

119

MINISTRIES

“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”

When Life Just Crumbles

How many of us realize that life does not always go the way we would want it to? Even in the faith, we experience moments of pain, loss, and frustration in various degrees. Life isn't always rainbows and flowers. Our situation can go from fantastic to disastrous in just a blink of an eye. Life can just crumble before us without warning.

Why do bad things happen? How are we to respond to them? How are we to understand them? Can we understand them?

This is not going to be a typical teaching from 119 Ministries. This will be more personal. Maybe you have noticed that we typically do not make things personal at 119...we have a dedicated team working to produce teachings and other related services...we desire to teach and encourage others in the faith, to bring all into the faith, not really to bring attention on us as a team, or even individual within our team...but... life is personal, isn't it? We are human too, and we are going through life just like you are going through life, and likewise, there are times in which things are quite far from fantastic.

In this teaching, for just a moment, I would like to depart from our usual teaching style to serve the purpose of this subject. We receive, on average, about 3,000-4,000 emails per year, and who knows how many phone calls. That does not include Facebook comments, DISQUS comments, etc. A fair percentage of those contacting 119 Ministries are simply going through some difficult times and are seeking understanding. They want help, and they want to be heard. Not everyone has an understanding family, or supportive fellowship. It is hard to make a teaching that would possibly offer help and comfort to every circumstance, but rest assured, in some way we can relate to the same challenges you may have faced or are currently facing.

I have hesitated in making a teaching like this for some time, because I have to talk about me. So, for whatever it is worth, I am going to place myself in a more uncomfortable place, and be a little more personal and frank with you by discussing some of the challenges I have faced in my life, and what I have learned from that and how it ultimately helped me grow in the faith. Please understand, I am not good at personal stuff. I am more data driven and a “just the facts” sort of person. It may come across as awkward. But, I pray that this teaching, or really message, serves well for some of you out there that are

experiencing serious challenges in life.

Some years before we began walking out the Torah, my wife and I were living in a house in a small town in Illinois, about 20 miles east of St. Louis. It was our first house after renting for several years. It was one of those early Sears Catalog houses from the early 1900's, and in places, it showed its age, but we liked it. We had not been living in it too long before we had aspirations to improve our first house. To get started, I began tearing everything out. I was really good at that. If you need things torn down and brought out of your house, I am your guy. Unfortunately, I am not that good with my hands or knowledgeable about how to build things. That went a bit slower, with many mistakes. My dad stepped in and we were making some good progress.

December arrived and my wife Lesly was almost eight months pregnant; we were about to have our first child. They were exciting times and everything was good. It had been rather warm still, entering winter, and we had hardly even used the gas furnace.

But according to the weather reports, winter was certainly on its way, with a vengeance. A massive ice storm was expected overnight. We both worked at a large healthcare system in St. Louis. I worked in the administrative area, and Lesly worked in direct patient care. We did not really want to take a day off, so our plan was to get up early and try to cross the bridge over the Mississippi into St. Louis before traffic was ridiculous.

We made it into work, but it wasn't long before Lesly called me and said she had been told that our house was on fire. So, we headed home not knowing what to expect. We were only two blocks from the firehouse, but the old house went up like a tinder box, a complete loss in every part of the house. We lost everything inside, including our rescue dog. It was quite depressing.

We learned that the ice had caused a power surge into the house, the breaker box failed and caused a fire in the walk-in closet of our bedroom. This occurred after we left, but it was actually before the time we would normally have woken up.

So, obviously, that all could have been far worse. At first, we were thankful that we left for work early; if we hadn't, we were told that because it lit up so fast in our bedroom we would have not made it. But, then, in addition to losing our dog, we sort of began to realize that everything we have collected over the years was lost. We had a car and whatever we took to work with us. That was it. All the work we had done on improving the house so far was also lost.

It is hard to figure out why certain things happen the way they do. Ultimately, we were just thankful to be alive, but starting over is not always easy to do. Later, we were told by the fire investigator something that opened our eyes a little.

