The tests of life are its plus factors. Overcoming illness and suffering is a plus factor for it moulds character. Steel is iron plus fire, soil is rock plus heat. So lets include the plus factor in our lives.

Sometimes the plus factor is more readily seen by the simple hearted. Myers tells the story of a mother who brought into her home – as a companion to her own son- a little boy who happened to have a hunch back. She had warned her son to be careful, not to refer to his disability. The boys were playing and after a few minutes she overheard her son say to his companion “ Do you know what you have got on your back ?” The little boy was embarrassed, but before he could reply, his playmate continued “ It is the box in which your wings are, and some day God is going to cut it open and then you will fly away and be an angel.”

Often it takes a third eye or a change in focus, to see the plus factor. Walking along the corridors of a hospital recently where patients were struggling with fear of pain and tests, I was perturbed. What gave me a fresh perspective were the sayings put up everywhere, intended to uplift. One saying made me conscious of the beauty of the universe in the midst of pain, suffering and struggle. The other saying assured me that God was with me when I was in deep water and that no troubles would overwhelm me.

The import of those sayings also made me aware of the nether springs that flow into people’s lives when they touch rock bottom or are lonely or guilt ridden. The nether springs make recovery possible, and they bring peace and patience in the midst of negative forces.

The forces of death and destruction are not so much physical as they are psychic and psychological. When malice, hatred and hard heartedness prevail, they get channeled as forces of destruction. Where openness, peace and good heartedness prevail, the forces of life gush forth to regenerate hope and joy. The life force is triumphant when love overcomes fear. Both fear and love are deep mysteries, but the effect of love is to build, whereas fear tends to destroy. Love is generally the plus factor that helps build character. It creates bonds and its reach is infinite.

It is true there is no shortage of destructive elements – forces and people who seek to destroy others and in the process destroy themselves – but at the same time there are signs of love and life everywhere that are constantly enabling us to overcome setbacks. So lets not look at gloom and doom – let us seek positivity and happiness. For it is when you seek that you will find what is waiting to be discovered

(a) On the basis of your reading of the above passage, make notes on it in points only, using abbreviations, wherever necessary. Also suggest a suitable title. (5 Marks)

(b) Write a summary of the passage in not more than 80 words, using the notes you have made. (3 Marks)
Note Making and Summary Writing.

1. The Importance of the Tests of Life
   a) Illness & Suffering build **Char.**
   b) Simple hearted - View disability +vely eg: boy with hunch-backed companion.

2. Change of focus required
   a) Sayings in hospital – awaken one to beauty of universe amidst pain; presence of God
      i) Give strength to overcome obstacles
      ii) Realisation - underlying **hum.** strength in troubles
      iii) Bring Peace & Patience

3. Forces of Destruction
   a) Psychic & psychlgcal
   b) Consist of malice, hatred & hard headedness
   c) Fear destroys

4. Forces of Life
   a) Openness, peace & good heartedness
   b) Love overcomes fear. Love builds **char.** & bonds
   c) Discover signs of love, defeat **destructive elmnts.**

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<thead>
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<th>Key-Abbreviations</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Char.- Character</td>
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<td>2. +vely-Positively</td>
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<td>3. Hum.-Human</td>
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<td>4. Psychlgcal-Psychological</td>
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<td>5. Destructive-Destructive</td>
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<td>6. Elmnts- Elements</td>
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Summary

The tests of life like illness, suffering, pain and disability build character. The simple hearted have the ability to view them as signs of hope and the presence of God. Even in the midst of suffering there is God. The belief that amongst pain and suffering the universe is still beautiful and God present gives strength to overcome obstacles. One must realize there is an underlying human strength that emerges during troubles. This brings peace and patience. The forces of destruction can be overcome by the power of love.