

Influence Ministries

FIVE THINGS GOD USES TO GROW YOUR FAITH

LESSON 6

TITLE: PIVOTAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

God builds our faith through and during PIVOTAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Tonight I want to talk about PIVOTAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Most of the time it's those big, negative, unexpected circumstances where something begins to happen in a person's faith that maybe couldn't happen any other way.

C.S. Lewis says it best. This is from his book, *The Problem of Pain*. He writes this:

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

James 1:2 (NIV)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Testing of my faith? There is a connection between the trials you're going to experience and your faith. The testing of your faith produces something. It produces persevering faith.

Let perseverance finish its work. In other words, God is up to something in the big, pivotal circumstances of life.

James 1:4

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

This is the one of the things; this is one of the primary things God uses to grow our faith and to strengthen our faith.

Oftentimes it's the negative, unexplainable circumstances, the very circumstances that have the potential and the power to turn us away from God,

God almost always, if we will allow him, leverages to do something in us to make our faith stronger.

John 11:6

So, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.

He did exactly what you would not expect him to do. Thank you for the information. Guys, sit back down. We're not going anywhere. And for two days, he did nothing.

You have felt that in your life, I guarantee you, haven't you? God, help me. God, help me. God, help me. God.

I ask you a question tonight... do you lean into or away from God during PIVOTAL CIRCUMSTANCES?

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Do you know what makes the difference between a person who leans into God and whose faith gets bigger and a person that leans away?

In most cases the thing that makes the difference are the people you are surrounded by.

When people are able to frame this and give a context for the pain, it's amazing how people come out on the other side.

But separated from that environment and that community, separated from insight, separated from stories like that, separated from messages like that, separated from testimonies like the ones we hear—the same pain that can grow your faith can destroy a person's faith.

Pain isn't new. Pain isn't an argument against God. Tragedy isn't proof of anything. Tragedy and pain are part of the story.

Phillip Yancey said this: There's only one thing worse than disappointment with God—that's disappointment without God.

And all of us, at moments and times in our lives are going to be disappointed with God, but you can be disappointed with God within a context where you still trust him, anyway.

When you feel like God is doing something to you, you are liable to lose faith.

If I had advice to you as we close this message and as we close this series, it's simply this.

If you are in the middle of a PIVOTAL CIRCUMSTANCE,

if you are in the middle of one of those, I'm so disappointed with God—

if you are in the middle of one of those, I don't know where to turn; I don't know where the answers are and I'm almost to the point of despair.

Would you add this to your prayer: God, I need to see you in this, I need to see you in this.