

Trials Are A Gift From God

Trials Can Stretch Us and Make Us More Productive

Mark Schindler

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One of the books in our home library is a 1946 anthology from the Reader's Digest entitled *Getting the Most Out of Life* and, because of the date, I am fairly certain it was put together by the Reader's Digest Association to encourage those who were returning from World War II. In spite of the world's greatest life and death conflict in war, many now found themselves within a new series of trials in day-to-day living. They needed the encouragement to keep them moving forward. This little book was an anthology put together to help face those trials of life which may or may not have been death defying. In most cases, they probably were not but everyone now had to deal with the severe trials of day-to-day living and learn to use them to rise above it all.

I would like to take a little time to read one of those stories because we too need to see beyond our trials to the ends they are bringing if we approach them in faith. The title of the story is “I Owe My Career to Losing My Life” by Major Alexander P. de Seversky. I want you to grasp the essence of what Major de Seversky saw in hindsight and try to apply it by seeing to the end of your own trials in faithful foresight.

Major de Seversky wrote:

I owe my career, in large measure, to the loss of my right leg in the first World War. What seemed a black end was, in reality, a bright, new beginning; I mean that quite literally. My bodily disability awakened powers and aptitudes within me that were dormant. It focused mental energies which otherwise would probably have escaped me. In 1915, when I was in the Russian Air Force, I volunteered on the bombing expedition against the German warships in the Baltic. My plane was hit and, as it landed on the water, the bombs still in the bomb rack exploded. I recall distinctly being hurtled into the air and sliding deep under the water. Then, I

was on the surface and I mustered the strength to pull myself onto a protruding piece of wing.

In a day of excruciating pain, I explored my body. Where my right leg should have been, I found a warm and mushy nothingness. The impossible thought pounded through my every, aching nerve: At the age of 21, I was crippled. My life was ended even if I were saved. A Russian destroyer picked me up and I spent weary months in the hospital but as I attained the skill to use the crutches, learning even to vault chairs and tables with their aid, my despair receded. What remained was a challenge to everything that was strongest in my character. No matter how often physicians and colleagues assured me to the contrary, I knew that I would fly again. I knew also that things which were commonplace for other people would now be hallowed with excitement for me by reason of my handicap.

While still on crutches, I returned to war working as Chief Naval Aircraft Inspector in the Petrograd District. Physically earthbound, I found my creative imagination soaring. I became fascinated by the designing, engineering, and production side of aviation. I began to add armament to planes in my charge, provide flexible installations for machine guns, and even fooled around with armor plates for flying boats, at that time a startling innovation. As a result of my physical incapacity, in short, my mind was conquering whole new worlds of interest.

Until the crash, aviation had been for me a kind of superior sport. Now, I became exceedingly aware of the wonder of aerodynamics. My artificial leg was finally fitted and, when it was fitted, I thought I should never be able to manage it. I seemed to be dragging a thousand pounds through life; it was hopelessly painful. This was before the truly impressive progress the field made in the last generation.

Slowly, I became habituated to the new limb. More importantly, I began to feel it as a distinction rather than a handicap. My desire to fly did not abate. In inspecting airplanes, I found ample opportunities to sit in the cockpit for hours. Under the pretext of

testing the controls, I was actually testing the strength and flexibility of my artificial leg. One day, I was sent down to the naval air station at the Black Sea to supervise the assembly of a batch of heavy, flying boat bombers. On arrival, I found that a demonstration before the high-ranking Army and Navy officers was scheduled. The morning of the big show, one of the airplanes gave an exhibition of stunting that astounded the gold-threaded dignitaries. It spun, rolled, and looped, dived, and zoomed. Finally, the craft landed and the pilot stepped out; the one-legged stranger from Petrograd. In anger, because I had taken the airplane without permission, the commanding officers of the station confined me to quarters. However, the story reached the ears of Tsar Nicholas II who restored me to full flying duty.

Before the end of the war, I was in charge of the Naval Fighter Command of the Baltic Sea with the rank of Commander and with 13 German aircrafts to my credit. The fact that I had made the record to fight my handicap meant additional glory that I certainly did not merit. Personally, I knew that much of my success in combat was achieved because of that handicap. It had forced me to take precautions, to develop technical improvement, and forced me to take training which, had I possessed the limb, I would certainly have overlooked. Because flying was somewhat more difficult for me, I was constantly studying the aerodynamic phenomenon and I experimented with improvements of aviation gadgets.

