

# **Trials and sufferings in Christian life. What Bible teaches us ?**

Pain insists upon being attended to.

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains.

It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world. - CS Lewis.

# Trials and sufferings in Christian life

- The Greek terms used (1 Pet. 4) and in other parts of NT for “temptation,” “trial” or “test” are derived from “Peirazo”, which means “to test,” “try” or “put to the proof.”
- Another term “Dokime” is found in (1 Pet.1:7) which has the meaning is “to test the genuineness of something.”
- This is where the testing of our faith is compared to or in other words, analysing the quality and purity of gold.
- In The book of (Jam.1:1-2) the word used is (“Peirazos”) for tests is an expression of developing the character.



# Biblical basis of a believer facing tests:

- The Lord Jesus said: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (Jn.16:33).
- "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim.3:12).
- "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent" (Rev.3:19).



- Yet when we encounter difficulties, we often wonder why? When we search for answers, we will ultimately learn that we must view “bad things” as “good things in disguise” because God wants to discipline His children to develop as they mature spiritually.
- In (Rom.8:28) “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”



# The different kinds of trials and sufferings:

Below are brief descriptions of eight types of tests that every Christian will likely face:

## 1) Fiery trials:

- Intense encounters or struggles; bursts of anger, grief or lust.

Ex: loss of jobs, family feuds over property, helplessness, making scape goat etc.

## 2) Infirmities: Physical limitations and illnesses, sickness viz. TB, Cancer etc.

## 3) Reproaches: Ridicule and rejection on account of faith or holiness. In the Office we face opposition, rejections. In the society we are treated differently.

- 4) **Persecutions**: Harassment and oppression due to religious convictions of our faith, our consecrated life. Not taking part in puja, Vishwakarma celebrations etc.
- 5) **Necessities**: Wear and tear due to daily responsibilities. Family liabilities, sometimes not able to meet the two ends.
- 6) **Distresses**: Disappointments and deep hurts, family feuds, conflicts, failures in life, loss of loved ones.
- 7) **Tribulations**: Unusual pressures and challenges. Facing challenges from society, Police and court cases, Occupational hazards
- 8) **Temptations**: Opportunities to yield to our sinful nature, Covetousness, jealousy, lust, falling into traps.



# How to overcome Trials and sufferings

## I. Give thanks:

- “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning we” (1 Thess.5:18).
- To be thankful rather than to complain takes a conscious act of the will and a sacrifice of natural desires.
- See “**bad things**” as “**good things in disguise**” because God wants to disciplines His children to develop as they mature spiritually.



## 2. Rejoice in the Lord:

- We have to rejoice in all things: “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phili.4:4).
- We should try to discern the positive benefits that could come about through the situation.
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- Ask the question. Why did God allow this to happen?
- Tests and trials give us opportunities to come to know God better and to bring glory to God.
- The Apostle Paul stated: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom.8:18).





### 3. Believe and act on the Word of God.

- ▶ In (Eph.6:17) Paul describes the Word of God as “the sword of the Spirit” the only offensive weapon in our spiritual armour.
- ▶ Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto us, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn.6:63).
- ▶ They are also the authority by which we can claim the promises of God.
- ▶ Jesus said: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in we, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto we” (Jn.15:7).
- ▶ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.



**Heaven and earth shall  
pass away, but my words  
shall not pass away.**

Matthew 24:35

TESTIFYGOD

## 4. Cry out to God.

- He desires to work powerfully through our lives; therefore we must learn to depend on Him.
- He alone must become our source of strength, provision, protection, and direction.
- God has the ability to protect us from every trial or distress. Instead, He often chooses to deliver us in the midst of trials.



## 5. OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.

- Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:44.)
- **Love our enemies.**
- Bless those who curse us.
- Do good to those who hate us.
- **Pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us.**

Ex: Joseph helped his brothers in Egypt (Gen.50:20).

We have many examples of those who forgave offenders, including, **Job, Stephen, James and Jesus Christ:**



