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*“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)*

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“THAT NO MAN SHOULD BE  
MOVED BY THESE AFFLICTIONS”

*Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: **That no man should be moved by these afflictions:** for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. (1 Thess. 3:1-4)*

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In time of trouble, some might question God. Some might become bitter, not understanding the nature of the trouble. Why does God allow trouble, pain, sorrow, and affliction to affect His Own people?

Suffering is not necessarily punishment nor does it suggest that God does not know of it or that He is unconcerned. Some examples of guiltless suffering are Job (Job 1:8), Jesus (1 Pet. 2:21-24), and Paul with his thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

Suffering may cause us to develop a deeper and stronger faith.

*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (Jas. 1:2-4)*

*Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: for the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:6-7)*

Suffering may serve as a living example, that through our endurance others may be encouraged. It may influence others to better bear their burdens.

*For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. (1 Pet. 2:19-20)*

*And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man*

*sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. (John 9:1-3)*

*And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. (Gen. 50:19-20)*

Old age may bring weakness and infirmities. With age and experience grateful Christians should remember the Lord's blessings of the past, and through past experiences have had their hope and faith increased to the extent that such afflictions may be easier to bear.

*And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Rom. 5:3-5)*

Suffering may be brought about by our own error, unfaithfulness, or lack of wisdom. By suffering consequences we are made to realize the error of our way and are painfully taught to avoid such error. Experience is a most effective teacher!

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor. 4:17)*

Perhaps the Lord sometimes allows us to be corrected through our suffering for mistakes made.

*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (Heb. 12:6-7)*

Moses striking the rock caused him to fail to enter the promised land (Numbers 20:10-12). David and his affair with Bathsheba caused David to always remember his sin (Psalms 51:3).

Man is a free agent, a being of choice. As a result we must make proper decisions. Death came as a result of man choosing evil. Even though mistakes may be forgiven, the consequence may have a lasting effect or may never be completely overcome. Playing with a stick which put out your eyesight when a youngster will cause you to remain blind throughout your whole life.

Suffering may result when one fails to observe natural law. God does not generally alter natural law to serve a personal instance. The law of nature is for a falling object to go downward. A child who gets too close to the edge of a cliff may fall over and fall to his death. The law of nature is for fire to burn. Fire can be both good and evil: it will burn in a fireplace and cook a meal. It can also burn down a house. When God has seen fit to intervene with the course of nature, that action is referred to as a miracle. God has both the power and the right to perform a miracle when it serves His purpose.

Being a Christian presents the question of why people suffer. There is no question when one disobeys either the law of God or the law of nature (which in reality is also God's law) that one will suffer. However, Christianity does not remove problems, but it gives a purpose in overcoming them.

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. (2 Cor. 1:3-7)*

In conclusion, people will suffer afflictions, but we can be assured that as a Christian, Christ will give us strength to endure.

*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Php. 4:11-13)*

HARRY COBB  
(Deceased)

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## FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT: GENTLENESS

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23)*

“I want to strew my flowers while I’m living.” –Lorene Cofield

Right on the heels of longsuffering (or patience), the next fruit of the Spirit is gentleness, also known as kindness. This is a quality that makes others feel at ease when they are around us. With gentleness, others know you will be kind.

I like to think of this as hospitality. For my grandmother, hospitality is a gift. From the moment a person arrives in her driveway her warm smile is on display. “Y’all get out and come in!” She says this over and over in those first few moments; it’s her way of welcoming guests into her home and into her life. She’ll offer a comfortable chair, and then something to drink, something to eat. Together, she and my grandfather would ask just the right questions to let the guests tell all about their lives. With seasoned grace, they made their visitors feel right at home. Thirty minutes would fly by, maybe even an hour. The guests enjoyed the visit as much as my grandparents.

My grandfather passed away several years ago, and my grandmother lives with my parents now. Still, she still has her warm personality. She welcomes everyone she meets with her pleasant, sweet smile. For her, hospitality has never been confined to her home. She takes it with her, instantly making people feel comfortable in her presence.

In contrast to this, it is simply human nature that when we meet someone new we tend to be guarded. A proud look or a sharp word can quickly tell us that we should not open ourselves up fully. I'm sure you've felt this way before.

If we recognize our own tendency to be guarded at times, can we also see our own actions enough to know if we put others at ease or if we make them feel guarded?

*But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)*

*But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (Luke 6:35-36)*

Just as God is kind, we should be kind. Gentleness, kindness,

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hospitality — the quality of putting others at ease will certainly win us more friends and give us greater opportunity to influence them in a positive way.

Just as with the last fruit of the spirit, longsuffering, it is impossible for this quality to flow out of the abundance of our heart if we do not have a genuine love for others. If we don't love them, we won't be able to put up with their unique ways. If we don't love them, we will not want to bring them into our lives. The first three fruits of the Spirit—love, joy and peace—certainly have an impact on our own spirit.

May we have hearts that are at peace with God, that are full of joy, and full of love. May we grow to have great patience with others to see past any personality traits that could be offensive. May we have courage to let our own guard down and present ourselves as warm and welcoming, as gentle children of God.

CHAD PRINCE  
(Oxford, AL)

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# GOSPEL MEETINGS

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<b>DATES</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>
November 4 - 6	Liberty Liberty, KY	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What did Joseph instruct to be put in Benjamin's sack?
  2. Who was Jacob's first wife?
  3. Which king dreamed about a large statue of a man made from different metals?
  4. What kind of water does Jesus discuss with the Samaritan woman at the well?
  5. Five of the Ten Virgins did not take enough of what?
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## TRUE SUCCESS MEANS FAITHFULNESS

The Story of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) is about the kingdom of heaven (25:14), but it offers an important lesson about success. God measures our success not by what we have, but by what we do with what we have--for all that we have is a gift from Him. We are really only managers to whom He has entrusted resources and responsibilities.

The key thing He looks for is faithfulness (25:21,23), doing what we can to obey and honor Him with whatever He has given us. We may or may not be "successful" as our culture measures success, in terms of wealth, prestige, power, or fame. In the long run that hardly matters. What counts is whether we have faithfully served God with what He has entrusted to us. By all means we must avoid wasting our lives, the way the third servant wasted his talents, by failing to carry out our Master's business.

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"True Success Means Faithfulness," The Word in Life Study Bible  
New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1996, pp. 1690.