

The Blessedness of Perseverance

Ponder: Is it worthwhile to endure trials?

Scripture: “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12, NASB).

Sometimes it seems that the trials will never end! You know the Lord will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability to endure (1 Corinthians 10:13), but you wonder, “What does He think I am – a bulldozer? I can’t take any more of this!”

Earlier in his letter, James exhorts us to “count it all joy when you fall into various trials” (1:2). That certainly doesn’t mean we should think trials are fun or enjoyable! But God’s design for trials is to make us better, not to make us bitter. Trials help us to develop patience (1:3), and when patience has finished its work on us, we will be spiritually complete (mature, 1:4). Easy? No! Worth it? Definitely!

Few, if any, of us have suffered the degree of trials that the apostle Paul experienced. A total of 195 lashes on five separate occasions scarred his back, in addition to unnumbered blows from three episodes of beating with rods. Add stoning, shipwreck, imprisonment, sleeplessness, hunger, and cold. For good measure, throw in his constant concern about weak, unreliable church members (2 Corinthians 11:22-28). Yet this same apostle wrote in this same letter, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17). L-i-g-h-t affliction, did he say? Indeed!

Let me be the last to dismiss any trials you may be enduring. But let me be the first to assure you that yes, it is worth it to persevere! I can’t tell you how long the trials will last, or exactly why the Lord is allowing them to test you. All I can offer is the Lord’s own assurance in His word that when you have passed the test, you will receive the crown of life. Remember, blessedness comes not through any outward conditions, but through your fellowship with God. I hope that encourages and motivates you to remain steadfast in your love for Him, regardless of circumstances.

Song: “In The Hour Of Trial”

Prayer: Faithful Father, please be close to those who are enduring severe trials today. Whatever our circumstances may be, help us to focus on Your design to make us better, and to crown us with eternal life where there will be no more pain. In Jesus’ name, Amen.