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The purpose of Faith Bible Fellowship is to glorify God by developing disciples of Jesus Christ from spiritual birth to spiritual maturity.

We define a developing disciple as one who:

- ♦ is worshipping God both privately and with other believers
- ♦ is growing in the knowledge of the Scriptures and applying it in daily life
- ♦ is sharing his or her life and resources with fellow believers
- ♦ and is sharing Christ with those who do not know him.

From Pastor Chris: The Crook in Her Lot

I've been reading a short book titled "The Crook in the Lot." It's a contemplation of Ecclesiastes 7:13, "Consider the work of God; for who can make that straight which he has made crooked?"

It's only 106 pages long, but it's not an easy read. To give you an idea, here's how it starts: "A just view of afflicting incidents is altogether necessary to a Christian deportment under them . . ." That's the way author Thomas Boston put it in the early eighteenth century. We would probably say something like, "When bad things happen, it's important to see God's hand at work in the trial if we hope to think and behave properly as Christians."

Boston's idea is that God is sovereign over all the events and conditions of our lives, "even the crooked, rough, and disagreeable parts in your lot." Everyone's got "crooks in their lot" because sin has entered into the world. Some are more visible than others. Some are our own doing, and some come through no fault of our own. But everybody's got them, and those who forget that will complain as if they have been unfairly singled out for hardships.

The Christian must understand that though God is not the author of evil, what God sees fit to mar (or let be marred) in our lot, no man will be able to mend. It is not wrong to seek relief from the crooks in our lot by prayer and common sense, but we should always keep in mind that the crook's duration will be as long or as short as God wills.

God always turns the crooks in our lives to his own purposes, which are always good. He might use a crook to reveal to us the state of our souls, or to wean us from the world, or to convict us of sin, or to discipline us for sin, or to prevent us from sinning, or to display his grace in us. God may have any number of other reasons for not straightening out the crooked

places in our lives as soon as we'd like (but if you read Boston's little book, you would think that he'd covered them all).

I reviewed "The Crook in the Lot" for Ed Jaeger's Sunday School class

two Sundays ago. Ed had called at 5:30 a.m. to say that he wouldn't be at church because his wife Belle was gravely ill. At 9 p.m. Belle went home to be with the Lord.

Belle's most visible crook was a stroke suffered four years ago, a stroke that severely impaired her speech and mobility. Through it all, Belle maintained a marvelous "Christian deportment." Cheerful, caring, and sweet-spirited, Belle knew that God was in control of the events and conditions of her life, and that he is good—all the time.

She also knew that a crook cannot last forever in one of God's redeemed. God may have his purposes in allowing a crook for a time, but his ultimate purpose for us is to "deliver [us] from this body of death" (Romans 7:24).

Another of our own has graduated to glory. She is with her Lord. There are no longer any crooks in her lot. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:25).