In order to reduce the load on my wooden leg, I invented the balanced rudders which lead to the balanced tail rudder. I designed both tactical and drop-able skis for flying boats. They were adapted by the Russian Navy and, subsequently, improved designs were used by Sir Hubert Wilkins in his arctic plane.

I also conceived a bomb sight which, years later, served as the basis for the automatic bomb sight. After Russia stopped fighting in 1917, I came to the United States and offered my service to the U. S. Air Force hoping to return to the front as the war was still on but, because of my artificial leg, I was given an engineering assignment helping the War Department put the S.E. 5 fighter

planes into production. Thus, I came into ever-closer contact with the key figures in Uncle Sam's new air services.

Ultimately, I organized the Seversky Aircraft Corporation, now a public aviation corporation, and built fighter planes for the U.S. Army. I have the supreme satisfaction today, as an American, of knowing that a fighter plane, born in my mind, fought brilliantly for our country. I discovered early that the hardest thing to overcome is not a physical disability but the mental condition it induces. The world, I found, has a way of taking a man pretty much at his own rating. If he permits his lot to make him embarrassed and apologetic, he will draw embarrassment from others. But, if he gains his own respect, the respect of those around him comes easily.

After a while, I was able to talk about my disability with little self-consciousness almost as mundane as encroaching baldness or any other unpleasant physical effect. The adjustment wasn't easy; often, my friends exhibited a well-meaning pity which I deeply resented. The basic piece of advice to the sound of limb and dealing with those who are not, is to ignore the matter. Not to avoid it or pretend not to notice but to treat it as a circumstance of minor importance. In sum total of a man's abilities and essential character, a leg, more or less, is quite incidental.

Year by year, I regained physical skills which I thought had been lost forever. Greater power and agility with my hands and arms became my reward for the lost leg. I adjusted myself to the knowledge that I would not move as quickly as others and that this put me at a disadvantage in some sports. The awareness that others were noticing my physical condition on a beach or on a diving board ceased to bother me. On the contrary, and that too is one of the marvels of human nature, I developed a kind of inner pride about it. It was as if I had with me always the symbol of my victory over difficulty.

Alexander de Seversky then proceeded to describe some of his personal life and his accomplishments in the design and advocacy of American aviation to that date. And he ends this 1946 story by writing, "Today, I feel this solemn

obligation to help those who are newly handicapped. The best that I can do, usually, is to make them understand that life remains rich and exciting and fruitful in spite of physical disability; that life has a wonderful, inscrutable way of paying off in other things for any physical limitation. I cannot resist the temptation to tell the fathers and mothers and sweethearts of our boys in the services that my own mother was in despair when I was wounded. It took long enough to recognize that my handicap was, in many respects, a blessing in disguise.”

The message that I am giving today is kind of part two of the sermon that I gave at the Feast about Martha, but only because there is an important segue from which I merely mentioned in that sermon but which is absolutely essential to our understanding in our walk through this life. I noted that God laid out a distinct pattern for God's elect; through Martha and the other six pillars of faithful service spoken of in that message.

God reveals Himself to each one as the Holy God of glory. He gives clear distinction for the overall course of one's life which can become more focused with faithful submission. He gives each certain gifts to be used while thoughtfully considering His Word and promises in order that His elect know Him well enough to use these gifts in appropriate ways at the appropriate times. He makes it absolutely clear, through a lifetime of nurturing from Him, that it is *He* who is accomplishing His purpose in us and we must wholeheartedly cooperate. There is much, much more to our lives than one great sacrifice which shows God our hearts, and God will continue to refine us through all the days of continual faithfulness and growth if we stay the course with Him.

With these points fresh in our minds and considering Alexander de Seversky's reflection of a successful life made possible by a life-threatening trial, let us begin reading in John 11.

John 11:1-7 Now, a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore, the sisters went to Him saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.” When Jesus heard that, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the

glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”
Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. Then after this, He said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

John 11:14-15 Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

John 11:33-44 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!” And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?” Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who was dead said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.”
Now when He said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him and let him go.”

