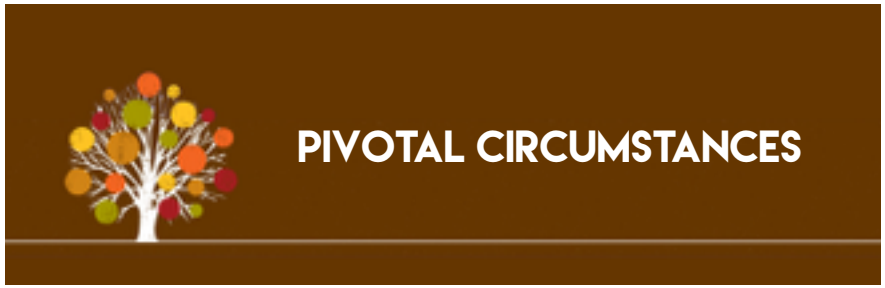

Pivotal circumstances can be positive or negative.

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world." *C.S. Lewis - The Problem Of Pain*

Jesus actually creates negative circumstances in order to grow someone's faith.

A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick." But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." **John 11:1-4 NLT**

So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days. **John 11:5-6 NLT**

Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea." But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?" **John 11:7-8 NLT**

Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up." The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!" **John 11:11-12 NLT**

They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died. So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead." And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, so that you may believe. Come, let's go see him." **John 11:13-15 NLT**

Well, I don't believe in a God who would ...

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask." **John 11:21-22 NLT**

Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again." "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?" "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God." **John 11:23-27 NLT**

Then Jesus wept. The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" **John 11:35-36 NLT**

Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. **John 11:45 NLT**

You know what makes the biggest difference in our response? The people around us.

There's only one thing worse than disappointment with God - that's disappointment without God. *Phillip Yancey*

The right response leaves us open to receive God's grace. The wrong response forces us to face life without God.

Warning: If it feels like God is doing something to us, our faith weakens.

If we know God is doing something in us, our faith grows.

June 19, 2016