

Lesson 13 Why Does the Path with God Include Trials?



Lesson Thesis: God often leads life to blessing through trials and struggle.

Introduction

In many people's lives, there are moments when everything feels confusing and unfair.

Brothers become enemies. Families go through conflict. Injustice seems to break destinies. A person may end up in a place they never planned to be.

At times, it may seem that human mistakes, deception, or jealousy can destroy everything — relationships, the future, and even God's promises.

But the Bible repeatedly reveals an amazing truth:

God continues to work even when life

goes through crises, trials, and struggles. The stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are not just ancient family stories.

They are powerful testimonies of how, through conflict, fear, betrayal, and long seasons of hardship, God gradually leads everything toward blessing and the fulfillment of His purpose.

That is why the central idea of this lesson is:

God often leads life to blessing through trials and struggle.

Key Bible Texts

Genesis 28:15 (NKJV)

“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

Context: God spoke these words to Jacob in a dream at night when he was fleeing from home because of conflict with his brother Esau. Jacob was alone, afraid, and uncertain about his future. In that moment, God reaffirmed the promises given earlier to Abraham and Isaac.

Meaning: God shows that His presence and promises do not depend on our circumstances. Even in uncertainty, His plan continues to move forward.

Genesis 32:28 (NKJV)

“Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.”

Context: This happened the night before Jacob met Esau again. He was afraid for his life. During that night, Jacob wrestled with God’s messenger and experienced a deep encounter with God.

Meaning: The change of name symbolized a change of life. God shows that through spiritual struggle, a person can be transformed and become part of His greater plan.

Genesis 45:5 (NKJV)

“But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.”

Context: After many years, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers in Egypt. They feared his revenge because they had sold him into slavery. But instead of condemning them, Joseph recognized God’s hand in everything that happened.

Meaning: God can use even the evil actions of people to accomplish His good purposes.

Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good.”

Context: Joseph said this after their father Jacob had died. The brothers were afraid again that Joseph might take revenge. But Joseph confirmed that his entire life had been part of God’s plan.

Meaning: This verse is the key to understanding Joseph’s story — God is able to turn human evil into a tool for good and salvation.

Historical Context

The lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph belong to the period of the **third generation of the patriarchs**, when God’s promises to Abraham continued to unfold through his descendants.

These promises included:

- the growth of a nation
- the inheritance of the land of Canaan
- blessing for all nations

The carriers of this promise became Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel.

At first glance, one might think that if this is God's plan, everything should happen smoothly and without difficulty.

However, the Bible shows the opposite:

God does not remove difficulties — He leads people through them, shaping their character and preparing them for His purpose.

In these chapters, we see real life:

- family conflicts between brothers
- deception and human manipulation
- fear of the future
- forced escape and exile
- injustice and slavery
- a widespread famine

Yet through all of this, the story never slips out of God's control.

Instead, one clear spiritual thread runs through everything:

God often leads life to blessing through trials and struggle.

Through these trials, God not only preserves His promise but also forms a people through whom He will act in the history of the world.

1. The Struggle for Blessing

Thesis: Even when a person acts wrongly, God continues to move history toward His plan.

Explanation: Isaac had two sons — Esau and Jacob. Esau was a hunter, while Jacob stayed among the tents.

At one point, Esau sold his birthright for food. The New Testament warns about this:

“Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.” (Hebrews 12:16, NKJV)

Later, Jacob received his father's blessing through deception. This caused a serious conflict. Esau wanted to kill him, and Jacob had to flee to Haran, to his uncle Laban.

From a human perspective, this story looks like:

- deception
- conflict
- a broken family

But God did not cancel His plan.
Even through human mistakes, He continued to work.

Conclusion: Once again we see the truth:
God often leads life to blessing through trials and struggle.

2. God Meets a Person on the Journey

Thesis: God comes to a person even when they are running from their problems.

Explanation: As Jacob was fleeing from Beersheba to Haran, he stopped for the night near the city of Luz.

That night, he had a dream: a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending on it.

Then God repeated His promises:

- to give the land
- to multiply his descendants
- to bless all nations

Jacob called that place **Bethel**, meaning “House of God.” This became a turning point in his life. Jacob realized: God is near even when a person is weak, afraid, and uncertain. From that moment, his life began to change.

Conclusion: This truth is confirmed again:
God often leads life to blessing through trials and struggle.