Brethren, what a desperately trying time for Martha, Mary, and Lazarus! How long did this illness last? How much suffering and pain went on, not only physically and emotionally for Lazarus, but also for Martha and Mary as they served their brother in his illness? Most all of you know how much of a burden there is on the ones who care for the sick as well as for the sick themselves, not to mention the stinging pain of death for those who are left behind. How much pain was suffered empathetically by all the friends and

relatives who knew them? So much pain that it caused Jesus Himself to weep even though He knew exactly what was going to happen next.

It is possible that He wept because of their lack of belief in what He had taught them. Or maybe, it was because He Himself learned by the things that He suffered, and He too was overwhelmed by an empathetic feeling of sorrow at the pain of those fellow human beings with whom He had developed a close, emotional relationship. How much agonizing reflection did each endure as the trial of a dearly beloved friend of Jesus who were taught the word of truth and hope by Him were now face to face with a physically hopeless situation?

As we think of all the different variables, you can only imagine yourself in this situation. I want us to re-read verses 39 through 42.

John 11:4 When Jesus heard that, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

John 11:39-42 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who was dead said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that you sent me.”

Brethren, can we see this in every one of our trials? The sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God. A gift from Him so that we see beyond the circumstances and we see God. The saying goes that seeing is believing, but what do we see? Our life ended or at least very limited circumstances? Or can we see a gift from God that opens our minds to the possibilities never imagined without it? And, keeping with this, there are several important principles for us that we can see in the article by Alexander de Seversky. I would like to take a look more closely at a few of them.

He wrote, in that article, “My bodily disability awakened powers and aptitudes within me that were dormant. It focused my energies which otherwise would probably have escaped me.”

II Corinthians 12:7-10 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

In “The Sovereignty of God” series, John Ritenbaugh said concerning Paul's reaction, “We, like Paul, want God to remove our afflictions any time we are in discomfort but especially when the affliction is chronic and we feel it impedes accomplishment.” God's response to Paul, however, fit a far greater need, perhaps to keep Paul humble so that his many gifts did not become a curse. Instead, God gave him a strength to bear up under the affliction thus keeping him in a constant state of dependency for strength to go on.

Paul humbly accepted this and continued his ministry despite his afflictions knowing he was fulfilling God's will. Paul went so far as to write, “Most gladly I will boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Paul saw his infirmities as a gift from God that were a path to real strength and he took pleasure in them because, just as Alexander de Seversky came to see his handicap focused his mental energies that otherwise would have escaped him, so too, did the apostle Paul, and so too must we.

Taking pleasure in our trials because they are a gift of God for our growth is certainly not an easy task. But, if we can see them in the same context Paul saw them as he writes in verse 9, “That the power of Christ may rest upon

me,” we too must see God and know it is the very weakness we are living through that is making us strong by His grace. If we can always look first to see the power of Christ resting upon us in our trials, and know that these very trials are not the end of our life, but the very same God is using these trials to save our life, then we will be way ahead of things and actually delight when God is working in us.

Alexander de Seversky also wrote that his incapacity opened up a whole new world of interests even though, when it happened at age 21, he considered his life ended even if it were saved. He discovered that the hardest thing to overcome was not the physical disability but the mental condition it induces and in the sum total of a man’s abilities and essential character, a leg, more or less, was quite incidental.

I would like us now to take a look at something that you may not consider when you consider your own trials. This is perhaps one of the clearest lines of demarcation between the way God thinks and the way men think regarding trials.

Exodus 16:1-8 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.” Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, “At evening you shall know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning you shall see the glory

of the Lord; for He hears your complaints against the Lord. But what are we, that you complain against us?” Also Moses said, “This shall be seen when the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the Lord hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the Lord.”

Exodus 16:12-15 “I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’” So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.

Exodus 16:25-35 Then Moses said, “Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.” Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. And the Lord said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! For the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.”

So the people rested on the seventh day. And the house of Israel called its name manna. And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. Then Moses said, “This is the thing which the Lord has commanded: ‘Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for

your generations.” As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

Numbers 11:4-10 Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: “Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!” Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium. The people went about and gathered it, ground it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil. And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it. Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the Lord was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 8:16 Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end.

Psalms 78:1-8 (NIV) My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them

from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.

Psalm 78:18-26 (NIV) They willfully put God to the test by demanding the food they craved. They spoke against God; they said, “Can God really spread a table in the wilderness? True, he struck the rock, and water gushed out, streams flowed abundantly, but can he also give us bread? Can he supply meat for his people?” When the Lord heard them, he was furious; his fire broke out against Jacob, and his wrath rose against Israel, for they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance. Yet he gave a command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. Human beings ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat.

