Confidence in God in Trials and Changing Seasons (Rom. 5:3-5)

1. God promises to fulfill His purposes to work all things for our good
   1. We can be confident that God will fulfill His purpose and plan for our life, family, ministry, etc. The enemy seeks to destroy our confidence in God’s leadership to prevent us having a vibrant spirit.

6being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it… (Phil. 1:6)

* 1. The Lord promised to overrule the pressures in our life to cause all things to work for our good. His primary purpose for us is that we grow in Christlikeness— love, meekness, purity, generosity, etc.

28We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose…29to be conformed to the image of His Son. (Rom. 8:28-29)

* 1. Love, meekness, purity, etc. in our life will be greatly rewarded by Jesus in the age to come.

18I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich… (Rev. 3:18)

13Each one’s work…will be revealed by fire…14If anyone’s work…endures, he will receive a reward. 15If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he will be saved… (1 Cor. 3:13-15)

17For our light affliction…is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.   
(2 Cor. 4:16-17)

1. Aspects of God’s leadership that the enemy accuses
   1. The Father disciplines us—He disciplines us to remove deficiencies (sin) from our life and to cause us to grow in righteousness. His correction is not rejection but love for the children He delights in.

11Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Heb. 12:11)

12Whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. (Prov. 3:12)

* 1. The Father prunes us—His commitment to prune us is a glorious promise, not a dreadful warning. He prunes us to *remove distraction* from obedient believers. He prunes us because we do not have the wisdom or resolve to “cut off” some of the “good” activities in our life that resulted from the previous season of fruitfulness. Without understanding the Father as the *vinedresser*, we are more vulnerable to be fearful or offended with His leadership when He prunes us.

1“…My Father is the vinedresser…2Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may   
bear more fruit.” (Jn. 15:1-2)

* 1. The Father allows His people us to be persecuted. He rewards them greatly for their faithfulness.

11“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.”  
(Mt. 5:11-12)

1. the divine process of transforming our life (Rom. 5:3-5)
   1. Paul connected three virtues to help us understand our trials—***perseverance***, ***character***, and ***hope***.

3We also glory [rejoice] in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;   
4and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5Now hope does not disappoint, because   
the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit… (Rom. 5:3-5)

* 1. ***Rejoice***: We do not rejoice in the trials themselves, but in what they produce in us as we rightly respond to God. Trials do not change us— but the Holy Spirit changes us as we agree with Him.
  2. ***Knowing***:Trials can cause us despair if we do not see God’s purpose in using them in our life.The devil tells us that our trials are proof that we are forgotten by God, disqualified from His blessing, and destined to fail, or that our relationship with God is not genuine.
  3. ***Perseverance***: This speaks of our fortified resolve to continually press in or “reach” to love, obey, and pursue God and His promises. We refuse to quit or draw back from contending for fullness.
     1. Pressure causes us to ask deep question*s* about the purpose of our life and the condition of   
        our relationship to God. It causes us to rehearse the consequences of persevering in God compared to giving up (quitting).
     2. Pressure causes us to work our “faith muscle.” Resistance training increases our strength.   
        A muscle is strengthened when it is exercised beyond the norm by using weight that breaks down and builds up the muscle. A butterfly’s struggle in a cocoon is necessary to develop its wings. To help it by cutting its cocoon would result in its wings remaining undeveloped.
  4. ***Character***: Those who persevere in asking for the Spirit’s help to grow in love will grow in godly character. Those who grow in character will see God’s leadership and perspective more clearly—“the fog lifts.” Jesus highlighted one benefit of purity: the ability to see more clearly (Mt. 5:8).

8Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Mt 5:8)

* 1. ***Hope***: Hope is *confidence* that Jesus’ leadership is good, that love is being imparted in us during   
     the process of the trial, that our life is successful in God’s eyes as we grow in love and humility,   
     and that He will greatly reward all of our growth in Christlikeness on the last day.
  2. ***Love poured out in our hearts***: The Spirit inspires and imparts God’s love in us during our trials   
     so that we can enjoy God and delight in His leadership with a vibrant spirit, even in difficult times.

5Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts   
by the Holy Spirit… (Rom. 5:5)

* 1. ***Hope that does not disappoint***: Our hope or confidence in God’s good leadership is reliable.   
     We will not be disappointed in the outcome of what we hoped for (1 Cor. 2:9; Eph. 3:20).

9“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which   
God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:9)