

# REJOICE IN OUR SUFFERING

*“We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us...” —ROMANS 5:3-5*

Rejoicing in having peace with God is about our past. Rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God is about our future, but what about our present? What if we're in a crisis and falling apart at the seams? How are we to rejoice in situations like that?

We can read all kinds of books that help us with suffering, but we'll never find one that tells us to “rejoice in suffering”...except the Bible. This is the perspective Paul gives us – “rejoice in suffering”. He tells us if we're going to enjoy the glory of God, we also need to learn to live with suffering. Romans 8:17 says, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” It isn't a case of, “Here's the glory, but here's the catch; we're going to suffer.” Paul is saying that our sharing in Christ's sufferings is going to contribute to sharing in His glory, and he makes this statement: “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18).

If the goal for Christians is to be restored into the image of God, then a tool for perfecting that is our sufferings. No one goes looking for it, nor should we, but suffering is again and again a creative force in our lives. It's actually an investment in our spiritual growth and maturity that will bring about good returns. Suffering delivers us into the hands of the Lord, in which He works, moulding us into who He wants us to be.

Suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character and character, hope. The end result will be someone whom Jesus will use to reach others with the same comfort, strength and wisdom they have received from Him.

Suffering needs to be looked at from a New Testament understanding of God's blessings. In the Old Testament, blessings were mostly seen in prosperity, but in the New Testament, they are seen in adversity. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33). Rarely do we meet people who know God and can say they haven't suffered. It's in our sufferings we meet with Christ in a deeply intimate way, and in union with Him, discover His strength for our weakness, His wisdom for our folly and His comfort for our fears. And that is hope; God's promise to us. In Deuteronomy 31:6, He said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." And that gives us every reason to rejoice at His feet.

***PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, I never thought I could rejoice in my suffering until You entered my life. Thank You for revealing to me the triumph that comes out of suffering.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Am I extending to others the love of Christ in their suffering?***