

Psalms 119:71

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

Analysis

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." The frank statement *tov li ki uniteti* (good for me that I was afflicted) contradicts natural thinking that suffering is pure evil. *Tov* (good) indicates benefit, value, welfare—affliction produced spiritual profit. The purpose clause *lema'an elmad chuqekha* (in order that I might learn your statutes) reveals suffering's educational function. *Lamad* (learn) means more than intellectual acquisition—it implies experiential learning, internalization through practice. *Chukei* (statutes) refers to God's engraved, prescribed decrees. Affliction taught what prosperity couldn't: God's statutes are supremely valuable, trustworthy, sufficient. James 1:2-4 similarly instructs to "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

Historical Context

Throughout redemptive history, God's choicest servants learned through suffering: Joseph through slavery and prison, Moses through wilderness exile, David through persecution by Saul, prophets through rejection and suffering, apostles through beatings and imprisonment. Jesus Himself "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8)—not that He was disobedient, but He experientially learned obedience's cost. The early church understood suffering as normal Christian experience, producing perseverance and proven character (Romans 5:3-5).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What have you learned through affliction that you could not have learned through prosperity?
2. How does viewing suffering as educational rather than merely punitive change your response to it?
3. What specific "statutes" of God has affliction made more real and precious to you?

Interlinear Text

טוֹב	לִי	כִּי	עָנֵה יְהוָה	לִּי מֵעַן	אֲלֵמָּה ד
It is good	H0	H3588	for me that I have been afflicted	H4616	that I might learn
H2896			H6031		H3925
חֲקִיֶּיךָ					
thy statutes					
H2706					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:67 (Parallel theme): Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

1 Corinthians 11:32 (Parallel theme): But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Isaiah 27:9 (Parallel theme): By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones

of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

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