

THE TESTING OF TRIBULATION

In her book, *Miracles of Courage*, Monica Dickens – an English writer and great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens – told about David, a 2-year-old with leukemia who was taken by his mother, Deborah, to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston to see Dr. John Truman.

Dr. Truman was a specialist in treating children with cancer and various blood diseases. His prognosis was devastating: “He has a 50-50 chance.”

The countless clinic visits, the blood tests, the intravenous drugs, the fear and the pain all mean that the mother’s ordeal can be almost as bad as the child’s because she must stand by, unable to bear the pain herself.

David never cried in the waiting room, and although his friends in the clinic had to hurt him and stick needles in him, he hustled ahead of his mother with a smile, sure of the welcome he always got.

When he was 3, David had to have a spinal tap – a painful procedure at any age. It was explained to him that because he was sick, Dr. Truman had to do something to make him better.

“If it hurts, remember it’s because he loves you,” Deborah said.

The procedure was horrendous. It took three nurses to hold David still while he yelled and sobbed and struggled. When it was over, the tiny boy – soaked in sweat and tears – looked up at the doctor and gasped, “Thank you, Dr. Tooman, for my hurting.”

Every one of us has faced trials and tribulation – situations that are physically and emotionally painful. It’s called life. The testing, we learn, can make us stronger, shape our character.

In his book, *For These Tough Times*, author and minister Max Lucado writes: “In our toughest times we may see what the followers of Christ saw on the cross. Innocence slaughtered. Goodness murdered. Heaven’s tower of strength pierced. Mothers wept, evil danced, and the apostles had to wonder, *When all that is good falls apart, what can good people do?*

“God answered their question with a declaration. With the rumble of the earth and the rolling of the rock, He reminded them, ‘The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord sits on His throne in heaven.’ And today, we must remember: He still is. He is still in His temple, still on the throne, still in control. And He still makes princes out of prisoners, counselors out of captives, and Sundays out of Fridays. What He did then, He will do still.”

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1:2-5 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter