

Power From on High

Series: Power From On High

Text: Acts 22:17-29

Title: How Suffering Can Turn Into
Witnessing, Part 3

Date: Jan 25, 2026

Lesson: 120

17 “It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance,

“returned to Jerusalem”

Galatians 1:15–17 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. 18 Then **three years later I went up to Jerusalem** to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.

16 ... I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles

17 “It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance,

“trance”

18 and I saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.’

This verse is referring back to 9:28-30

How the Lord relates to his people

- Jesus is alive and interceding for us (Rom 8:34)
- Our Lord foresees all things and knows the outcome of our evangelism before we experience it.
- Knowing that God is sovereign over our success releases us from self-blame, guilt, and despair.
- He may redirect us away from fruitless, unhealthy, or dangerous situations for our own good and for His greater purposes and for His greater purposes.

Revelation 3:7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:

19 “And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You. 20 ‘And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.’

Is it ever okay to question God?

Biblical faith does not silence questions; it directs them toward God in humility, trust, and submission.

21 “And He said to me, ‘Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’ ”

22 They listened to him up to this statement, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!”

23 And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air, 24 the commander ordered him to be brought

into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.

25 But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?”

26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and told him, saying, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman.”

27 The commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” And he said, “Yes.”

28 The commander answered, “I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money.” And Paul said, “But I was actually born a citizen.”

29 Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.

Romans 13:4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil

“minister” [diakonos] -

Proverbs 21:1 The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.

How to transform trials into testimonies

1. Expect opposition as a result of bold faith.
2. Embrace hardship as God's will.
3. Look for evidence of God's providence
4. Determine to turn adversity into purposeful moments of witnessing
5. Trust that ongoing or escalating hardships are woven by God into a _____ that serves His larger purposes.

James 1:2–4 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

“when”

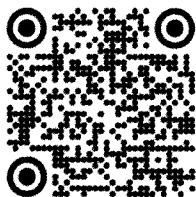
Each trial _____ on the last, forming a sanctifying sequence toward Christlike maturity.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

“work together”

Discussion Guide

1. Paul's time in Arabia was a hidden season of preparation before public ministry. How might God be using ordinary or unrecognized work to form your character right now?
2. We noted that there is a right and wrong way to question God. What is the difference and when have you brought doubts or frustrations to God, and how did humility shape your response?
3. How did today's subject about God using civil authorities change your view of imperfect governments and leaders protecting believers today.
4. James 1:2–4 and examples like Joseph, Paul, and the puzzle analogy illustrate trials building cumulatively toward maturity. Instead of asking "Why this trial now?" what would it look like to ask, "How is God weaving this into his bigger picture for my life?"



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ANSWERS: civil authorities, sequence, builds