



Outer Growth - Trials

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

1 Peter 4:12

Test -1 Thessalonians 5:21

Response - Psalm 28:7

Ideas - 1 Peter 5:8

Attitude - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Life - John 10:10

Strong - Joshua 1:9

The New Testament point out that trials are the inevitable experience of faithful believers in an ungodly world controlled by Satan and opposed to the gospel. Those who are committed to Jesus Christ with a devoted heart and loyal faith, who live by the Spirit and who love the truth of the gospel, will experience trouble and sorrow. In fact, suffering for righteousness' sake is evidence of the genuineness of your devotion to Christ. Through painful trials, God allows you to share in His suffering and forms within you the character He desires. Yet when you suffer and remain faithful to Christ, you will be considered blessed, "for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

Trials are a test. We are to rejoice in creature comforts as if we rejoiced not, and must not expect to live many years, and rejoice in them all; but if we do rejoice in God, we may do that evermore. A truly religious life is a life of constant joy. And we should rejoice more if we prayed more. Prayer will help forward all lawful business and every good work. If we pray

without ceasing, we shall not want matter for thanksgiving in everything.

We shall see cause to give thanks for sparing and preventing, for common and uncommon, past and present, temporal and spiritual mercies. Not only for prosperous and pleasing, but also for afflicting providences, for chastisements and corrections; for God designs all for our good, though we at present see not how they tend to it. And proving all things must be to hold fast that which is good. We should abstain from sin, and whatever looks like sin, leads to it, and borders upon it. He who is not shy of the appearances of sin, who shuns not the occasions of it, and who avoids not the temptations and approaches to it, will not long keep from doing sin.

Abraham had a test in Genesis twenty-two where his faith and commitment to God were tested to the maximum. The three great tests of his belief are the call to separate himself from his people and country, and to go forth not knowing where he was going, the requirement to trust God for the promise of the covenant, without seeing the fulfilment of that promise for twenty-five years, and the command to offer up Isaac. The true faith of all believers will be tested in areas they would not expect. However, not in the way of how Abraham experienced with his son, but in ways of things that we may hold on to that are ungodly or precious earthly things we value. Trials will determine how we respond: Either in faith or the feeling of defeat. It is easy to succumb to loss when something goes wrong. "Oh no!" may be the first thought, or "what happened!" could be another. For believers, the next thing is how to approach the situation. Do you start ranting and raving about the matter and take out your frustration on everyone or anyone in sight? Or analyse the problem and immediately call upon God to help ease the issue at hand, and ask Him what to do for this troubling circumstance.

Mordecai, a close relative of Esther, had his own encounter with trials. One of them was to honor Haman, the prime minister of Persia, who was the first political figure in the Bible who devised an evil plan to exterminate God's chosen people. However, Mordecai refused to bow before Haman because of his loyalty to God. Therefore, he would not consent to bow

down or prostrate himself before Haman. Mordecai refused to kneel to any human or idol.

"And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath, as in Esther three, verse five. The actions of Mordecai cause Haman to develop a dislike for him. This motivated Haman's plan to eliminate Mordecai and people like him.

"Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai, as in Esther five, verse nine.

The trial Mordecai faced was knowing the plot of Haman. In Esther four, at the start and end of verse one, "When Mordecai perceived all that was done, (he) went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry." He rallied the people, giving awareness of what this prime minister was trying to do against him and his people. Mordecai, had a strength of character, godly convictions, and assurance in his God. Haman knew in his heart that Mordecai was the better man, and hated him for it.

Trials can generate the wrong ideas. In the heat of the moment, going through it, all sorts of scenarios will come to mind for the outcome of it. The devil does these things to unbelievers and believers because he opposes God and His creation. God made man, but the devil tries to manipulate them. The enemy, although spiritual, attempts to give God's people a hard time in the flesh, although we physically cannot see him with the naked eye.

