

## **WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: SECTION THREE**

### **Three Responses That Empower the Sufferer – Dependence/Trust**

The comprehensive third response required of the Christian, in order to make the most of our season of suffering, is that of dependence/trust. It can be rightly said that one of the foundational purposes of God in transforming the life of an individual involves a *“transference of trust”* from self toward God, resulting in a lifestyle of deeper dependence upon God. Even our salvation cannot take place without this change occurring at its most basic level. We cease and desist from depending upon ourselves for gaining acceptance with God by placing our trust in the Divine person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Yet this initial transaction is only the beginning when it comes to trusting in God rather than depending upon self. The rest of our earthly Christian life is spent undergoing this process, in every area of life, with greater and more meaningful depth. We are not only saved by faith, but once that salvation occurs, we must live by faith (Romans 1:17). As we do, we find ourselves trusting God more and more, and depending on ourselves less and less. Nothing motivates this transference of trust from self toward God like adversity. Nothing! It is in the context of our affliction that we learn the most important lessons regarding dependence. Paul’s trust in God grew deeper during a time of life-threatening difficulty in Asia. He briefly shares that negative event in his life and the purpose behind it in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 –

**“For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. . .”**

Paul speaks here of an affliction so severe that he became convinced it would result in his death. He found it to be so overwhelming that he gave up any hope for being delivered from it. In spite of Paul’s sense of hopelessness, a deliverance authored by God did take place. The adversity and corresponding deliverance were so dramatic that Paul compares one to death and the other to a resurrection from the dead. Both occurred for a spiritually important purpose: to produce in Paul a transference of trust and dependence, from self toward God. In his letter to the church at Philippi, his personal testimony consists of having no confidence in himself (3:3), while affirming his utmost confidence in Christ – “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (4:13). Nothing contributed more to this transformation in Paul, than the trials which he encountered during the course of his Christian life (Act 9:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:4).

It will be no different for us. As we go through times of suffering, God will use those negative circumstances to tear down the self-sufficient attitude that resides within each of us. His goal in the midst of our pain and hurt, which at times can be overwhelming, is to use adversity in a manner that requires us to depend upon Him rather than ourselves. As we do, we discover that our sufficiency is in our Savior, and that He is totally worthy of our trust. As a result, there develops within us an ever-decreasing confidence in self and an ever-increasing confidence in Christ. Each new trial becomes a fresh opportunity for further progress in this transference of dependence and trust.