

## **KITCHEN NUTRITION FOR THE SOUL**

### **“Character Building Opportunities”**

*Scripture references:*

*Romans 5:2b-5 And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*  
*1 Corinthians 3:9 For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.*

Who likes to suffer? Not me, man! Rejoice in it? Ugh! God uses suffering, however, as a means to produce perseverance and character. It is written that we are to assume the character of Christ. He certainly suffered, but God was with him. Likewise, *God has poured out his love into our hearts.* God’s love in us will give us the ability to love through the suffering experience. He knows we cannot do it on our own accord. I once heard Greg Laurie say in a sermon that when Satan came knocking on his door, he answered, “Hey God! Can you get that?” This exemplifies letting God and His love, help us respond to adversity.

It takes time and help to acquire this discipline. *For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.* God also promises to complete the work he began in us. Remember this is a process, He’s not through with you yet, and you are His building project, His creation. We can choose to continue building our character by focusing on a positive outcome rather than on our suffering. That’s a tall order, eh? I want to be tall, not small, to grow in my faith and spirit. It usually requires fellowship with other Christians to grow. In Phil. 1:6, Paul begins his letter by describing how he *always prays with joy because of your partnership in the gospel.* It is crucial to pair up by having a prayer/accountability partner. We cannot simply depend on others to pray for us all the time or be a “lone ranger”. Wherever two or more gather together, prayer is answered.

One day I had a revelation that I could view my “situations” and “issues” as “opportunities,” character building opportunities. Rather than saying to myself, “S\*\*t happens!” or “This stinks (wah!)” I can choose to say, “Oh! This would be a character building opportunity”, considering the situation as a crossroads, a test, and a chance to learn a lesson. Then, perhaps, move on to the next level like in grade school and video games.

Did you ever seem to be stuck in a rut? Often times, that’s when God is trying to communicate, “Hello? Remember me?” It helps to ask God, “Give me a clue! What are you trying to tell me? What do you want me to do?” Of course, at this point, one must stop and listen for an answer. It can take time and effort, most things worthwhile do. Keep seeking Him until you get that clue, pray about it, and make sure it lines up with His Word. Then kick off the cement shoes that are holding you down, put on your “PF Flyers”, and spring into action! We can choose to build character for God’s glory by walking in love, and walking in his way when in the throes of a storm.

Oh, you don’t have to get it right all the time. God is patient. He is in the business of forgiveness and second chances. Once again, that word, “*likewise*” comes to

mind. As He forgives, so must we, bringing us back to opportunities. Let's see what the bible says about opportunities...

*Gal. 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

*Col. 4:5-6 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

Well that's crystal clear to me. It does not say to bury your head in the sand, whine, curse ("pepper") the situation, make excuses, or run away. Looks like we should be good to believers and outsiders, make the most of it, and respond with wisdom and grace.

That's another tall order, I'm sure glad God is there to help! I'm also thankful for all the tools like church, fellowship, and Bible study. I could never come up with this on my own. My mission here is to show you what I've learned so far through my adversity and study, for what it's worth!

Now let's go back to Paul's prayer in Phil. 1:9-11 he says, "*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, **filled** with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ- to the glory and praise of God.*" Personally, I'd rather be filled than empty. Filled with love, wisdom, insight, and good stuff, not bitter, confused, and bleck! (Is that a word, you know what I mean, don't you?) So, I challenge you to go to the filling station daily. Consider **what** is filling you, **where** filling station is, and go to God for the good stuff. Don't wait until the gauge reads empty because you may not make it! Someone will have to stop what they're doing and tow or carry you along (then again, that's another story) fill up! Maybe consider carrying an extra can of gas to help someone else, now I'm thinking of my AAA card. Sort of like the insurance of salvation. Thoughts like this make my road a little easier and more meaningful to travel. Time to move on.