

The Trial of Faith

A reason for Christian suffering

Remember that grace teaches godliness. Godliness comes from a desire to glorify God by doing His will and through complete dependence upon Him. While the desire to glorify God is in the Christian's heart, the flesh is weak and grace must act to perfect and purify dependence upon Him. _____ is God's provision to perfect and purify this dependence. Even Jesus was made perfect through suffering. Through intense suffering in Gethsemane, His unfailing dependence upon the Father found its fullest expression in the words, 'not my will, but thine, be done' (Luke 22:42).

That suffering is God's method under grace for perfecting and purifying faith is found in the following: In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:6, 7).

What is said to be unto praise, honor, and glory at His appearing? _____
By contrast, what things are not mentioned that you think would be? _____

Trials to purify faith, not to test faith

Read of Peter's trial of faith in Luke 22:31-33.

Was Jesus' prayer for Peter answered? _____

Was Peter's profession made in faith? (Read Mark 14:29) – _____

What was the point in Peter's painful, disgraceful suffering? _____

Read of Paul's trial of faith in 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.

Why was Paul made to suffer? Had Paul failed to depend on Christ fully, like Peter?

The trial of faith does not test whether or not there is faith, or if the faith is sufficient, but rather it purifies our faith, removing all impurities of dependence upon ourselves. Look again at 1 Pet 1:6, 7.

Why is the trial of faith so important?

Satan's fall (Ezek. 28:12-15) – 'I will', God' creation refusing to maintain willful dependence on him.
Man's fall (Genesis) – Perfectly created. Did not maintain attitude of dependence upon God.
Son of Perdition (2 Thess. 2:4) – Culmination of mankind's self-sufficiency and doing without God.
Jesus Christ (1 John 3:8) – 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God'

God's purpose in the life's of His children while here on earth is to create, develop, strengthen, and refine the complete dependence upon Him which must be found in those who throughout eternity will be the closest to Him, sharing in His glory. He is preparing for Himself a new creation in Jesus Christ that will be in complete voluntary dependence upon Him and in loving subjection to Him. The purpose of grace is, through suffering, to discipline the child of God and produce this state of dependence upon the Father.