

“You are the light of the world.” —Matthew 5:14

Endurance (some translations call it patience) is at the heart of the Christian walk. How much and how well we endure reveals how much Jesus fills us and strengthens us. The challenges we face are often engineered to reveal an area that God wants to grow even stronger in us.

How does all this apply to you being His light in this world? There are two points to consider when dealing with grief: 1) how is God using this to bring me closer to Him, and 2) how is He shining through me to the world that is watching? The first point is usually answered when we spend time with Him in prayer and in His Word. Sometimes there is sin, sometimes there is nothing obvious. But every time a trial unfolds, our Savior wants to walk through it with us, building our patience, endurance and faith.

The second point is that our light can shine brightest in our darkest times and we never know who is

watching. Dwight Moody once said “Where one reads the Bible, a hundred read you and me.” And the chapters of our life they read closest are those where we have faced grief—those points where we deal with anxiety, loss and discomfort. This is where our faith meets real life.

“Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?”

—Job 2:10

People want to know if what we claim is what we live. Do we have a unique source of inner strength, or do we react the same as everyone else? Is there enough of Jesus in our lives to make others want to investigate?

In my first grief, God reminded me of how quickly the flesh will take over a situation if given the chance. In my second grief, God reminded me that everything I have is temporal and regardless of how valuable it may seem, it is nothing compared to my life in Him and His life in me. His light shines strongest when His priorities are our priorities because then we will love our Lord, love our neighbor, and love our

What's Your Problem?

2 Corinthians 12:9

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GOOD GRIEF!

Had any grief lately? Not the grieving that takes place over the loss of a loved one, but the sudden event that exasperates us so much we could just explode—or give up. The kind of grief that ruins your day, or week, or more. A Charlie Brown kind of grief!

Jesus said in John 16:33 “*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*” *NKJV.* Will grief overcome me and hide the light of Jesus in me? Or will Jesus overcome me and have victory in my grief? I hope my following experiences encourage you the next time you face grief so you will always...*Let Him Shine!* —*KC*

My Brother's Grief, My Grief

My first grief occurred at, of all places, a ministry event. I work with a ministry that uses several hundred volunteers and we were busily engaged in our ministry efforts when one of our volunteers (I'll call him *Brother*) let loose with a tantrum that frightened other volunteers and destroyed some church property. When I heard the commotion I went to investigate, but all I found were frightened people and destruction as I saw *Brother* drive off.

To be honest, I was very upset. *Brother* had lost his job earlier in the week and he and I had spent some time praying together and talking about some of his issues. But if I could have caught up to him before he left the church, I would have chewed him up one side and down the other and then told him that he must repent and repair all the damage he had done

if he wanted to stay in the ministry. I was really steamed and not about to put up with this kind of grief!

I told the front desk volunteer to come get me if *Brother* returned. He did return, but I was busy so the volunteer instead got the chairman of the ministry to talk to *Brother*.

When the chairman came by he said that he had talked with *Brother* and found out that he had quit taking his anger management medication after losing his job, because the company had implied he could work there if he were not on those drugs. But today they told him “No job” even though he had quit the drugs (without informing his doctor). Our chairman admonished *Brother* and told him that he could come back to the ministry but that, because of his anger being so strong, he should spend the night working in the prayer room instead of his normal job.



“Let your light shine so that others may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matt 5:16

Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world." —John 8:12

When the chairman told me this, I was immediately, deeply grieved. His solution was divinely guided while mine would have been purely from my flesh. Paul talked about this situation in Galatians 6:1, *"Brothers and sisters, if someone in your group does something wrong, you who are spiritual should go to that person and gently help him right again."* NCV

When Brother threw his fit, I would have followed immediately with one of my own if God had not interceded by separating us. By His grace, no one knew my heart because I never got the chance to confront Brother. Instead, one who was more spiritual than me was used to help restore Brother.

While it is painful to admit my foolishness, I hope it is valuable for others to see how easily and readily the flesh can take over when dealing with trials and tribulations. Brother's behavior was wrong and needed to be dealt with. But our Lord wanted it to be done in a loving way that would restore him to fellowship. And once Brother's grief became my grief, I could finally help him bear his burden. This was a humbling reminder to me of what it really means to love one another as we *Let Him Shine*.

Computer Grief

For most of us, computers and grief are interchangeable words. As much as these devices have increased our efficiency and capabilities, they have also caused more grief than any other machine in history.

Recently, it became obvious that I needed to upgrade my backup drives because I was out of room. I did the routine installation and everything went well. That is, until I restarted my system and could not find the data drive—*or the backup drive!*

Instead of formatting the new drive, the setup program had reformatted the system drives! These drives held years worth of Light-Shine's data—gone was our project information, graphics, displays, newsletters, training materials, conference works, sermons, commentaries, academic course work, materials being readied for publishing, address data and everything else except our financial data (God is so good!). But the meanest part was that it took the backups as well as the data drives. The heart of our system had just been destroyed!

Ironically (*one of those coincidences*), I had just completed reading Job two days before and as soon as I

Shaped for Glory

During the Great Depression, a man lost his job, exhausted his savings and forfeited his home. His grief was multiplied by the sudden death of his precious wife. The only thing left was his faith—and it was weakening.

One day while looking for work, he stopped to watch some men doing stonework on a church building. One of these men was skillfully chiseling a triangular piece of rock. Not seeing a spot where it would fit, he asked, "Where are you going to put that?" The man pointed toward the top of the building and said, "See that little opening up near the spire? That is where it goes. I am shaping it down here so it will fit in up there."

Is God shaping you down here so that you will fit in perfectly up there?

"...you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." —Ephesians 5:8

realized what had happened, I was reminded of Job 1:21, *"I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be stripped of everything when I die. The LORD gave me everything I had, and the LORD has taken it away. Praise the name of the LORD!"* NLT

Please understand, my inconvenience was in no way comparable to Job's tremendous losses. And I did not believe that the Lord had wrecked my computer (the Devil did that!). I was just being reminded that my Lord was still in charge and that I should be praising Him regardless of circumstances. Then, as a further reminder, a song came on the radio by *The Newsboys* called "He Reigns." Amazingly, my grief was already being dealt with by His presence through His Word and songs of praise. Thank you Lord!

These divine intercessions made all the difference in how I responded to this situation. I was surprisingly not angry about what had happened. The

software manufacturer could offer no help, so I sent the drives off to see if the data can be retrieved directly by disassembling the disks.

But, what really made me do some soul searching through this was that I was physically suffering even though I knew God was in charge. I found it nearly impossible to sleep for a few nights, would suddenly be filled with anxiety and/or sorrow, and I was really distracted from life as I worked through this disaster. I knew that I knew better, but still the waves would come crashing in. Like Job, I needed to hear from God.

His answer came from James 1:2-4 *"Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything."* NLT

Gwen's Corner

It's not too late to plan a Fourth of July cookout and invite over a few neighbors or an unsaved friend. There are so many patriotic-themed paper plates and decorations available at the stores. Just put the hot dogs and hamburgers on the grill. I've even seen several varieties of red, white and blue ice cream at the grocery!

Saying a blessing over the meal is a witness in itself. And conversation in a relaxed setting over a meal, especially in your home (or backyard), is a wonderful opportunity for your neighbors and friends to hear and see your faith and values.

As for me, I'm planning on making that cake mix that has red, white and blue candy chips in it! And then perhaps after frosting it, I'll use décor gel to write on it *God bless America* or *Ps. 33:12-Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord*.