulties afford a platform upon which God can show Himself. Without them we could never know how tender, faithful, and almighty our God is. How much we may and

ought to trust Him!" And, I have found that to be ever true in my own life!

While I don't even begin to compare myself to Joseph, Chambers, or Taylor, my life has not been easy either, and I have also faced difficult times that have made me from time to time question "Why, God?" But, then I see His mighty hand at work, and I begin to realize - yes, the road is difficult, but He has everything planned according to HIS perfect will and design.

As some of you may know, back in May of this year, I had started writing a new booklet entitled "God Meant It For Good", about how as a Christian EVERYTHING that happens in our lives (even the bad stuff) is part of God's overall plan for our lives to teach us what HE want us to learn, even when we don't understand.

I had started writing this book in May, and in July is when my Mom got deathly sick, and my health also started to deteriorate a bit. But my Mom was SO sick, she came within moments of death several times over the past month or two. And, even though she had started showing signs of great improvement over the past week, God took her home last night as she slept.

But, the afternoon before, I had been watching a sermon by Dr. David Gibbs on YouTube. His sermon was about TRUSTING GOD NO MATTER WHAT. And in that sermon, he shared an illustration. I won't take time to go into ALL the details, but...

David had traveled to a city to speak in a church. The pastor of the church met him at the airport. The pastor asked David since they were close to the hospital, would he mind if they visited a lady?

When David agreed, the pastor said, let me tell you briefly about her. He said this lady had been married with 3 little kids. Well, a year ago - her husband had been instantly killed in an accident at his job site. AND her parents had been instantly killed by a drunk driver on their way to the funeral.

David was shocked.

"BUT" - the pastor told him, "A month ago, this lady found out she has an incurable disease and she is DYING." They spent some time talking with the lady who amazingly was in good spirits. Then David asked "Is there anything I can pray for you about before we leave?"

The lady smiled and replied, "No, I'm fine I'm going to heaven soon, and God has already told me He would take care of my 3 kids"

WHAT? How can anyone who has been through all that be "fine?".  
One word - JESUS!

Anyway, that evening I was talking with my mother, and she asked me what I had been listening to, so I proceeded to tell her the story. Then she said; "Joshua, this past month or two, I have been VERY close to death several times. But, I haven't felt sorry for myself, or even cried, because I KNEW God is in control of EVERYTHING! And I TRUST Him!"

That was our LAST conversation before she passed away.  
Yes, I am still in shock! WHY GOD? She was getting better!!

BUT - God had me watch that sermon and have that conversation with her that evening before He took her home, because GOD IS GOD, and remember ALL THIS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM! Not ALL thing ARE "Good", but they ALL WORK "Together" for Good.

We don't always know what God is doing, but that's why we MUST TRUST HIM!

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God..."

In October of 2012, I was the keynote speaker at the CURE Childhood Cancer luncheon in Atlanta. The luncheon event is an annual event by the CURE organization that honors mothers of children with cancer and those who have lost children to cancer.

The best part for me, was the comments many of the people made to me after I spoke. One lady told me her son who is 8 years old now had been diagnosed with the same type of cancer I had, and also when he was four. She said he is now in remission, but they had wondered how the rest of his life would be. With tears in her eyes she said, "Joshua, you have given me SO MUCH hope for our son's future!" And many others had comments about how much hope and inspiration they got from hearing me speak and share my story.

Now...if I hadn't had cancer myself 50+ years ago, I wouldn't have been able to share a story like I did. Oh, I could have gotten up there and told them some inspirational words or something. However, many would have thought; "What do you know about cancer? You've never had it?". But, hearing my story and how I was supposed to die 50+ years ago from this dreaded disease,

but am still here was what many of the people in the room needed to hear.

Was having cancer fun? NO! Is dealing with all of the daily things I've had to deal with for my entire life fun? NO! But, they changed my life and made me trust God completely. They made me realize how much I need Him everyday, and they eventually caused me to understand that God DOES make EVERYTHING work "TOGETHER" for good.

When I stopped speaking at the end of my short speech yesterday, and stepped down from the stage, everyone in the room stood up and applauded for a LONG time. Many of the faces I looked into had tears in their eyes. And almost everyone I made eye contact with for the next couple of minutes mouthed the words "THANK YOU!!". For me, going through the pain of cancer and the stuff I have to deal with is worth it.

Our lives are not always filled with FUN things. Unfortunately, we have to face some painful things at times. But every painful thing we face is all part of God's plan for our lives. When he brings trouble and problems into our lives, He's NOT destroying our lives – He is CREATING our lives.

When we make a cake, we add flour and other ingredients to it. Now, if we took a scoop of flour by itself and ate it – it would taste terrible, we would spit it out. But when we add to it the good stuff, like sugar, chocolate, etc., and put it all together – we get an awesome cake.

The same with our lives – just because bad stuff happens to us, doesn't mean God doesn't love us. He knows perfectly well what He is doing. And sometimes, in order for us to learn what He wants us to learn, or to prepare us for something He wants in our lives – we have to undergo problems. But when the problems do come – don't give up hope, don't quit, don't stop trusting – In fact, TRUST HIM MORE!!

God is in COMPLETE Control of everything. And HE knows what HE is doing!

Learn to Trust and Obey. That's the most important thing!



## **ABOUT JOSHUA**

Joshua Goodling is a terminal cancer survivor and stroke survivor., At the age of four, He was diagnosed with cancer, and given just one week to live. The doctors said his chances were zero! That was over 50 years ago, so it's been a LONG week! Joshua's life is a testimony of how truly amazing and powerful God is, and how He has a perfect plan for each of our lives. All we must do is have faith in Him, love Him, trust Him, and obey Him!

If you have any comments or questions about truly knowing and experiencing God, visit Joshua's website or contact him.

All of his publications are FREE. If you would like to help him reach people with the Gospel, you may support him via his website.

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