A testimonial from someone who has overcome adversity and turned tragedy into a triumph is always a great source of encouragement.

Virginia Walkaways Fajardo, for example, had been paralyzed by a spinal tumor. Prior to that she had been a vibrant, active woman. Nevertheless, she adjusted to her loss and continued to parent two daughters. In addition, she became interested in working with prisoners and taught creative writing classes at the penitentiary in her community.

On one occasion a discouraged inmate named Waymon told her she “couldn’t imagine what it is like to be in prison.” Her reply, sent through the mail, is memorable.

“When you said I couldn’t imagine what it is like to be in prison, I felt impelled to tell you that you are mistaken. When, at the age of 31, I awoke one day to find that I was completely paralyzed, I felt trapped—overwhelmed by a sense of being imprisoned in a body that would no longer allow me to run through a meadow or dance or carry my child in my arms.

“For a long time I lay there, struggling to come to terms with my infirmity, trying not to succumb to self-pity. I asked myself whether, in fact, life was worth living under such conditions, whether it might not be better to die. . . . But then, one day it occurred to me there were still some options open. Would I smile when I saw my children again, or would I weep? Would I rail against God, or would I ask Him to strengthen my faith?

“I made a decision to turn my seemingly negative experiences into positive experiences, to look for ways to transcend my physical limitations by expanding my mental and spiritual boundaries. . . . You can look at your bars, or you can look through them. To some extent, Waymon, we are in this thing together.”—By Victor Parachin, Signs of the Times, February 1991.

Quote: “There are so many people in the church who stop looking to the Lord and go to throwing stones at one another.”—Unknown, Signs of the Times, February 27, 1893.

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D. L. Moody once told about a Sunday School teacher who wished to show his class how free the gift of God is. He took a silver watch from his pocket and offered it to the eldest boy in the class.

“It’s yours if you will take it.”

The little fellow sat and grinned at the teacher. He thought he was joking. The teacher offered it to the next boy and said, “Take the watch; it is yours.”

The little fellow thought he would be laughed at if he held out his hand, and therefore he sat still. In the same way the teacher went nearly round the class; but not one of them would accept the proffered gift. At length he came to the
smallest boy. When the watch was offered to the little lad, he took it and put it into his pocket. All the class laughed at him.

“T am thankful, my boy,” said the teacher, “that you believe my word. The watch is yours. Take good care of it. Wind it up every night.”

The rest of the class looked on in amazement; and one of them said, “Teacher, you don’t mean that the watch is his? You don’t mean that he hasn’t to give it back to you?”

“No,” said the teacher, “He hasn’t to give it back to me. It is his own now.”

“Oh-h-h! if I had only known that, wouldn’t I have taken it!”

The greatest joy the Christian church can know—the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain—can be ours if we simply follow God’s directions. He says: “Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain.” This great blessing, as well as hundreds of others mentioned in the Bible, is ours for the asking.—By Kenneth J. Holland, *These Times*, August 1951.

Quote: “If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me.”—By Robert M. McCheyne, *These Times*, November 1971.


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On that day in 1874 when David Livingstone, the great missionary to Africa, was buried in Westminster Abbey, the streets of London were lined with thousands of people seeking to pay respect to the memory of a great pioneer for God. In the crowd was a poor old man in ragged clothes, weeping bitterly. Someone asked why he wept when all were seeking to honor the illustrious dead.

“I’ll tell you why,” the old man said, “I knew David Livingstone. We were born in the same village, brought up in the same school, went to the same church, worked in the same room. But David went that way, and I went this. Now he is honored by the nation and Christians everywhere. But I am neglected, unknown, dishonored. I have nothing to look forward to but a drunkard’s grave.”

And so the choice is ours, too. Not many can be world famous for God, as was Livingstone, but we can be on God’s side, as he was. And our choice will determine the course of our life in time, and it will determine our destiny in eternity. “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.” Isaiah 55:6—By H. M. S. Richards, *Our Times*, January 1951.

Quote: “No man can tell whether he is rich or poor by turning to his ledger. It is the heart that makes a man rich. He is rich according to what he is, not according to what he has.”—By Henry Ward Beecher, *These Times*, January 1965.

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Contradictory Traits
A mighty man of war, Julius Caesar, was remarkably afraid of thunder, and is said to have donned a laurel wreath to protect himself from lightning.

Marshal Saxe, the great French soldier, like Lord Roberts, fled at the sight of a cat, and could not refrain from a scream of terror should one brush against him.

Peter the Great, the Russian czar, could on no account cross a bridge. Often and often, it is related, he strove to master the antipathy, but never succeeded.

Byron, the poet, cherished a superstitious antipathy to salt, and would leap from his chair if any of the article happened to be spilled on the table.

Dr. Johnson and Thomas Carlyle could never enter a room or set forth on a journey with their left foot foremost. Strong-minded man and remarkable as Lord Chancellor Bacon was, every eclipse of the moon threw him into a fainting fit, while the philosophical Boyle, from boyhood upward, turned cold and miserable at the sound of running water through a pipe.—From N. Y. Telegram, Signs of the Times, July 7, 1898.

