

The Goal of Trials

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross.

—Hebrews 12:2

The goal of trials is to look to Jesus. This happens when you are shut off from all here below so that only God knows.

As long as you envisage external vindication below, it is your hint that you are not ready yet. Are you like that young man who just wanted to be vindicated before his father, and when his father died, he had nothing else to live for? God is a jealous God, and He wants you to enjoy Him, alone.

Sometimes I say to my wife, “Let’s go out for a meal. Let’s go to a restaurant.”

“Fine,” she says.

Then I ask, “Whom shall we take with us?”

“Don’t you just want to be with me?” she asks.

That is what God is saying, and Jesus responded in getting His joy from the Father alone.

If this is your pattern, I will tell you what it will mean. It will mean that your best and closest friends may not understand. It was a trial for Jesus that He could not explain to the disciples all that He was up to. Yet His joy was internal, and when you begin to react to criticism and praise in much the same way, you are beginning to get free. When you begin to react to criticism and praise without taking either seriously, that signifies that you are passing the tests as Jesus did. The goal of trials is contentment with the glory that comes from God only.

A friend, Jon Bush, asked me once in connection with this, “Is

it that ambition takes us so far and the glory of the Lord the rest of the way?" I agreed with him.

The goal is reached when our ambition dissolves and all we want is for Him to say, "Good. Well done."

Excerpted from *Meekness and Majesty* (Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 1992, 2000).