



WOW: Word Of the Week

Pressure

July 10, 2024

A new beginning! Welcome back to my office! Another WOW! (And along the way, I hope to share a few more “bits” and a few articles or reflections from time to time.)

“Pressure is a privilege.” You may have seen the quote; it has been making the rounds again. In an interview published in The Washington Post September 3, 2019, Billie Jean King said, “I have this saying: Pressure is a privilege. Usually if you have tremendous pressure, it’s because an opportunity comes along.”

Pressure! What is it? Older translations of the Bible use tribulation, affliction. Those are not much-used words today! The Greek verb, *thlibo*, means “to crowd, to cause to narrow, to throng.” The related Greek noun, *thlipsis*, means pressure. One lexicon says, trouble. By the way, this is Paul’s word in Second Corinthians.

We often talk about trials, tests, and troubles without making much distinction. But biblically, there is a difference! Another Greek word, James 1, “count it joy when you encounter testing.” *Peirasmos*—trial or testing; an opportunity to prove yourself. Note the difference! In trials or testing, we prove ourselves. In times of trouble, we experience the pressures of life.

Observations! Take-aways! Pressure. Is it good or bad? A rubber band does its job when you put it under stress or tension. Pressure gets things done—until the pressure becomes too great! Christians see trouble as a natural, normal part of life. “Thank you, Lord, for this opportunity to be what you made me to be.” Thank you for the challenge, the opportunity to change and grow.

My friend, Steve White, observes four things about pressure: pressure means that somebody believes in you; pressure means you expect more of yourself than to be average; pressure gives you the opportunity to do something extraordinary; pressure causes you to rise to the next level.

In recommitting to write and share a weekly WOW, I have decided to add some pressure to my weekly schedule. I have enjoyed the rest, but I want to keep on growing. Pressure contributes to growth, enables change, shapes me more and more into his image. Pressure is not bad; certainly not a hindrance. Paul rejoiced in his troubles.

Different word, different idea, but James urged Christians to rejoice in times of testing.

Bottom line! Lean into the life God is placing before you! With his power and help, he is working everything for good to those who love him, leaning into his calling according to his purpose. God works everything for us, not against us. Even pressure!