Quote: “Miserable thou art, wheresoever thou be, or whithersoever thou turnest, unless thou turn thyself unto God.”—By Thomas a Kempis, Signs of the Times, September 10, 1929.

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Sometime ago I was in the cemetery at Nashville, Tennessee, and I called to mind the touching story of a stranger who was seen there planting a flower over a soldier’s grave. When asked, “Was your son buried there?”

“No,” was the answer.

“Your son-in-law?”

“No!”

“A brother?”

“No!”

“A relative?”

“No.”

After a moment the stranger laid down a small board which he held in his hand, and said, “Well; I will tell you. When the war broke out, I was a farmer in Illinois. I wanted to enlist, but I was poor. I had a wife and seven children. I was drafted; I had no money to hire a substitute, and so I made up my mind that I must leave my poor, sick wife and little children, and go and fight in the war.

“After I was all ready to go, a young man whom I knew came to me, and said, ‘You have a large family which your wife can not take care off—I will go for you.’ He did go in my place, and in the battle of Chickamauga he was wounded, and taken to Nashville Hospital; but after a long sickness he died, and was buried here. Ever since I have wanted to come to Nashville and see his grave, and so I saved up all the money I could, and yesterday I came on, and today found my dear friend’s grave.”

With tears of gratitude running down his cheeks, he took up the small board, and pressed it down into the ground in the place of a tombstone. Under the soldier’s name were written only these words: “He died for me.”—By E. P. Hammond, Signs of the Times, September 16, 1903.

Quote: “Only a Christian can truly sing a Christian hymn.”—By Charles G. Bellah, Signs of the Times, November 12, 1929.

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A thousand voices had poured forth a glorious chorus, and the conductor of the choir laid down his baton with relief and satisfaction.

“I’m sure I did that well,” said the baton to the music stand on which it laid.

“Did what well?”
“Conducted that chorus.”
“Foolish thing,” said the stand; “you had about as much to do with it as I had.”
“You!” shouted the baton indignantly. “Did you not see that my movements regulated the speed at which the singers went, called in the bass, or tenor, or alto, or signaled to the treble to cease, bade them increase their voices or diminish them?”
“I saw that the master used you to signify his commands, but you were little more than nothing in the business.”
“You are simply jealous of me, that’s all,” retorted the baton. “Without me this music would be all confusion.”

The master rose, and without lifting the baton gave the signal for his singers to be ready; he had, absent-minded man that he was, forgotten where he had laid it, so he seized a roll of music, and used that with which to conduct. When the piece ended, the stand shook with laughter.
“What did you do that time?” it asked of the discomfited baton; but there was no reply; the baton was bitterly disappointed and humbled.—From The Christian, Signs of the Times, June 20, 1895.

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George Muller, the great philanthropist of faith and prayer, was en route from England to Quebec. A heavy fog retarded the progress of the vessel and threatened to keep him from an important appointment.
To the captain on the bridge Mr. Muller explained the importance of his arrival in Quebec by Saturday afternoon. This was on Wednesday.
“It is impossible!” exclaimed the captain. “We cannot make better time through this fog.”
“Very well,” George Muller replied, “if your ship can’t take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement in 47 years.”

Much to the captain’s surprise Mr. Muller suggested they go down into the chart room and pray. Reluctantly the captain went with him, and there the two knelt while Mr. Muller offered a simple prayer. When they went back on deck the fog was completely gone, and George Muller kept his appointment in Quebec.

What God did on countless occasions for George Muller He desires to do for every trusting child of His. Is there something in your heart that you long for? Is there some great problem with which you have been wrestling? You have tried many ways of solving your problems—but have you tried God?—By Robert H. Pierson, Our Times, April 1947.

Quote: “I saw God write a gorgeous poem this very morning. With the fresh sunbeam for a pencil, on the broad sheet of level snow, the diamond letters were spelled out one by one till the whole was aflame with poetry.”—By Phillips Brooks, These Times, March 1965.

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Two frogs fell into a can of milk,
Or so I’ve heard it told;
The sides of the can were shiny and steep,
The milk was deep and cold.
“O, what’s the use?” crooked Number One,
“ ‘Tis fate; no help’s around.
Goodbye, my friend! Goodbye, sad world!”
And weeping still, he drowned.

But Number Two, of sterner stuff,
Dog-paddled in surprise,
The while he wiped his milky face
And dried his milky eyes.
“I’ll swim awhile, at least,” he said—
   Or so I’ve heard he said.
“It really wouldn’t help the world
   If one more frog were dead.”

An hour or two he kicked and swam,
   Not once he stopped to mutter,
But kicked and kicked and swam and kicked—
   Then hopped out, via butter!—By T. C. Hamlet, *These Times*, August 1965.

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