

SUFFERING PERSECUTION:

**Enduring harsh treatment, rejection, insults, malicious slander, and violence
for the sake of our allegiance to Jesus.**

1 PETER NIV

^{1:3} Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! **In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ **and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you...**

^{4:12} Dear friends, do not be surprised at **the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you**, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But **rejoice** inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be **overjoyed when his glory is revealed**. ¹⁴ **If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.** ¹⁵ If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶ **However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name...** ¹⁹ So then, **those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.**

BAD REACTIONS TO SUFFERING:

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| 1. “I’m being punished by God. I guess I deserve this.” | JN 1:11-12, HEB 12:7-11 |
| 2. “I am a child of God! I shouldn’t have to go through this!” | HEB 12:7-11, JAM 1:2-5 |
| 3. “I’m paying my penance – I’m earning my wings.” | EPH 2:8-9, HEB 10:1-23 |
| 4. “I don’t have to put up with this! I’m not a doormat!” | JOHN 18:36, EPH 6:12 |
| 5. “Uh oh! The devil must be winning this battle!” | COL 2:13-15, 1 PET 4:19 |
| 6. “I can’t escape suffering so I <i>pursue</i> it.” | 1 CORINTHIANS 7:20-21 |

ACTS 5:41 NLT

The apostles left the high council **rejoicing** that God had counted them **worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus.**

REASONS TO REJOICE IN SUFFERING:

1. **“I must resemble Him! My faith to follow is showing!”**
1 PET 2:21 “...Christ suffered...leaving you an example, that *you should follow...*”
2. **“I’ll be more at home in Heaven! My eyes are on eternity!”**
1 PET 4:13 “...overjoyed when his glory is revealed...”
3. **“I’ll be more rewarded in Heaven! I trust my Judge!”**
1 PET 2:23 “...he entrusted himself *to him who judges justly...*”
4. **“I am being refined for more in His Kingdom!”**
1 PET 5:10 “...will himself restore you, make you strong, firm and steadfast...”
5. **“I am drawing closer to Him!”**
1 PET 4:14 “...the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you...”
6. **“I know my obedience, faith, and loyalty are REAL!”**
1 PET 1:7 “...*the proven genuineness of your faith...*”

PREPARE FOR SUFFERING:

1. **Fix your thoughts on HEAVEN.**
2. **Remember your true IDENTITY.**
3. **Pray for MERCY while standing strong.**
4. **Use your FREEDOM while you have it.**
5. **INVEST in the *local* church and the *suffering* church.**
6. **CAUTION your loved ones.**
7. **EMBRACE your opportunity in Christian history.**

- **Polycarp (2nd century, Smyrna):** The aged bishop stood firm before Roman officials and was burned alive—the flames, witnesses said, would not consume him until he was stabbed.
- **Felicitas of Rome (c. AD 165–175):** This mother watched her seven sons tortured and murdered by every imaginable method before she herself was beheaded rather than renounce Christ.
- **Perpetua and Felicity (3rd century, North Africa):** A young noblewoman and her pregnant servant walked hand-in-hand into a Roman arena. Wild animals and the sword ended their lives.
- **The 40 Martyrs of Sebaste (4th century, Armenia):** Forty Christian soldiers were stripped and forced to freeze on a frozen lake all night, singing hymns until their voices fell silent one by one.
- **Boniface (AD 754, Netherlands):** The 75-year-old missionary bishop was beaten with clubs then cut down by pagan swords while preparing new converts for baptism.
- **William Hunter (March 26, 1555, London):** At only nineteen, he was burned at the stake for refusing to deny the Scriptures or accept doctrines he believed contradicted them.
- **The Korean Martyrs (17th–19th centuries):** From teenagers to grandparents, thousands were executed by sword, fire, and torture over two centuries, refusing to bow to emperor-worship.
- **The Ugandan Martyrs (1886):** When King Mwanga demanded they renounce Christ, these teenage pages refused—and were burned, stabbed, or dismembered along a royal road.
- **Jim Elliot & the Ecuador Five (1956):** Attempting to bring the gospel to the Huaorani people, five young missionaries were speared to death on a riverbank they had named “Palm Beach.”
- **Esther John (1960, Pakistan):** A young nurse who left Islam for Christ was found stabbed to death in her bed after refusing to stop sharing the gospel with village women and children.
- **Graham Staines (1999, India):** The Australian missionary and his two young sons were trapped in their vehicle by a mob and burned alive as they slept during a village outreach trip.
- **Lilia Saavedra (Nov 2008, Colombia):** A Christian worker devoted to rural ministry was ambushed and shot to death by armed militants for her faithful service.
- **The Coptic Martyrs (Feb 2015, Libya):** Kneeling in orange jumpsuits on a beach, 21 humble Egyptian laborers whispered the name of Jesus as ISIS militants beheaded them one by one.
- **The Chinese House Church Martyrs (20th–21st century):** Thousands—many young women—have been tortured, executed for leading unregistered churches. They keep meeting in secret.

MORE ON SUFFERING...

JESUS, THE ONE WE FOLLOW, SUFFERED REJECTION AND VIOLENT PERSECUTION

ISAIAH 53:3 ...REJECTED BY MANKIND, A MAN OF SUFFERING, AND FAMILIAR WITH PAIN...

HEB 2:10 ...THE PIONEER OF THEIR SALVATION...PERFECT THROUGH WHAT HE SUFFERED.

HEB 12:1–3 ...HE ENDURED THE CROSS...ENDURED SUCH OPPOSITION FROM SINNERS...

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS SHOULD EXPECT TO ENDURE HARDSHIP BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH

JN 15:18–20 “...THEY HATED ME...IF THEY PERSECUTED ME, THEY WILL PERSECUTE YOU ALSO...”

2 TIM 3:12 ...EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO LIVE A GODLY LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS WILL BE PERSECUTED

WE EXPERIENCE A UNIQUE FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS WHEN WE SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE

PHIL 3:10–11 ...THAT I MAY KNOW HIM ...AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS...

2 COR 4:8–10 WE ARE... PERSECUTED... THAT THE LIFE OF JESUS MAY...BE REVEALED IN US...

PERSECUTION CAN SERVE TO REFINE AND MATURE GOD’S PEOPLE

ROMANS 5:3–4 ...SUFFERING PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE...CHARACTER...HOPE.

JAMES 1:2–4 THE TESTING...PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE...YOU MAY BE MATURE & COMPLETE...

ETERNAL REWARDS ARE PROMISED FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER FOR CHRIST

MATT 5:11–12 WHEN PEOPLE ... PERSECUTE YOU BECAUSE OF ME...GREAT IS YOUR REWARD...

ROMANS 8:18 OUR PRESENT SUFFERINGS...THE GLORY THAT WILL BE REVEALED IN US.

2 COR 4:17 MOMENTARY TROUBLES ARE ACHIEVING FOR US AN ETERNAL GLORY...

JAMES 1:12 THE ONE WHO PERSEVERES...WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE