

Trials of the Christian Life

The Struggle is Real



March 15, 2023
Scott McClain

The Purpose Behind Persecution and Trials

"I sure hope today is the start of a new trial in my life!" "Man, I can't wait to be persecuted today!" "Life is way too easy...I need some time in the valley." Who says such things?? No one desires adversity, trials, or persecution in their life. They bring pain, sadness, depression, loss, temptation, sin, a falling away, and often, a sense of losing oneself.

Yet not only is it something we all experience throughout the course of our lives, but God also _____ we will experience persecution even when we are doing things right (2 Tim. 3:11-12)! How can a loving God ALLOW and even WANT His children to suffer?? It doesn't make sense to us. But God's ways are not our ways, His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). Thankfully, we can get an understanding of God's ways through His word. Though the primary theme of the Bible is about a King and His kingdom (and the battle over who has the right to rule and reign), God authored, recorded, and preserved His word for our learning – Rom. 15:4. God wants us to know Him but notice it takes patience! The more we know God, the more comfort and hope we have. The more comfort and hope we have, the more we trust Him. The more we trust Him, the closer we draw to Him.

Though sometimes it may seem like the opposite is true, everything God does is ultimately for our _____ (Rom. 8:28). As we will see throughout this series, God allows persecution to take place in our life for one primary reason: to grow our faith.

FAITH

From Webster's 1828 dictionary: the assent of the mind or understanding to the truth of what God has revealed. Simple belief of the scriptures, of the being and perfections of God, and of the existence, character, and doctrines of Christ.

Faith is the key to EVERYTHING concerning our walk with God (Heb. 11:6. Consider what the Bible has to say about it:

- Our salvation is just the _____ of our faith – Rom. 3:25-28, 5:1, 10:10-13; Acts 16:27-32; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 1:13, 2:8-9.
- Faith has substance – Heb. 11.
- Faith is based on scriptural **facts** – Rom. 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Heb. 4:12; Isaiah 40:8; 2 Peter 1:18-21.
- Faith gives us freedom and liberty – Gal. 3:23-25, 4:1-6, 5:1; Rom. 6:14; 2 Cor. 3:17.
- Faith adopts us into God's family (heirs) – Gal. 3:26, 4:5-6; Rom. 8:17; Titus 3:7; 1 John 3:1-2.
- By faith, we take a stand for God and against this world – 1 Cor. 16:13, 15:58; Gal. 5:1; Eph. 6:11-14; Col. 1:23.
- Faith is a Christian's way of life – 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:6-7; 1 John 2:6; 1 Thess. 4:1; Eph. 5:1-2, 15; Ps. 85:13; 1 Cor. 11:1; Ps. 86:11.

- Faith must grow from belief to knowing to _____ -Ps. 9:10; Pro. 30:5 and Eph. 6:16 (shield of FAITH!); 2 Kings 18:1-5.
 - Trust leads to obedience – 2 Kings 18:6.
 - Obedience leads to _____ – 2 Kings 18:7-16.

How does our faith grow? It MUST be tested. – 1 Peter 1:7; 2 Gold slides Job 23:10; Ps. 66:10-12; James 1:3-4; Rom. 5:3-4; 1 Peter 4:12-13.

KEY:

In preparation for spiritual growth, there must be a “tearing down” before there can be a “building up” – Hosea 6:1; Job 5:18; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:31; Rom. 12:1.

Phil. 3:10 - *Persecution is not your enemy in your walk with God, but rather your _____.*