Apparently, we had bought a house that was quickly flipped, meaning someone bought the house just to do some quick improvements and sell it for a profit. Many people do this and it that is just fine. In our case it was not. Either out of negligence or some other reason, the previous owner did not vent the gas furnace. It had a pipe that went nowhere. It went into the wall with absolutely no ventilation. Remember, this is our first winter in the house; if we would have stayed through the winter, we were told that we would have likely died of carbon monoxide poisoning. I doubt that, at the time, I was smart enough to have a carbon monoxide detector. With the temperatures just having dropped, the fire occurred just in time.

In essence, as uncomfortable and saddening as the house fire was, it ultimately saved us. What seemed like a curse to us at first, was actually a blessing. A month later, Lesly gave birth to Tyler, our first son.

There are certainly more traumatic experiences one could go through; people have and people do. While it was traumatic for us, I do not want to make it sound like there are not worse things that could happen. There most certainly are, but it was a learning experience for us. Everything that happens to us that we perceive as bad, could actually be good in some weird unknowable way. We don't know. We just have to trust YHWH that whatever He puts in our lives is for His glory, because isn't that our whole purpose of existence, to glorify Him in all we say and do?

It might remind us of Romans 8:28

Romans 8:28

[And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,\[a\] for those who are called according to his purpose.](#)

So, if you are going through a difficult time, keep your head up and ears open...perhaps YHWH is blessing you through it in some way, showing you that we are all limited in understanding, and that we fully depend on Him. In our case, we lost everything, and we were reminded that things are not as important as we often make them out to be.

And even if we cannot see anything obviously good about a bad situation, that does not mean it is not there. We may have never learned about the gas furnace if we did not talk to the fire investigator. YHWH could have kept that hidden from us this side of eternity. But, He did let us know, and we certainly had a lot to praise God over that day despite what we had to go through to get to that understanding. Our faith grew, and we learned many lessons through that ordeal.

I think one of the most important lessons we learned is that we can be blessed through what first appears to be a curse, and perhaps more importantly, we may not always know the details about the blessing.

Another challenge in my life occurred in 2014, and helped me learn the same lesson all over again, but with a different angle.

Beginning in 2011 I started having weird moments where I had difficulty swallowing from time to time. It was painful and quite frankly a little scary. My voice began to easily weaken, and in my job as a process improvement engineer, I did a lot of teaching and project facilitation. It made things a challenge from time to time. I increasingly felt tired, and needed to nap. In fact, sometimes I would do just that during my lunch breaks. Also, my boss would often poke fun at me in our meetings because my handwriting was so small. I did not know it at the time, but all of these things were related, and part of a problem I did not yet know I had.

In April 2013 we had our third child, Lydia, and she was and is a complete joy, just like our other two children. By this time, I realized that I did not mind changing her diaper. With our other two children, changing diapers always produced this embarrassing gag reflex, occasionally resulting in laughs toward my direction. I didn't give it much thought at the time. Perhaps I was just more used to it by then, or maybe her diapers smelled like flowers since she was born in Costa Rica. Turns out, it was related to my other issues.

I continued becoming more and more tired all of the time. It was affecting my motivation and

engagement with my family. I was becoming depressed and withdrawn. I could see it happening, I just couldn't do much about it. I still had the other problems, but they were getting worse. I was needing to sleep about 13 hours a day just to feel a little normal. Then, in late 2013 a tremor appeared with my left index finger. It was harder to type and my left hand was clumsy. In fact, even walking felt clumsy.

That prompted a trip to a neurologist in February 2014. I discovered all of my symptoms were related, and I was also told that my left side was not keeping up with my right side, and that was causing slight issues with walking. My steps were also close together, instead of taking regular strides.

I went through a lot of blood tests and had an MRI. My diagnosis was Parkinson's disease, and I was placed on carbidopa/levodopa to see if it would help. On March 13th, 2014, my symptoms disappeared with the medication, confirming my neurologist's diagnosis.

I was familiar with Parkinson's disease. My wife's grandfather had it for years. I saw what it would eventually do. With a 1 out of a 100,000 chance, I was diagnosed about thirty years earlier than the average person, similar to Michael J Fox. I won the Parkinson's lottery. At least it wasn't ALS, which was on the list of possibilities I'm told.

