

Lesson 16

What Is More Dangerous: Difficulties with God or Comfort Without Him?



Introduction

Holy Scripture repeatedly reveals one important truth: God's people are rarely formed in comfort, ease, and convenience. Moses, a man of God, went through serious trials. His life was not easy—first he was raised in a foreign palace, then he fled into the wilderness, lived many years in obscurity, and only after that was called by God into great ministry.

Moses was not alone in this. Joseph was sold by his brothers. David hid from Saul. Elijah experienced fear and loneliness. The Apostle Paul endured persecution, imprisonment, and hardship. God often leads His servants not through ease, but through the fire of trials, because it is there that faith, character, humility, and dependence on the Lord are formed.

The modern world often teaches a different message: that a good life is a life without struggle, without limits, without effort, without responsibility, and without pain. But both life experience, Scripture, and even some observations from science show that constant comfort does not make a person stronger. On the contrary, when a person

has everything externally but lacks inner purpose, discipline, responsibility, and a solid spiritual foundation, outward success can lead to inward collapse.

This is why people often refer to the well-known experiment by American researcher John B. Calhoun, called *Universe 25*. In 1968, at the National Institute of Mental Health in the United States, he created nearly ideal living conditions for mice: safety, constant access to food and water, a warm environment, and sufficient space. At first, the population grew rapidly, but later serious behavioral disruptions appeared—breakdown of social roles, loss of the ability to care for offspring, and eventually the colony declined toward extinction. Modern researchers emphasize that this experiment cannot be directly applied to humans; rather, it raises important questions about challenges, social roles, stress, and meaning, instead of providing a simple model for human society.

This example is not a biblical foundation, but it clearly illustrates an important truth: abundance without meaning, comfort without responsibility, and life without a spiritual foundation do not automatically heal a person. Humanity was created not merely for comfort, but for relationship with God, for obedience, for work, for growth, and for service.

Lesson Objective

To show that an easy and uncontrolled life does not, by itself, make a person happy or mature, and often weakens them spiritually, morally, and internally; and to demonstrate that God uses difficulties to shape a person's character, faith, and purpose.

Key Bible Texts (NKJV)

Deuteronomy 8:2–3 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. **3** He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Proverbs 30:8–9 Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Judges 17:6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

Hebrews 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Romans 5:3–4 Not only so, but we[c] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Historical and Geographical Context

The history of God's people shows that the most important seasons of spiritual formation did not happen in full comfort, but in times of testing. Israel came out of Egypt, but before entering the Promised Land, they passed through the wilderness. The wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula was a harsh place: there was no familiar support, no human stability, and no earthly abundance. Yet it was there that God taught His people faith, obedience, and dependence on Him.

Moses was also shaped in several stages. First—the palace of Egypt; then—the wilderness of Midian; and finally—his calling to lead the people to freedom. It is as if God was leading Moses away from false strength, human confidence, and outward security, in order to teach him to live by God's power.

During the time of the Judges, Israel was already living in a land with more opportunities, more stability, and greater outward order. Yet it was in this period that spiritual decline often appeared. When the people stopped being watchful, they quickly turned to idolatry, self-will, and moral disorder.

In this way, Scripture reveals an important principle: difficulties do not always mean God's absence, and ease does not always mean God's blessing.

Main Content

1. Why does God often shape a person through difficulties?

Thesis: God often uses difficulties not to destroy a person, but to purify the heart and prepare them for true life and service.

Explanation: Human nature tends to relax in comfort, but in trials, the true condition of the heart is revealed. When everything is calm, a person may think they have

faith, humility, patience, and obedience. But it is in difficulties that what truly lives inside becomes visible.

That is why Moses' journey was long and challenging. Forty years in Egypt gave him education, experience, and understanding of power. Forty years in the wilderness broke his self-confidence and taught him patience. Only after that did he become ready for God's great work. God was not in a hurry, because His goal was not only to give Moses a task, but to prepare Moses himself.

The same truth is seen in Israel's history. In Deuteronomy 8, God clearly explains the purpose of the wilderness: to humble, to test, to know what is in the heart, and to teach dependence not only on bread but on every word from God. As it is written:

“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna... that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:3, NKJV)

This means that difficulty in God's hands is not meaningless pain, but a workshop where a person's character is formed.

