

## Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith –

### Pivotal Circumstances

James 1:2-4, John 11:1-44

It happens again and again: people go through the most difficult circumstances imaginable, and come out on the other side with rock-solid, unshakable faith.

As they describe their stories later, they say, "I wouldn't have signed up for it; I wouldn't choose to go through it again; and I wouldn't wish it on anybody else. But God did something in the middle of those circumstances that I don't think he could have done any other way."

Our faith is permanently impacted by these big, bad, bold, unexpected circumstances. And that's not accidental; it's intentional on God's part.

#### Discussion Questions

1. In the Problem of Pain, C.S. Lewis writes, "*God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.*" In your opinion, why is it so easy to factor God out of our lives when things are good and to become part of the conversation when bad things happen?
2. Read James 1:2-4. James writes that trials test our faith—our confidence in God. What relationship do you see between adversity and a stronger faith?
3. James says that the goal of these tests is "perseverance." The implication is that trials can create persevering faith in God. But why trials? How else could God create persevering faith?
4. As you look at John 11:1-6. How does it make you feel to read that Jesus loved Lazarus, but didn't go to him in his time of need?
5. Look again at John 11:4. Is the idea of God using human pain for his glory disturbing to you? Is this a new concept for you?
6. As Jesus speaks with Martha (11:21-27), what do we learn that she already believes about Jesus? What more does Jesus want her to believe?
7. In John 11:41-42, what reason does Jesus give for pausing to pray before performing this miracle? What is the significance of that?