I was basically told that my previous year would always be my better year, and each year I would degrade into more of a crippling cognitive and physical mess. The increasing lack of production of the neurotransmitter dopamine causes all sorts of issues, not just tremors or movement issues. In fact, it is the neurotransmitter that enables you to feel joy and connected to others. It is the reward center for life. It is responsible for motivation. It even affects energy levels. Parkinson's doesn't kill you, it just kills the essence of you, plus the added problem of an increasing lack of muscle control.

It certainly wasn't the "best day ever." A Parkinson's diagnosis does not occur in a vacuum...it affects everyone you care about around you, it affects your work, it changes everything you expected about your future in this life.

Long story short, I felt rather defeated. It understandably wore on my family, my friends, and my daily work. I wondered if I was being cursed. Perhaps I had done something wrong? These sort of thoughts haunt you and cycle through your head.

Ultimately, I decided to own the problem. And then in owning it, I gave it to YHWH. I relied on YHWH to show me what I needed to do. Without going into all of the boring details, he led me to a solution. He deserves all praise in giving me the strength and energy to find something that has worked for the long term.

I still have Parkinson's disease, but I have lost most of my symptoms, and I have not progressed in nearly five years. That is not supposed to be possible. It baffles doctors. I still have my limits, and I do have bad days from time to time, but through what I learned, I have now been a part of helping many others with Parkinson's disease by sharing my experience, and leading them to do the same thing I did. On occasion, I even get to share my faith and have very interesting conversations.

So, if lesson number one was realizing that what seems like a curse could actually be a blessing to me, then lesson number two was realizing that what seems like a curse could actually be a blessing to others.

Those are important lessons, and I and my family went through a lot to learn them.

But in both of these life challenges, YHWH revealed the good that came out of them, in a way that I

could have never expected nor predicted. Those stories have some positive endings. The meaning behind those events seems clear now, although *during* the crisis, things were not so clear.

YHWH didn't have to make it clear. He did not have to take care of my Parkinson's diagnosis, and show me how to help others. He did not have to show us how the house fire likely saved our lives. The reason for why things just seem to go wrong may not always be so clear. They may not be clear for years, for decades, or even in this life. And if He didn't ever show me those things, how should I have responded to that? What would that mean?

The death of a loved one is perhaps one of the most significant challenges we can face, and perhaps you have been there? It is hard to see anything good from losing a loved one. But, there are some important things to consider.

It reminds us of the importance of the resurrection to come. That the death of a loved one may not be a "goodbye" but a "see you later."

It reminds us the importance of sharing the faith with others, so that they may someday be a part of the hope of the resurrection.

If we let it, it can re-center and re-focus us. It can remind us that faith is what really matters. Our relationship with YHWH should rule our lives...we should be looking at things from an eternal perspective to enable us to get through those difficult times...we should be seeking answers, even if we don't receive any answers this side of eternity, take comfort that someday we will have the answers, and those answers will be perfect.

What I once questioned as a curse was actually a blessing to our family...and in another instance, what I questioned as a curse, is now actually blessing others. Both instances are a wake up call of how much praise Yah deserves.

We see the story of Job in the Scriptures, it is perhaps one of the best examples of "when life just crumbles." We see the pain and misery Yeshua faced in his ministry and death. We see how he faced it, as an example for us, giving us courage and strength to get past whatever is thrown our way.

We see that Yeshua's answer about the blind man and why he suffers is not because of anything the man did, but just to glorify God.

John 9:1-3

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus (Yeshua) answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Messiah Yeshua then proceeded to heal him.

He was blind his whole life, just to be healed by Yeshua someday, so YHWH would see His glory.

Whatever happens to us, even if we do not know the reason why, how we carry forward and push through it is a testimony to others. It strengthens our faith and the faith of others. YHWH is glorified. If we have to suffer for that to happen, just like Yeshua, then bring it on.

James 1:2-4

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

There will certainly be times of challenges and difficulties, no one escapes it, and while challenging times can span a long time, our *now* is not our *forever*. In the scope of eternity, perspective changes for the better.

When life just crumbles, we must remember YHWH's specialty, that is, the restoration of all things.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom!

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

TWITTER: [www.twitter.com/119Ministries#](https://twitter.com/119Ministries#)