
UNDERSTANDING TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” I Peter 4:12

WE ALL face difficulties and perplexing problems at one time or another. God has promised them to us, so we should not despair or question “why” in the midst of them. The secret of understanding is clearly revealed in the above portion of scripture found in I Peter 4:12. Note the preceding verse: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever” (I Peter 4:11). Notice carefully the secret revealed in this purpose. The context clearly indicates the plan and purpose of God for fiery trials mentioned in the next verse. Don’t miss it! **THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED.** These inclusive words are among the most commonly used in the Bible. Nothing is excluded! **ALL THINGS** — repeated over 200 times in the Bible. Let’s look at a few.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you **ALL THINGS**, and bring **ALL THINGS** to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

Here is a very familiar verse that includes this same term: “And we know that **ALL THINGS** work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Meeting the conditions of this verse, we are automatically obligated to include all of our trials and tribulations. This is not a painful commitment in the light of the promise of God that all will work together for good. As to how it shall be accomplished is not our problem, for God’s promise forever lifts it above our responsibility. Praise the Lord!

When God states that He is to be glorified, we must automatically conclude that there is no separation to the Christian between the secular and sacred. God is to be glorified in our body, soul, and spirit. He is to be glorified by that which will be evident in our actions. Our thought patterns are to bring glory to God, so we will be cautious of what enters our mind. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (I

Corinthians 10:31). “. . . That in **ALL THINGS** he might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18).

If God is to be glorified in all things, it must include the trials found in the very next verse (12) in this fourth chapter of I Peter. The instruction is that we are not to think some strange thing is happening to us in the midst of fiery trial. It is fire that burns the dross from the metal. Notice it is the individual that the fire is working on — “**TO TRY YOU.**” It is not a trial of our love or patience. It is our total person that is put to the test!

Such trials and testings should not be classified as some strange thing. It was promised to us. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:12). It is time to get acclimatized to suffering. It is promised by God and will be the means of bringing glory to Himself and preparing us for the accomplishment of His plan and purpose in our lives. Do not despair! Look up, for God is on the throne to accomplish His eternal purpose, which is always for our good (Romans 8:28).

Someone states, *If only I could understand what God is endeavoring to do, it might be easier for me to go through trials and tribulations.* If you are honest, you are to be assisted, for the very next verse of Scripture imparts God’s purpose to your consciousness. “But rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (I Peter 4:13).

Joy and Testings

It is most interesting that rejoicing, happiness, gladness, and joy are all identified in the Bible with suffering. Let us take a good look at this fact. I shall point out only a few of the many verses that will substantiate such a claim.

In addition to verse 13, notice I Peter 1:6: “Wherein ye greatly **REJOICE**, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.”

“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, **HAPPY** are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you” (I Peter 4:14).

Remember that verse 13 states, “ye may be glad also with exceeding **JOY.**” Listen to I Peter 1:8: “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with **JOY** unspeakable and full of glory.” “My brethren, count it all **JOY** when ye fall into divers temptations (testings)” (James 1:2).

Benefit of Trials and Tribulations

Already I have declared that God has a distinct purpose in all of the things He sends our way. He is to be gloried in all of them. Here is another verse that states the same truth, found in I Peter 4:11: “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:7).

First, we are purified by the fire of testings to become an honorable vessel to the glory of God. Second, we will have some enemies! Our message and personal stand for Christ dare not vary from the radio to the pulpit or in personal conversation.

The third benefit of suffering trials and testings is spiritual maturity. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:3,4). To accomplish the task assigned to us as Christians, we must be conformed to the image of Christ. It is His love and compassion for a lost world that must flow through us. It is His message we are to proclaim through clean, dedicated lives. God is the One bring-ing trials our way, to indicate to our consciousness that He alone must become partakers of Christ's sufferings; and His glory will give us great joy. "Ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4:13).

Jesus Christ gave an invitation and also the qualifications for it. "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

Do you think for one instant that we can become identified with Christ independent of His suffering? Can you take up the cross God gives you daily without suffering? Dare we entertain the thought that people will accept Christ's message easier from our lips than His? "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but! have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:18,19).

How sickening it is to hear some radio and TV preachers proclaim a sickly, anemic, entertaining message. People are dying and on their way to hell without hope, and some clergymen give a little entertaining message that is not offensive to the drunkard or the harlot. Where is the scathing denunciation of the Word of God? Where is the message of repentance and separation from sin, demanded by a holy God? Where is the deep conviction of sin that lays bare the human heart, motivating a desperate cry to God for Divine intervention, lest the guilty and condemned sinner lands in the fires of hell? Christ says that the worldling will hate Christ and His messenger. And He warns that this is the time to beware when all men speak well of us. O yes, we will also become our strength, so that with Paul, we, too, can state, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

God's Silence

He is not under obligation to tell us everything we want to know in the midst of testing and tribulation. We know His plan for our future. God can be silent about that which he desires to keep to Himself. "THE SECRET THINGS belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that WE MAY DO all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

The fiery trials will no longer be strange things happening to us. We know the purpose of them. We shall be filled with joy in the realization of our being partakers of His suffering, bringing glory to His Name and maturing spiritually to a higher plain of service and godliness.

To accomplish the task assigned to us as Christians, we must be conformed to the image of Christ

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