

Redemption!

What is a core Value? “A principle or belief that an organization views as being of central importance.” Core values shape the culture of an organization.

We already have core values, good ones, why do we need to change? This is true. For several years we have had 6 core values, they are values that are essential to any healthy church and they are still very important to us. However, we wanted our values to capture what is most true about us. What do we value most? What distinguishes us from other churches? If our current values describe what is true and good for all churches, we wanted to identify what is true, good, and unique about Definition Church. What do we value most?

1. **We see redemptive potential in every moment.**
2. **We do whatever it takes to pursue our God given potential.**
3. **We do what’s right because it is what love requires.**

We see redemptive potential in every moment

Romans 8:28, “We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose.”

This is my life verse! When I look back over the events of my life, I can clearly see how God was with me and causing everything to work together for my good.

- **God worked through my broken family-** to teach me to work hard, to persevere, to be mentally and emotionally strong. To teach me common sense, street smarts, and a toughness that has served me well in ministry.
- **God worked through my family and school troubles to push me into sports and church.** God worked through my church to provide friends, to teach me about Jesus, and to help me discover my gifts and God’s call on my life.
- **God worked through sports to bring great coaches in my life who encouraged and challenged me.** Sports taught me teamwork, leadership, sportsmanship, allowed me to experience success and build confidence and also how to handle losing.
- **God worked through my financial struggles** to teach me to trust Him. To be grateful. To be content. To give. God even used my financial struggles to help me discover my ministry calling.
- **God worked through my marriage crisis, through being forced out of my first church,** and through lots of smaller challenges throughout the course of my life. God works in all things for our good!

I could spend hours sharing with you how God has worked, in every situation in my life, for my benefit! To help me to be a better, stronger, more mature man. You see this principal at work throughout the Bible and in the lives of almost every Biblical character. One of my favorites is James.

James is the ½ brother of Jesus. After the resurrection of Christ, James is converted, the early church is formed and James becomes the pastor of the church in Jerusalem. At this moment they are going through tremendous persecution and suffering. James begins his letter by explaining all that God is accomplishing through their suffering.

James 1:2-25, 8 blessings of trials.

1. Trials produce Endurance. James 1:2-4

*Trials give you the ability to keep going!

*I've never been the smartest, or the most talented. It was not until year 8 that Daystar averaged over 100 people. What I have had, is endurance. I just don't quit. I keep working, keep learning, keep growing until I figure it out. In life, about 75% of the battle, is just showing up every day. Just don't quit. Outlast your competition and you win!

*I learned this from my mother. She is the strongest woman I know. She never gives up. When my dad left, she sold everything, and went to college. When my step father left, once again she reeducated herself, and became a mortgage underwriter. After her third failed marriage she wrote a book about her life story. In the last couple years once again she has reeducated herself, become a substance abuse counselor and life coach specializing in helping people overcome abuse and trauma. Her secret to overcoming trials is seeing every trial as an opportunity to learn and grow. Mom, you are amazing!

* I am sure I do not understand all that God is doing in America and around the world but this I do know. No matter what happens the church will march on. The church will get stronger, purer, and more resilient. Nothing is going to stop the church!

2. Trials produce Wisdom. 5-8

* When you go through some stuff, you learn some stuff. Trials produce wisdom.

* I just finished a book and the only reason I could write it is because it is my story, I have been through it.

* I was talking to a friend recently who is going through a difficult time. He was asking me, why is this happening and what should he do. I told him, gently, I have given you advice for several years and you usually do the opposite which is why you are in this mess. He said, I am listening now. His trial is producing some wisdom.

* Some lessons, we are too stubborn to learn, until we suffer, until we go through a trial, then we begin to listen. You may be thinking, "I do not feel like God is telling me what to do!" Maybe that is because God knows you will not do what He says. Trials humble us, so we will listen and obey the voice of God. James says if you waver between God and the world do not expect to hear anything.

3. Trials produce Faith. James 1:9-11

* Poverty is when we do not have the resources we need. This can apply to money, community, time, ideas, or anything else that is beyond our reach. These moments can become huge faith builders when we see God meeting our every need.

- Not having time- God giving me a message
- Not having the money- God suppling our needs
- Not having the answer- God giving me wisdom in the moment

- James 2:5, Psalm 23

- God is my provider! I have always had all I needed.

4. Trails produce Rewards. James 1:12

- **2 Corinthians 4:17**

- **Mark 10:28-31**

5. Trials produce Holiness. James 1:13-15

* James highlights how easy it is for us to blame God for our sin. I am reminded of Adam, "It was that woman, who you gave me." James makes it clear, God is not the cause of my sin, my unbridled lust and desires are the cause of my sin. My desire is God given. My desire is good. I just need to satisfy my desire with what God says is good.

Our world is constantly baiting us to satisfy our good desire with sin. James says, watch out, desire gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown it gives birth to death. Which means two things. First, satisfy your God given desire with a God given pleasure. Second, when you find yourself in sin, kill that sin before it grows up and kills you.

What does all this have to do with trials. Trials often expose our desires and the areas of small compromise that when left unattended can destroy our lives.

* **Genesis 4:6-7**, "Why are you so angry? The Lord asked Cain. Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."

* Trials expose our sin providing an opportunity for us to open our hearts and allow God to transform us from the inside out, to help us become like Jesus.

6. Trials produce Gratitude. James 1:17-18

* Trials produce gratitude. When you get on the backside of a trial, you are so grateful for God's grace and faithfulness through it.

* Tina's close call- all she could say was thank you Jesus!

When we go through trials, we discover

- We are not alone
- We are His prized possession

* This produces a heart of gratitude.

7. Trials produce Humility. James 1:19-21

* When you have suffered:

- You talk less and listen more
- You are more self-aware
- You are eager to receive God's instruction

* When I was pastoring my first church I was going to change the world. I was a little prideful, independent, and hardheaded. After being forced out I was humiliated, I did not want to do it alone, and I was teachable.

* Humility often only comes on the backside of humiliation.

8. Trials produce Transformation. James 22-25

* Trials cause you to take a long look in the mirror. Trials produce self-reflection. Trials cause you to ask questions like; could I have done something different. Do I need to change? What should I do next time? Trials also open your heart to what God wants to do in your life. James says, the Bible is the mirror of self-reflection. The mirror exposes areas of opportunity for you to learn and grow.

* Covid-19 trial changed our mission and I believe is going to help us me more effective in the years to come.

Three final ideas about trials:

- I can also learn through the trials of others. I do not have to do all the suffering myself.
- Sometimes our greatest trial is success. Success has ruined a lot of good people
- My pain, my failure, my struggle is my platform, my anointing, and greatest opportunity for influence.

We see redemptive potential in every moment

Logo- It captures the idea of redemption. God has the power to define your future!

God is with you and we are with you!