

THEOLOGY OF TRIALS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Hebrews 12:11

As we live for Christ, we will experience troubles because we are trying to be God's people in a perverse world. Some people say that troubles are the result of sin or lack of faith, but the Bible teaches that they may be a part of God's plan for believers. Our problems can help us look upward and forward, instead of inward, they can build strong character, and they can provide us with opportunities to comfort others who are also struggling. Your troubles may be an indication that you are taking a stand for Christ.

Principle

Suffering is not always the result of sin.

God provides hope and love in suffering.

Problems help us trust in God's sovereign purpose for our lives.

Suffering enables us to comfort others.

Our eternal reward outweighs our suffering.

Problems open up opportunities for service.

Problems may be a confirmation that we are living for Christ.

God uses suffering in his plan for our lives.

Key Text

"Teacher," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it a result of his own sins or those of his parents?" "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "He was born blind so the power of God could be seen in him." (John 9:2-3)

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to endure. And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation. And this expectation will not disappoint us. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." (Romans 5:3-5)

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters." (Romans 8:28-29)

"All praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of every mercy and the God who comforts us. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. You can be sure that the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ." (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

"For our present troubles are quite small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

"And I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News." (Philippians 1:12)

"But God will use this persecution to show his justice. For he will make you worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering." (2 Thessalonians 1:5)

"Finally, dear brothers and sisters, I ask you to pray for us. Pray first that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honored wherever it goes, just as when it came to you. Pray, too, that we will be saved from wicked and evil people, for not everyone believes in the Lord. But the Lord is faithful; he will make you strong and guard you from the evil one." (2 Thessalonians 3:1-3)

THEOLOGY OF TRIALS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Hebrews 12:11 Continued

Principle

Through his suffering, Jesus fully identified with us.

Jesus was willing to obey God even when it meant suffering.

Trials help train us to be more fruitful.

Problems help us mature.

Trials help refine our character.

When we suffer, we share in the suffering of Christ.

Key Text

“We all know that Jesus came to help the descendants of Abraham, not to help the angels.” (Hebrews 2:16)

“So even though Jesus was God’s Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8)

“No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it is painful! But afterward there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.” (Hebrews 12:11)

“Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.” (James 1:2-4)

“So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while. These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him, you trust him; and even now you are happy with a glorious, inexpressible joy. Your reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.” (1 Peter 1:6-9)

“Dear friends, don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterward you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory when it is displayed to all the world. Be happy if you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God will come upon you.” (1 Peter 4:12-14)