An easy life often gives the illusion that a person is already strong enough. But trials teach a different lesson: without God, a person is weak, limited, and dependent. And it is this understanding that leads to maturity.

Practical Applications

The Purpose of Trials. A difficult season does not always mean that life is going in the wrong direction; sometimes it is exactly how God leads a person deeper.

✓ Instead of immediate complaining, it is helpful to ask: *What does God want to teach me through this season?*

Character Formation. Character is not developed in comfort; it is formed through faithfulness in difficulties.

✓ In moments of pressure, it is important not to run from responsibility, but to learn endurance and obedience.

Dependence on God. When external supports disappear, it becomes clear what your life is truly built upon.

✓ Develop the habit of seeking not only a solution to the problem, but first of all God's will.

2. Why does abundance without God become dangerous?

Thesis: When a person has many outward comforts but lacks the fear of God within, they begin to forget the Lord and grow spiritually weak.

Explanation: Scripture warns not only about the danger of poverty, but also about the danger of abundance. In Proverbs it says:

“Lest I be full and deny You, and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’” (Proverbs 30:9, NKJV)

This is a very accurate observation. When people go through hard times, they tend to seek God more. But when life becomes easy, stable, and comfortable, the heart can begin to live as if the Lord is no longer truly needed.

The problem is not in the blessings themselves. God gives food, a home, family, work, abilities, and many other good things. But the problem begins when the blessing replaces the One who gives it. A person stops giving thanks, stops being watchful, and stops guarding their soul. Gradually, they become spiritually careless.

From a biblical perspective, this is very important: a person does not live by bread alone. If life is reduced only to comfort, safety, and pleasure, the soul remains empty. Without God, even prosperity cannot make a person whole.

Practical Applications

The Danger of Abundance. Not only suffering, but also comfort can become a test for the heart.

✓ In seasons of prosperity, it is especially important to maintain prayer, gratitude, and spiritual discipline.

The Blessing and the Source. It is possible to enjoy God’s gifts and still forget God Himself.

✓ Make it a habit to consciously thank the Lord for everything and remember who every good thing comes from.

Inner Emptiness. Comfort cannot replace meaning, truth, or a living relationship with God.

✓ Examine yourself: what fills your heart when you remove entertainment, comfort, and busyness?

3. Why does a life without challenge and responsibility weaken a person?

Thesis: When a person avoids effort, struggle, and responsibility, their inner strength gradually weakens.

Explanation: God created people not for idleness, but for work and a meaningful life. Even before the fall, humanity was given responsibility and purpose. This means responsibility is not a punishment—it is part of God’s design. But when a person lives only for ease, they lose focus, discipline, and purpose.

In the Book of Judges, we see that spiritual and moral chaos increased when God’s order was no longer followed:

“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 17:6, NKJV)

This is not a picture of true freedom, but of collapse. When a person becomes their own standard of truth, they begin to justify their desires and gradually destroy themselves.

An easy life often removes pressure, but it also removes growth. Without challenge, a person gets used to seeking only what is comfortable. Then work feels too hard, faithfulness feels too boring, sacrifice feels too inconvenient, and obedience to God feels too strict.

That is why many biblical figures went through seasons where they had to endure, wait, fight, serve, and trust. God was not breaking them without purpose—He was making them capable of carrying responsibility.

Practical Applications

Responsibility Builds Strength. What requires effort often shapes a person.

✓ Instead of avoiding responsibilities, see them as part of God’s training in your life.

Without Challenge Comes Weakness. Constantly choosing only what is easy makes the soul lazy.

✓ Make a conscious choice to pursue what is beneficial, not just what is comfortable.

Self-Will Destroys. When “I think so” becomes the standard of truth, a person quickly loses direction.

✓ Measure your decisions not by feelings, but by the Word of God.

4. Why can trials produce fruit, while ease can lead to loss?

Thesis: Trials, when accepted with faith, produce maturity, while uncontrolled ease often leads to inner emptiness and downfall.

Explanation: The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches that discipline in the present does not feel joyful but painful; yet afterward it yields “**the peaceable fruit of righteousness.**” (Hebrews 12:11, NKJV)

This is a deeply mature biblical perspective. What feels unpleasant now may later become life-saving. What feels pleasant now may later lead to destruction.