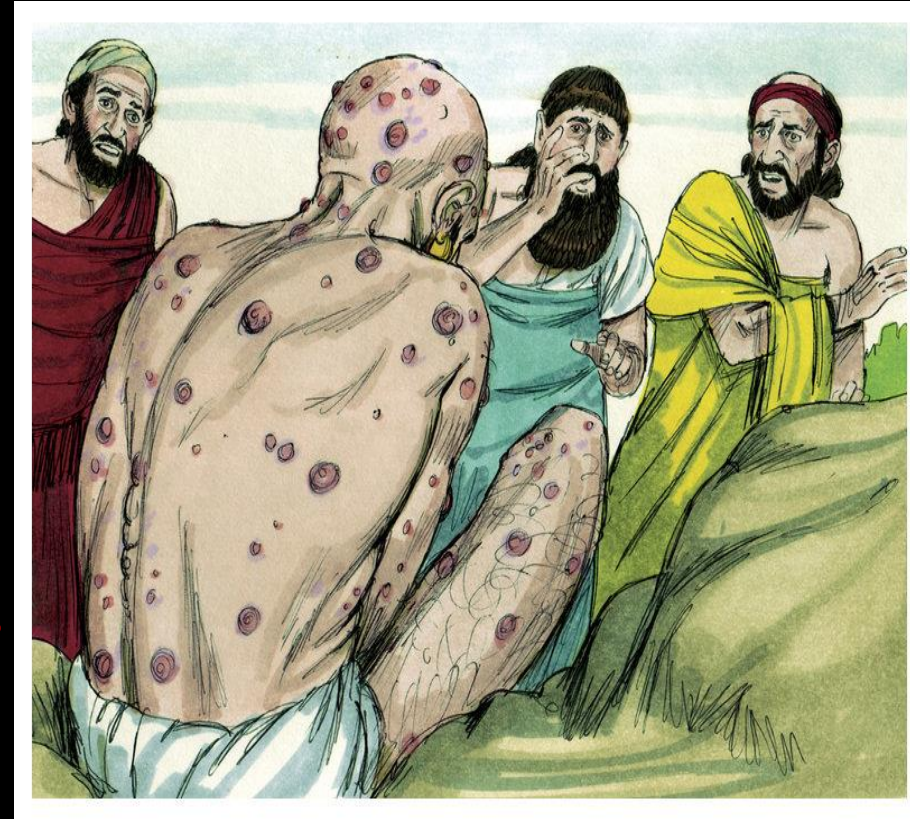
# Job a rich and righteous man

- Job was living a righteous life.
- He was offering sacrifices to God, even for the sake of his children perhaps they may sin in their youthfulness.
- Job had a large family; seven sons and three daughters and he owned extensive flocks of livestock
- In just one day, Job received four messages, that all of his livestock, servants, and ten children had died due to invaders and natural disasters.





- Yet he honoured and blessed God in his prayers. (Job 1:21b) “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”
- His friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar could not comfort him but tried to find faults in him.
- His body was infected with skin diseases.
- God was pleased with Job’s response, but was upset with Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar for their poor reasoning and advice.
- Job prayed for his friends and God forgave them.
- God restored Job to good health, gave him twice as much property as before, new children and a very long life.



## Benefits from the trials and tests in Believer's life:

Now we will see some benefits when we experience trials and sufferings.

1. To increase our surrender or dependence to God.
2. To insure our stability.
3. To inspire others who are struggling .
4. To invoke or put to action our service.
5. To introduce our specialty.

## I. TO INCREASE OUR SURRENDER OR DEPANDANCE:

Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word (Ps. 119:67).

- It may be Financial problems, Personal problems, family conflict, emotional, social.

The questions that we should ask at that time are:

- Do we turn to God or away from God when problems come?
- Does God allows us to have trials and testing to increase our surrender.

## II. TO INSURE OUR STABILITY:

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, .....” (I Pet. 5:6-10):

- Plants that have no resistance are easily uprooted.
- **If we don't face trials and problems we will be easily discouraged at the least problem since we haven't developed stability.**
- God allows us to have trials and problems to increase our stability.





### III. To inspire others who are struggling:

“But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel... (Phil 1:12-14):

- When others saw Paul enduring imprisonment and yet continued preaching, it encouraged them.
- We can be a strength and encouragement to others if they see that we remain faithful in spite of our trials and problems.
- God allows us to have trials and problems so that we can be an inspiration to others who struggle.

## IV. To invoke or put to action our service:

“I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me severely, But He has not given me over to death” (Psa. 118:17-18): .



- Sometimes people give up and quit when they face trials.
- We have seen the example of Ruth.
- We must rise to the challenge when we face trials and problems.
- Trials and problems should be used as stepping stones, not stumbling blocks.
- God allows trials and problems to invoke us to service.

## V. TO INTRODUCE OUR SPECIALTY OR TALENT

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.....” (Jam. 1:2-4):

- God has something special for each of us to do in our lives.
- Sometimes we must patiently wait for that talent to be developed and have opportunity to use them.
- The apostles were trained by Jesus for three years before they began work on their own.
- Many times our specialty lies in the area in which we have overcome the most problems.
- God allows our trials and problems to introduce our specialty.

## Conclusion:

- Q.1. How have you reacted to trials and problems in your life?
- Q.2. Have the trials increased your surrender?
- Q.3. Have the trials insured your stability?
- Q.4. Have the trials inspired others who are struggling ?
- Q.5. Have the trials invoked or put you to service?
- Q.6. Have the trials introduced your specialty talents to others?