Eve, the woman from Adam's rib, encounters the serpent in the Garden of Eden, in Genesis three. She begins in verse two to three, "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." The serpent responds in verses four through five, "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Eve repeats God's instruction to the serpent verbally, what she knows about the trees in the Garden of Eden. The serpent takes what she said and twists it, giving her the wrong impression. Did Eve know that she would get feedback from the serpent? Serpent says, "Ye shall not surely die." Yet, God said to Eve, "lest ye die." God said, "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it." The serpent said, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof."

The idea the devil used during the trial to get Eve was to supplant what she was told, giving her the wrong thought. To go from "not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it." While the serpent said, "the day, ye eat thereof." Already, he has the day she eats it. Satan has Eve already eating the fruit from the tree before it happens. Putting the wrong conception in her.

What should the behaviour be during a trial? There are only two reactions: either good or bad, complaining or thankful. To the believer who really trusts their Father's providence, and believes that their prayers are heard, every moment's occurrence will be just that which they have prayed for—the fulfilment of our Father's will. It is for this reason that thanksgiving is so inseparably joined with prayer.

What we are going through will never defeat God. It does not matter how it looks, because we are here today because of Him. For believers, God is the one who keeps us alive during these trials. What we are going through would have already ruined many people today. However, God said no! Grace says no! Mercy says no!

The attitude during trials separates those who are victorious from those who are not. For some of us, our words are messing us up. Look at how we talk. As godly people or believers who are saved and accepted Jesus Christ, we better talk faith all the time. How can we overcome trials if what comes out of our mouths speaks the opposite?

The people complain in Numbers eleven, of the Old Testament, after the third day out of Egypt from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, because the circumstances were not ideal, starting from verse four, "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and

said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes."

Most of them did not make it to the promised land because of their attitude, demonstrated here by their words. It also began to weigh heavily on Moses, who led them out of Egypt in verse eleven, "And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?" Because we may feel under pressure during the trial, it doesn't mean it is going to defeat you. However, the negative words that come out of your mouth will. That is what the devil wants you to say, just to admit and submit with your words.

Through Jesus Christ, God will bring that thing, situation, problem, or sickness under subjection. Even though we do not see it yet, we must walk by faith and not by sight, as in Second Corinthians five, verse seven. The centurion's servant receives healing in Matthew eight, verse seven, " And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. However, hear the response of the centurion in the following verse, "The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." This is how we are to talk, already seeing it before it happens. Jesus marvelled and said in verse ten, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Trials are a part of life. Everyone will have them, whether rich or poor, young or old, black or white, popular or unpopular. Trials are not predicted but are unpredictable. It can come from anywhere and be about anything. All must be ready to react, especially believers. The question is, how will you handle it? Your way? Or Yahweh, through Jesus Christ, the deliverer for believers.

David's life in the Old Testament received many trial experiences one after another. David was King of Israel, had to deal with Saul, his encounter with Goliath, had to deal with the Philistines, and even his own son, Absalom: to name a few.

Trials are to make us strong. Moses, at first hand, found this out when God called him to help lead the people out of Egypt. He told him what would take place in Exodus three. God equips Moses in Exodus chapter four.

Although God explained to Moses in both chapters, he still revealed some faults he had, which God already knew, but he made this response in verse thirteen, " And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." God was angry in the following verse.

When Moses went to Pharaoh the first time, he came back to God in verses twenty-two and twenty-three of Exodus five, "And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

Each time after that, Moses went to Pharaoh as God commanded, and during this trial, it built up confidence. Moses was no longer timid but bold. God expects His people not to shy away from the trial, but to embrace it and depend upon Him every step of the way, each day, until it is defeated.

Trials are temptation, which is some form of difficulty or pressure in our lives (sometimes from the world or Satan) that God uses to try and prove our faith, and to develop in perseverance and godly character so that we "may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," as in James one, verse four. We are to face trials with joy because of the righteous fruit they produce in us as we persevere in faith and hope. Our faith can only reach full maturity when facing these trials and opposition. Trials are sometimes brought into our lives so that God can test the sincerity of our faith.

Scripture nowhere teaches that trials in life are an indication that God is displeased with us. Instead, they indicate that God identifies our faith and has confidence in our commitment of Him.