

## Greetings from President Walton....



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Tough decisions. Life is filled with tough decisions. They make life challenging. Often they impact the lives of those around us in ways that seem less than positive at the time. Our theology reminds us of the fact that God is in charge of all things. We may not know what the future holds, but we know who holds our future!

One of my favorite Old Testament stories follows the life of Joseph. Sold off into slavery, thought to be dead, imprisoned because of lies, it seems that poor Joseph can't seem to get a break. All the time, God is preparing him and situating him for things that he couldn't possibly have imagined.

God, through a whole series of events, raises Joseph up to a position of authority and stature. God reveals to Joseph that a famine is coming, and Joseph was allowed to make some hard decisions a time of prosperity to hold back food for the future. The people had to think He was crazy to worry about not having food when there seemed to be an abundance. Then, when those years of famine arrived, people from all over came to get food from the store houses that Joseph so wisely had set aside. In fact, as you may well remember, his own brothers, the very ones who had sold him into slavery, came to Egypt looking for food, not realizing Joseph was even alive.

Fearing for their lives, they cower before Joseph. This powerful man who had the perfect occasion to get revenge, instead of plotting for all those years, saw God's hand at work. And one of my favorite Old Testament passages comes from the lips of Joseph, when he said, "What you meant for evil, God meant for good..."

Several lessons we can learn from this story help us in our current time. Even in the midst of circumstances or challenges that we don't understand or like, God can bring good as we trust in Him. Also, God uses many events in our life, both positive and negative, to shape us, prepare us and strengthen us for His purposes. Perhaps most importantly, Joseph reminds us that God has a good plan for our lives, and even when we can't see the immediate results of it, we can place our hope in Him.

Often the challenging things in life, while difficult as we are going through them, build us stronger in the future. Then can impart wisdom and new direction in our lives. I once had a member who was diagnosed with fast spreading cancer. It was a terrible tragedy, and many of us grieved.

But this man saw this as an opportunity to witness His faith in Jesus. His testimony was far more powerful because of this circumstance, and many other lives were touched by the witness of his life in those last few months of his life. I remember him telling me that he recognized he couldn't change his circumstance, but he could decide how he would live out the rest of his time. He received the joy of his faith. But don't ever doubt it was a difficult decision on his part.

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The District is currently facing some difficult decisions. These are decisions that impact people and programs, and that's what makes these decisions so difficult. I am convinced that God is at work in it all in ways beyond what we can currently comprehend. He is shaping us and preparing us for a stronger future. We can put our trust and hope in Him, confident that He is the Lord of the Church, and has a good plan for us, individually and corporately.

It's a new day in the District Office, and while I can't promise that I'll do everything right, or do things that will please everyone, I am convinced that God has placed me in this position to serve Him, and I desire to do that with all my heart. In the face of circumstances you don't like or understand, realize two things.

- First, I will make mistakes, and like all sinners, need forgiveness, first from God, and from time to time from you.
- Secondly, my goal and desire as your District President is to strengthen this District to more brilliantly shine the light of Jesus into the places where He has planted us.

I will continue to pursue that with passion and conviction that I pray will benefit us and honor our Lord. I appreciate your partnership and prayers as we forge forward together, difficult decisions and all!

Your brother in Christ,

**Greg**

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*"The love of Christ urges us on." 2 Corinthians 5:14*

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