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Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.

—Romans 5:1,3-4, NLT

Made right—two powerful words that have the ability to transform lives. Our being made right is the result of God's doing for us what we could never do for ourselves. It's known as the "great substitution." Scholars say it is the theme of the book of Romans.

Along with the marvelous gift of being made right come many other wonderful benefits. Last month we looked at some of them: justification, peace and access, to mention a few.

But in my estimation, one of the greatest benefits of being made right is the ability to rejoice in the face of tribulation. The Greek word for "rejoice" is *kauometha*. It literally means to glory or revel in a thing. The implication is that since we have peace with God, we can rejoice and glory when tribulations come our way rather than giving up.

In the text, the words "problems" and "trials" are translated from the same Greek word and carry the idea of affliction, anguish, burden. They allude to extreme pressure—not the everyday pressures of life, but the inevitable trials that come to followers of Christ as a result of their relationship with Him. These include being misunderstood, ostracized, persecuted and so on.

Part of what Paul says in this verse is that problems and trials help us learn to endure. The word "endure" is from the Greek word *hupomone*, sometimes translated "patience." It

refers to extreme stick-to-itiveness—the ability to stand strong in the face of opposition or trial. It literally means “to remain the same under.”

Our English rendering of patience does not do justice to the Greek word picture for patience. Endurance is a much better fit.

In the last part of verse four we find an additional benefit; it’s in the phrase “strength of character.” The Greek word carries the idea of a proof or an experience. When we endure, we gain an experience with God—proof we are His. It’s much like a stamp of approval.

Made right—do you understand the advantages of this experience? Do you know what’s yours as a result of this marvelous gift? The benefit is paid in full; why not take advantage of what God has provided?

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