



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Shepherd's Path

## A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

### Character Shapers Series, Lesson 50

**Lesson Title:** Taming Troubles

**Take Home Point:** God can use troubles to shape our character.

#### Warm-Up:

Have you heard of the great hymn

*It Is Well With My Soul?* This hymn was written in 1873 by a gentleman named Horatio Spafford after two major traumas in his life. The first was the great Chicago fire of October 1871, which ruined him financially (he had been a wealthy businessman). Shortly thereafter, while crossing the Atlantic, all four of Spafford's daughters died in a collision with another ship. Spafford's wife, Anna, survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone." Several weeks later, as Spafford's own ship passed the spot where his daughters died, the Holy Spirit inspired these words. His pain and trouble were beyond what I've experienced, but his faith in God made him strong.

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 4:7-9, 15-18

#### Observation (What happened?):

By what power do we survive and overcome our troubles?

In verse 17, how does Paul describe the difficulties we endure?

#### Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What power does Paul refer to in verse 7?

What does it mean that the life of Jesus is revealed in us?

#### Insight:

We live in a sinful world. We will experience troubles caused by our own actions and also by the consequences of the actions of others. And these troubles may make us feel overwhelmed. It is not wrong to feel overwhelmed by the troubles, difficulties, and adversities we face. Jesus himself gave a glimpse of feeling this way in the garden just before his arrest. Read Luke 22:39-43 to get an idea of his anguish. The key point to remember is that faith cannot follow your feelings; your feelings must follow your faith. Then God can use the circumstances in two ways. First, it brings him honor when your faith is demonstrated to others around you, even though it may not seem like it to you at the time. Second, he teaches and shapes your heart by the experience and your faith. You learn humility by your recognition of powerlessness and your dependence on him and others. You learn compassion for others in their troubles. You get better at looking past this temporal world to see the greatness of the eternal spiritual realm. God promises strength for each moment and an assurance of his presence. It is enough.

#### Application (What does it mean to me?):

What troubles are you experiencing that you are trusting God to overcome?

What keeps you from losing heart in the face of your troubles? What are you looking at?

Kingdom Quest year 2