

Trials Prepare Christians for Glory

1 Peter 1:6-12 “⁶ *In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,* ⁷ *so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* ⁸ *And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,* ⁹ *receiving as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.* ¹⁰ *Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, made careful searches and inquiries,* ¹¹ *inquiring to know what time or what kind of time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He was predicting the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.* ¹² *It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been declared to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.”*

1. Christians Are Being Prepared for Glory: “⁶ *In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,* ⁷ *so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 1:6-7).

It is important to remember that our earthly experiences are divinely purposeful in preparation for what has in store for us in heaven. In other words, our present life is not chaotic and trivial. Our life today is the school for our heavenly future!

In that regard, we need to go through trials. Sometimes God uses trials to discipline us when we have been disobedient to the God’s will (cf. Psalm 119:67). Sometimes God uses trials to prepare us for effectiveness in ministry or to prevent us from sinning (2 Corinthians 12:1-9). Of course, many times we don’t know or understand God’s purpose for allowing the trials in our lives. However, we can always trust that God has a plan and that He can be trusted in the trial to do what is best for us.

There are various kinds of trials—Paul uses the same word in 1 Peter 4:10 to describe God’s grace. Regardless of the difficulty, we can trust that God’s grace is sufficient to meet our needs. Because trials are varied, the grace to prevail in one trial does not mean that the next trial we face will be easier for us to prevail.

Trials are never easy! They are *grievous* and tend to cause anxiety, fear, pain, disappointment, and doubt (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13). It is important to realize the pain and difficulties of trials and not try to put on a brave face just to appear *mature* and *spiritual*.

“This, too, shall pass!” Trials do not last forever—they are “for a season.” God controls the trials! Peter illustrated this truth in His reference to the goldsmith. No goldsmith will intentionally waste gold, effort, time, or energy by unnecessarily putting gold through the smelting furnace. His purpose is to purify the gold by removing impurities and so we might more perfectly reflect the glory of Jesus in our lives.

Of course, our glory will not be fully formed or revealed until Jesus returns. Our trials today prepare us for tomorrow’s glory. According to Romans 8:71-18, we will bring praise and honor and glory to Jesus if we have been faithful in the suffering of this life. This helps explain why Peter could associate rejoicing with suffering—suffering is difficult to day, but we can rejoice as we look ahead to His return and our reward.

As the assayer tests the gold to confirm its quality, so the trials of life test our faith to prove its validity. A faith that cannot stand the test is untrustworthy—flawed faith is revealed through the trials of life! Faith that is abandoned in difficult times proves that there is no faith at all (cf. Job 23:10). Being r

It is encouraging to know that we are born for glory, preserved for glory, and being prepared for glory, but it is particularly exciting to know that...

2. Christians Can Enjoy the Glory NOW “⁸ *And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,* ⁹ *receiving as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.* ¹⁰ *Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, made careful searches and inquiries,* ¹¹ *inquiring to know what time or what kind of time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He was predicting the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.* ¹² *It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been declared to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look” (1 Peter 1:8-12).*

The Christian approach to life is NOT “pie in the sky in the sweet by and by!” Christianity is a living relationship with the Creator God that turns the trials of life into

opportunities for glory now and forever. The Apostle Peter provides four admonitions for enjoying glory during trials:

1) **Love Christ** (v. 8). Our knowledge of Jesus is based on the biblical record and substantiated by our spiritual relationship with Him—the Holy Spirit has poured out God’s love into our hearts (Romans 5:5). The more we experience His presence, His peace, and His merciful grace, the more we trust the Savior’s heart, and our love for Him grows!

Of course, Satan, our great enemy, tries to use the trials of life to embitter us with the intention to turn our hearts against the Lord, but God’s Spirit is always present to comfort, encourage, and sustain us through the storms of life—*He causes all things to work together for good* because we love the Lord (Romans 8:28-29).

2) **Trust Christ** (v. 8) Of course, we are called to live by faith and not by sight, but problems have the potential to pull our attention from Jesus and weaken our faith. When we finally realize that FAITH means surrendering ALL to God and obeying His word regardless of circumstances or consequences.

Love and faith (trust) are theological twins—they always go together! To really love someone means that you trust that person. Faith and love strengthen the relationship which then strengthens our hope! Since faith and love serve as building blocks for a confident future, they also serve to undergird hope!

How can we grow in faith during difficult times of suffering and testing? It is the same way we grow when things are going well—we immerse ourselves in God’s Word (Romans 10:17). The wisest approach when dealing with difficult times is to feed on God’s Word—the Lord and His Word are completely trustworthy.

3) **Rejoice in Christ Jesus** (v. 8) This does not mean that you rejoice over your situation and pretend that it is not painful and frightening. However, if we trust that Jesus is Lord of the circumstances and that He does work all things together for good, we can rejoice and give thanks to the Author of Life!

One of the great benefits of the Bible is the numerous times that God delivered His servants from deadly situations: Abraham offering His son as a sacrifice; the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace; Daniel in the lion’s den, and Paul with the thorn in his flesh! In every case, these saints of God learned the sufficiency of God’s grace (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:9).

Note that the joy is “*inexpressible and full of glory*” (1 Peter 1:8). Words fail us when we experience the awesome presence of the Living Lord! When the situation

has completely overwhelmed us and we see that nothing good can come from our dilemma, we are overcome with joy and praise when the Lord not only resolves the problem, but the resolution is a miraculous blessing!

4) **Receive from Christ** (vv. 8-12). If we love the Lord, trust Him, and rejoice in Him unconditionally, then we can receive from Him all that we need to turn our trials into triumphs. Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher of the nineteenth century, said, *“Little faith will take your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul.”*

The amazing thing is that this *glorious salvation* that we are awaiting (Christ’s return) was part of God’s plan from eternity past. The prophets of old wrote about this salvation and studied closely God’s revelation. Although they “saw” the *suffering* of the Messiah, as well as His *glory*, they could not fully understand the apparent contradiction and connection between the two.

When Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us, the Jewish teachers, as well as his own disciples, expected a conquering Messiah. Even after His resurrection, His disciples were asking about the “kingdom” (Acts 1:1-8). If His disciples were not clear about the Lord’s plan of saving His creation, we should not be surprised that the Old Testament prophets could not reconcile His suffering with His glory.

The prophets looked ahead by faith and saw two extraordinary events: Mount Calvary, where the Messiah suffered and died (Isaiah 53) and Mount Olivet, where He will return in glory (Zechariah 14:4). They could not adequately see or understand the “valley” between—the present time of His Church (cf. Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:8-11; Colossians 1:26-27; Hebrews 1-2).

Of course, we can find Christ throughout the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, and certainly we should search the entire Word of God to discover and personally apply the truth of God’s Word (John 16:12-15).

The Lord does not mean for us to suffer meaninglessly through the trials and difficulties of this life. He has given us everything we need to *overcome* in every situation that we face. In his first letter, the Apostle John wrote, *“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world”* (1 John 4:4). Of course, to *overcome* does not mean that we will not suffer, but it does mean that the Lord will grant us the grace to victoriously suffer for His glory!

According to Peter, *it is glory all the way for Christians!* The challenge we face is to view our earthly lives from God’s perspective—joy unspeakable and full of glory!