

# No Pain, No Gain!

**Life is full of crises, some big, some small. Sometimes it seems that we are boxed in with problems.**

**There are many who, when in such a situation, are on the verge of giving up.**

They cannot understand what is happening to them, to their marriages, to their jobs, to their families.

Something is missing, and try as they will, they simply cannot find the key to make things work out right.

Many hours have been spent trying to figure out where things went wrong.

In their marriage and family the magic is gone, the romance is gone.

The communication is gone. In their place are arguments, questions, suspicions, innuendoes and cutting remarks.

I'm convinced that Satan is determined to break up all marriages, for they are training ground for a future relationship between the True Church and Jesus Christ, [**Revelation 19:7-9**].

If Satan can get the strongest, most admired marriages broken up, the weaker ones will be tempted to quit struggling and give in.

**Do not let Satan get a foothold in your marriage or any other relationships.**

Work harder than ever to strive for and keep a good marriage.

**The other secret struggles in our personal Christian lives are just as critical.**

We all have seasons of despair, accompanied with feelings of failure, to the extent that we have considered quitting.

**Why do we feel like giving up at times?**

Mostly because we act as if God has turned His back on us.

We do **not** doubt His existence or His reality, but our prayers seem to go unanswered.

We cry out for help in such desperation and He seems not to hear.

We struggle along, making one mistake after another.

We make promises to do better, we study into His Word, the Christian Bible, we cry and pray, and help others.

But we are so often left with an empty, unfulfilled sensation.

**The promises of God haunt us, we claim them in what we believe is honest, childlike faith, but time after time we fail to receive what we ask for.**

Doubt creeps in and Satan whispers, *"Nothing works, does it? Faith in God doesn't produce any results. Quit! Give up!"*

**Every Christian reaches that crisis at one time or another, and at that time sin demands the upper hand, telling us to walk away from it all, why put up with this stress?**

**Psalms 44:23-26** [New King James] *“Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord? Arise! Do not cast us off forever. Why do You hide Your face, and forget our affliction and our oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our body clings to the ground. Arise for our help, and redeem us for Your mercies’ sake.”*

**David was overwhelmed by the crisis he was in.**

**Does it amaze you that the great men of God failed the same battles that you and I face today?**

**1 Peter 4:12-13** [New King James] *“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”*

This is not to say that we experience spontaneous pleasure while we are suffering, but we can rejoice in our times of trial.

**Hebrews 12:11** [New King James] *“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”*

We rejoice when we realise that our Creator God knows exactly what is happening to us, that He is **not** trying to be mean or cruel, and that He has a plan behind the experience, a plan for our well-being.

We can and should deliberately thank God, not for the suffering itself, but for His faithful control of it and His blessed purpose in allowing it to happen.

Remember, God is merciful and loving at all times.

**What is the purpose behind the suffering we are experiencing?**

**Romans 5:3-5** [Amplified Bible] *“Moreover, let us also be full of joy now! Let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance [fortitude] develops maturity of character, that is approved faith and tried integrity. And character [of this sort] produces the habit of joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God’s love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us.”*

**Individual character is forged on the anvil of pain.**

**James 1:2-4** [New King James] *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”*

**James is reminding us that character building takes time and trials, there is no short cut to it.**

Steadfast faith is itself a road to a goal, the goal of a mature, stable character.

**We are not born with such perfect character, to build it within each of us is God’s goal.**

**God’s character building project will continue throughout our lives, and occasionally will invoke some pain, physical or mental pain.**

This plan of God was set up before any physical human was created.

**Genesis 1:26-27** [New King James] *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”*

The Hebrew word translated “image” is “tselem” meaning resemblance, outward form or shadow. The Hebrew word translated “likeness” is “demûwth” meaning attributes or character.

Note the original creation of human beings was **only** “image” as “likeness” takes time spent with the One whose character we wish to reflect.

When we understand what God is creating in us, we have every reason to rejoice when it involves pain, knowing that God is treating us as a potential child of His.

**Hebrews 12:1-11** [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.”*