Brethren, we saw first in Exodus 16:4; manna was a test from God for those people to learn a new way of life, to walk in His commandments—especially to have an opportunity to begin to feel the significance of the Sabbath relative to this whole Planet Earth. Verse 7 showed us daily manna for 40 years. What an opportunity to see the glory of God! Exodus 16:8 shows us that God received complaints against Him in the times of trials while Numbers 11 shows us that there was even *contempt* and weeping over the bread of physical life that God had left for them. They did not need the variety of physical choices that they desired. As we saw in Deuteronomy, it was a continual test for their *good* for the greater part of all their lives.

Brethren, all of us have different kinds of trials that may last a long time, even to the end of our physical lives, and some are much more severe than just not fulfilling our desires. But if we can see God and know in faithful

commitment to Him that He is giving us the food of the mighty ones to open whole new worlds, as Alexander de Seversky put it, then we also should be able to see as Alexander de Seversky might have written: In the sum total of our abilities and essential characters of the Family of God, a leg, more or less, is incidental.

When he was fitted and began wearing his artificial leg, it began as something hopelessly painful but ended up becoming a distinction rather than a handicap. It was as if he had with him always a symbol of his victory over difficulty. Again, we are going to turn to some very familiar scriptures and I hope they can give us some great measure of hope, confidence, and foresight concerning our trials; even to death.

I Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Brethren, in foresight rather than hindsight, our Father has given us the ability now to hold on to this vision of distinction and seeing our trials with Christ as symbols of the victory that is already ours in faith which we actually are seeing when the glory of Christ is revealed in the coming. Please turn with me now to Romans 8.

Romans 8:14-30 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses.

For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

The apostle Paul was going through severe trials almost on a daily basis; some of which were just a continuous struggle with the same problems. He shows us that if we suffer with Christ, we will be glorified with Christ. He was convinced, as he stated in verse 8, that the sufferings of this present, evil time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us. Because of the foresight as the basis of faith he saw, in verse 30, whom He did already predestine, them He also called, and whom He had already called, He also justified, and whom He had already justified, them He has already glorified.

Hebrews 12:2-8 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in

your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

As difficult as the trials we face in life may be, God tells us right here through the author of Hebrews that our very trials we carry with us are the symbols of our victory as seen in verse 8. A vivid symbol of the legitimate heirs of the Kingdom of God are the trials themselves. We carry with us the victory of Revelation 21:7.

Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

The final principle I would like for us to glean: de Seversky wrote at the very end of the article, "Today, I feel a sound obligation to help those who are newly handicapped. The best thing I can do, usually, is to make them understand that life remains rich and exciting and fruitful despite the physical disabilities. That life has a wonderful and inscrutable way of paying off in other things apart from physical limitation."

Quite often our trials, whether they merely limit our participation to what we consider to be the normal way of life everyone else enjoys, or if they are excruciating and maybe even painful and seem to be inscrutable, not understood by human reasoning. But brethren, if we can understand them in foresight and preparation of sound obligation to be of service to God, to each other, and especially to those who come after us following the pattern set up for us by our older Brother, should we not be working as diligently as we can always to see our trials as gifts from God in His glory? Just as Alexander de Seversky saw in hindsight, his disability was a blessing in disguise, a gift which obligated him to be of service to others, so too, should we within the realm of our disability that God is using to build strength in us for His honor and glory.

All kinds of technological advancements in aviation sprung out of ideas from Alexander de Seversky. And due in no small measure to his vision in the advocacy of the air power, the United States became one of the most dominant leaders in the field of air power. However, it was only after a chain of great accomplishments that he could look back and see what he considered the end of his life at 21, even if saved alive, as a gift and a blessing in disguise.

But brethren! It is our privilege and duty to look forward in faith to the great accomplishments that God is working in us through the little and great trials of our lives. Do we see God and His gift to us as every trial of our lives, great and small, even on to death? Is our vision faithfully clear enough to see that as a distinction rather than a handicap, already a symbol of our victory? God inspired the apostle Peter to write in I Peter 2:

I Peter 2:21-24 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

Brethren, this is a done deal. And the symbol of a victorious life is actually in the things to be glad we suffer within the power of Christ that rests upon us the gift from God.