

All Things Are For A Purpose

Someone once said that a Christian is like a tea bag, not worth much until he or she has been through some hot water.

If there is one thing that Christians can agree on it is that living a godly life is **not** always easy.

We all face trials of “hot water” sometimes as a daily occurrence.

We are the target for snide remarks, even from some in our own family because we will **not** get involved in areas where Jesus Christ would **not** want to be.

Some Christians remain single rather than marry someone who does **not** share their faith.

2 Timothy 3:12 [NIV] *“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,”*

Along with trials, those who live godly lives will suffer persecution at some time in their lives.

Matthew 5:11-12 [NIV] *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

In spite of all these trials and persecution, we as Christians have so much to be joyful about.

1 Peter 1:3-6 [NIV] *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.”*

Some may consider that Christians pay a high price for their beliefs, but it is very small compared to what awaits those who remain faithful to God and live His way of love.

Hebrews chapter eleven lists great persecution that early Christians faced, yet remained faithful to their calling.

Hebrews 12:1-13 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. **Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees!** “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.”*

God allows trials and persecution to come on us to test our faith and prove to us that we really are children whom He loves dearly.

If we see our difficulties from God's viewpoint we are seeing this short physical life as nothing compared to eternity which God is offering to all who are faithful to His way of life, the way of love.

Colossians 1:9, 11-14 [Phillips Translation] *"We are asking God that you may see things, as it were, from His point of view by being given spiritual insight and understanding" ... "As you live this new life, we pray that you will be strengthened from God's boundless resources, so that you will find yourselves able to pass through any experience and endure it with joy. You will even be able to thank God in the midst of pain and distress because you are privileged to share the lot of those who are living in the light. For we must never forget that He rescued us from the power of darkness, and re-established us in the Kingdom of His beloved Son. For it is by His Son alone that we have been redeemed and have our sins forgiven."*

We learn and grow through personal experience, good or bad.

The most important changes take place within the framework of struggle.

Psalms 119:67, 71 [NIV] *"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word." ... "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees."*

Most Christians at some time cry out to God in a trial *"why me?"*

But once we grasp the fact that God permits pressure for a real purpose, then a new understanding can flow into our minds.

Unfavourable things that strike into our lives, as they do all people, can make us bitter or better Christians according to our response.

We need to acquire the same attitude as the apostle Paul who incarcerated for the gospel's sake and isolated from those he loved, was still able to write.

Colossians 1:24 [NKJ] *"I now rejoice in my suffering."*

God allows us to experience setbacks and difficulties for a significant purpose, to develop the very character of God.

Galatians 5:22 [NIV] *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,"*

Through our communion with the Holy Spirit He generates these God-like characteristics in us, but we will experience persecution.

Why?

Because it will generate a feeling of guilt and resentment in others who see us live this way, prompted by Satan who hates us to be developing the very character of God.

Romans 8:28 [NIV] *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*

Always remember this and then we can rejoice in our trials and persecution.