Scripture also shows a spiritual chain of growth: “**tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.**” (Romans 5:3–4, NKJV)

God allows struggle not because He is indifferent to human pain, but because He sees beyond the present moment. He is not looking for a comfortable person, but a mature one. Not someone relaxed, but faithful. Not someone outwardly successful, but inwardly strong.

In this sense, the path of faith goes against the spirit of the age. The world says: avoid everything difficult. Scripture says: go through difficulties with God. The world says: live in a way that is easier. Scripture says: live in a way that is purer, deeper, and more faithful.

An easy life becomes dangerous when it pulls a person away from prayer, work, discipline, sacrifice, and remembrance of God. But a trial lived through with the Lord can become a place of deep growth and building.

Practical Applications

Fruit Comes Later. Not everything valuable feels good in the moment; much is understood only with time.

✓ In difficult seasons, do not rush to conclude that God has abandoned you.

Maturity Through Faithfulness. The Lord forms maturity gradually, not instantly.

✓ It is better to walk with God step by step than to seek a quick and easy path without Him.

Struggle Has Purpose. What feels heavy today may become the foundation of strength and wisdom tomorrow.

✓ Stay faithful in the small things: in prayer, work, study, obedience, and purity.

5. What path truly preserves a person?

Thesis: A person is not preserved by an easy life itself, but by a life with God—a life filled with truth, purpose, discipline, and faithfulness.

Explanation: The main message of this lesson is not that difficulties are good by themselves or that we should seek pain for its own sake. The Bible does not teach that. The key truth is this: if God is absent from a person's life, both hardship and comfort can lead to destruction. But if a person walks with God, the Lord is able to use both sorrow and blessing for their good.

So the real question is not how much comfort a person has, but the condition of their heart. One person in prosperity thanks God, serves others, and remains humble and watchful. Another becomes relaxed, proud, forgets God, and gradually loses themselves. One person in suffering becomes humble and grows. Another becomes hardened. Everything depends on who stands at the center of life.

Moses was not preserved by the wilderness itself; he was preserved by God in the wilderness. David was not shaped merely by danger; he was shaped by God's presence in the midst of danger. Israel had to learn that a person does not live by bread alone, but by the Word of God. This is the answer.

True protection for a person is not the absence of hardship or the presence of abundance, but a right relationship with the Lord. Where there is the fear of God, obedience, prayer, and faithfulness, a person does not fall apart even on a difficult path. And where these are absent, even a very comfortable life can lead to inner emptiness.

Practical Applications

The Heart Matters Most. It is not circumstances themselves that define a person, but their relationship with God within those circumstances.

✓ Guard your heart above all, because it determines the direction of your life.

God's Presence Over Comfort. Without the Lord, ease cannot save; with the Lord, even a hard path becomes meaningful and light.

✓ Seek not just a peaceful life, but a faithful life before God.

Discipline Protects the Soul. Spiritual life requires order, not just inspiration.

✓ Remain consistent in reading Scripture, prayer, service, and obedience.

Discussion Questions

Why did many of God's people in the Bible go through difficult seasons in life?
What is dangerous about a situation where a person has everything but begins to forget God?

Why does comfort without a spiritual purpose fail to make a person mature?

What exactly does God form in a person through trials?

How is a life of ease different from a life lived in God's order and peace?

How can we tell whether prosperity is damaging the heart or helping us grow in gratitude to God?

Homework

Practical Assignment. Carefully read Deuteronomy chapter 8 and write down at least three reasons why God led Israel through the wilderness instead of bringing them immediately into the Promised Land.

Creative Assignment. Write a short personal reflection on the topic: *What is more dangerous: difficulties with God or comfort without Him?*

Length: 1 handwritten or typed page.

Be sure to include at least two Bible passages from the lesson in your reflection.

Conclusion

An easy life is not the highest goal of a person. God never promised His people a path without difficulties, but He did promise His presence along the way. Moses, David, Joseph, Paul, and many others were shaped not by comfort, but by God's faithfulness in the midst of trials.

So the main question is not how easy life is, but whether it brings a person closer to the Lord.

Where the pursuit of holiness disappears, depth disappears.

Where responsibility disappears, character weakens.

Where the memory of God disappears, even prosperity becomes dangerous.

But where a person learns to live by God's Word, to give thanks, to endure, and to remain faithful, even a difficult path becomes a place of building rather than destruction.
