



## Trials...God's Pathway for Growth and Grace

There is nothing worse than a crushing trial. Since our natural inclination is to avoid discomfort, only authentic faith in Christ equips one to look beyond the valley of personal suffering to the pinnacle of suffering's purposes. Maintaining this loftier perspective does not negate the reality or pain of walking through life's valleys. A child of God, however, is able to face significant difficulties with sustained hope since God remains faithful in caring for His children (Lamentations 3:21-23).

In His gracious, sovereign oversight, God uses all aspects in believers' lives—including great difficulties—to help them become more like Jesus (Romans 8:28-29).

Becoming more Christ-like is the goal for believers in Christ. The realization of this goal is dependent on beliefs and associated responses that link directly to trials. The linkage between trials and growing in Christ is clearly seen by referencing two passages of Scripture, one in Galatians and the other in 1 Corinthians. Some of the characteristics of Christ-likeness are described in the "fruit of the Spirit" passage (Galatians 5:22-23). Another picture of Christ-likeness is seen in the "Love Chapter" (1 Corinthians 13). As you examine these two passages, ask yourself, "How can Christ-likeness be developed to its fullest potential apart from trials?" The obvious answer is, "It is not possible."

Basically, if believers desire to grow in Christ, then trials are integral to their growth. When believers realize a broader perspective of God's purposes in trials, then the singular response of "Lord, get me out of this problem" will change to "Lord, may your will be done in every dimension through this trial." Trials ...

- Are to be expected
- Are necessary to develop Christ-like character
- Provide opportunity to follow Christ's example in suffering
- Are used by God to equip believers to bring His comfort to others
- Proclaim God's sufficiency in spite of perceived weaknesses in faithful believers
- Are sometimes used by the Lord to discipline His wayward children
- Are used by God to produce greater fruitfulness in the lives of faithful believers
- May deplete physical resources to test the generosity of believers and their continued trust in God's supply
- Give opportunity for the Body of Christ to minister to fellow believers
- Provide an avenue for believers to share the Good News to others
- Caused by others provide opportunity for Christ-like responses from believers
- Experienced by believers often contain benefits designed for other believers
- Allow believers to be more than conquerors because of their ever-present God
- Remind believers to rely on God, not themselves
- Remind believers to maintain an eternal perspective

- Contain God's promise of victory for steadfast believers
- Provide an avenue for a believer to receive eternal rewards from the Lord

With so many sovereign purposes related to trials, believers are to trust the Lord for His will to be done in and through every aspect of life (Proverbs 3:5-8). Believers cannot initially know the scope of God's purposes in trials, but they can be assured that God's Word provides sure guidance in all of life's challenges (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In every trial, believers can rejoice, be patient, and continually pray (Romans 12:12, Philippians 4:4-7) while demonstrating their love for Christ by remaining obedient to Scripture.

See [God's Purposes in His Children's Trials](#) for a fully referenced study that includes all the potential purposes of trials listed above.

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

**Lamentations 3:21-23**, But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

**Romans 8:28-29**, And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

**Galatians 5:22-23**, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**, Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

**Proverbs 3:5-8**, Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**, All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

**Romans 12:12**, Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

**Philippians 4:4-7**, Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.