3. The Struggle That Changes a Person

Thesis: Sometimes God transforms a person through spiritual struggle.

Explanation: After 20 years, Jacob was returning home, but he was afraid to face Esau. The night before their meeting, something unusual happened — someone wrestled with him until morning. The Bible reveals that this was the Angel of the Lord.

After the struggle, God said: *“Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel.”*
(Genesis 32:28, NKJV)

The name **Jacob** meant:

- deceiver
- one who grasps or manipulates

The name **Israel** means: - one who struggles with God

Jacob understood something important: he could no longer control his life through his own cleverness — he needed God.

He called that place **Peniel**, saying: *“For I have seen God face to face.”* (Gen. 32:30, NKJV)

This struggle changed his life.

Conclusion: Once again, the same truth is confirmed:

God often leads life to blessing through trials and struggle.

4. The Betrayal of Brothers

Thesis: God can turn even human evil into good.

Explanation: Jacob had twelve sons, but his favorite was Joseph, the son of Rachel. His brothers became jealous of him and eventually sold him to traders going to Egypt.

In Egypt, Joseph:

- became a slave
- was falsely accused
- was thrown into prison

He went through thirteen years of suffering. Yet God was with him. Joseph received the ability to interpret dreams, and Pharaoh appointed him as ruler over Egypt.

Years later, a famine brought his brothers to Egypt. They bowed before Joseph without recognizing him — fulfilling the dream God had given him in his youth. When Joseph revealed himself, he said: *“For God sent me before you to preserve life.”* (Gen 45:5, NKJV)

Conclusion: Once again, we see the truth:

God often leads life to blessing through trials and struggle.

5. God’s Plan for a Whole Nation

Thesis: Sometimes God leads a person through hardship for the sake of future generations.

Explanation: A famine covered the entire region. If Joseph had not been in Egypt, Jacob’s family might have perished. But God had already prepared a way of salvation. Jacob moved to Egypt. Before that, he stopped in Beersheba, where God said:

“Do not fear going down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there.” (Genesis 46:3, NKJV)

The family settled in the land of Goshen, where they grew into a great nation. Later, this nation would become Israel. Even before his death, Joseph said:

“God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land.” (Genesis 50:24, NKJV)

He asked that his bones be carried out of Egypt because he believed in God’s promise.

Conclusion: The entire story confirms once again:
God often leads life to blessing through trials and struggle.

Conclusion

The stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph reveal one powerful truth.

Life may include:

- mistakes
- fear
- betrayal
- injustice

But none of these can destroy God’s plan. God leads history across generations. He uses even difficult situations to bring people to His purpose. So remember the key message of this lesson: **God often leads life to blessing through trials and struggle.**

And if you are going through a struggle today — this is not the end of your story.

Very often, it is exactly through that struggle that God is shaping your future.

Practical Application

1. My mistakes do not stop God’s plan. God can work even through our failures when we turn back to Him.

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God...” (Romans 8:28, NKJV)

✓ Application: honestly bring your mistake to God and trust Him with the outcome.

2. God is near in difficult moments. God is especially close when we feel afraid and alone.

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5, NKJV)

✓ Application: start your day with a simple prayer: “Lord, be with me today and guide me.”

3. Struggle builds character. Hardships are tools God uses to shape our hearts.

"...tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character..." (Romans 5:3–4, NKJV)

✓ Application: ask yourself, "What is God teaching me through this situation?"

4. Jealousy destroys relationships. Jealousy blinds the heart and leads to sin.

"A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones." (Proverbs 14:30, NKJV)

✓ Application: thank God intentionally for what you already have.

5. God works over time. God's work is often a process, not an instant result.

"He has made everything beautiful in its time." (Ecclesiastes 3:11, NKJV)

✓ Application: practice patience and do not rush God's timing.

6. Forgiveness frees the heart. Forgiveness does not justify wrong, but it releases the burden.

"...forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32, NKJV)

✓ Application: choose to forgive, even if it feels difficult.

7. God's plan looks beyond today. God's decisions always have a long-term purpose.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you... thoughts of peace and not of evil..." (Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV)

✓ Application: make decisions with the future in mind, not just today.

8. Hope is stronger than circumstances Faith allows us to see God's plan even in hard situations. *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for..."* (Hebrews 11:1, NKJV)

✓ Application: in a difficult moment, say: "I trust God with my future."
