

The Wisdom of a Half-Brother

Isn't it interesting that many times blended families produce some pretty interesting kids? Think about it. Many times the kids from blended families grow up with anxiety and guilt. Often they feel pulled between two sets of parents. They can harbor bitter feelings toward their siblings because they often perceive that the other child is loved more. If that is what it was like for a normal kid, try being James the half-brother of Jesus.

James is one of my favorite people in the Bible because he takes faith and puts it into practice. He puts a modern day face on how we need to live as Christians. James talks about things like helping widows and orphans. James offers us some really practical advice on how to handle problems that come our way. Check out what James says about troubles.

"Dear brothers and sisters, when trouble comes your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that 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 perfect and complete, needing nothing."

Troubles are an opportunity for growth? You bet! We all struggle and we have pain. The point is that when we struggle we don't need to pretend to be happy. What we need to do is develop a positive outlook because of what the troubles can produce in our lives. We can't know the depth of our character until we are put under a little pressure. It is easy to be kind to others when things are going our way, but can we still be kind when others are not treating us fairly? God wants to make us mature and complete not to keep us from pain. Picture a child that is spoiled. They mature a lot slower than children who receive correction from their parents.

How do I learn from problems?

1. **Ask God to give you wisdom:** God can help you understand the situation you in and help you find the best way to handle the situation. The Great thing about seeking God in the middle of a crisis is that God's wisdom is practical, it is supernatural, and it will always lead you to becoming more like Jesus.
2. **Stand on your Faith:** We must believe not only in the existence of God but also in his loving care. This means trusting that he will hear and answer when we pray. We must trust that God will align our desires with his purposes, which means sometimes we will not get what we had hoped for but we will get what we need.
3. **Be Patient:** We live in a want it now society. Remember that God set's things into motion according to his plans and his time. Much like yanking a cake out of the oven before its ready produces a lousy cake. We need to remember that from time to time God is working something great in our lives and even though we can't see it. We need to remember that we can't see it because we are in the oven and our view is a bit restricted.

No one likes trouble my self included. I can be as big of a baby about trouble as anyone. We all need to learn to cling to that fact that God is working something good in our lives and that is why the heat is on.

Until Next Time.....Jeff