

Monday Week 49 Facing Trials

Bible Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Q193 What is the benefit of having your faith tested?

A. Faith that is tested brings glory to God.

A fisherman tied a bright orange lure to his line. He was beside a cool creek in Kodiak, Alaska. He cast his line into a deep pool of water. He started to reel in his line. A fish grabbed the lure. The fisherman pulled back on his rod to set the hook into the fish. But suddenly the line went slack. The lure had come off the line. The fisherman realized that he had not tested his knot. He didn't have his lure tied on well. After that, the fisherman tested his knots when he tied a lure to his line. Later, a large salmon bit his lure. Because he tested his knot, it held and he caught the fish. He was glad he had tested his line.

Your faith needs to be tested so that it will endure. If your faith is never tested, how do you know it will stand? God will allow your faith to be tested. He will allow trials to come into your life. Trials are difficulties. They are hard places. Maybe you have a problem getting along with someone. That is a trial. Ask God to help you. Trust Him to make you friendly and kind even to that person who is hard to get along with. God will bless your faith as you trust Him. He will test you, and when you stand true, He will bless you.

Thinking Deeper

A patient lying in a hospital bed was questioning where God was. He had been involved in ministry, but now was undergoing cancer treatment. Had God abandoned him? He asked God to help him. "Lord, I have been telling people that You can help them in their trouble. Where are You today?" The patient thought about Job, who couldn't find God when he needed him most. Job looked all around him, in front, in back, to each side, and couldn't discern God. But Job said, "He knoweth the way that I take. When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." That morning some Christians came to visit the patient and encouraged him. Before the day was over, he realized that God had been with him. He hadn't abandoned him, even though he felt alone.

What kind of faith is it that quits when God doesn't seem to be there? What kind of faith is it that has to see or feel, or it gives up? That kind of faith certainly is not Christian faith. Faith goes on believing God's Word despite the circumstances. How does God strengthen our faith? He does it by sending us trials. The trial of our faith is necessary if it is to ever grow. So Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, told us that the trial of our faith is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth." The trial of your faith is designed to strengthen your faith and to bring glory to God. God is working. Rejoice.

Tuesday Week 49 Facing Trials

Bible Reading: 1 Peter 2:13-21

Q 194 When does God get the most glory from Christians suffering?

A. When Christians suffer well for doing good.

Kalu Singh, a Christian college student, was traveling from village to village with a mission. He was showing a film about the life of Jesus. One day his bus was stopped at a check point. Some policemen came onto the bus. They beat Kalu, and took his papers. Later, when other Christian workers went to the police station to complain about the beating, they found the police to be different. They apologized to Kalu for beating him. And they asked him to show the film about Jesus at the police station. Kalu asked people to pray for the policemen. God used a bad thing to open a door for the Gospel to be presented. Because Kalu suffered well, God was able to use him. (from www.persecution.org, Dec. 9, 2008, India)

Remember to walk like a Christian even when you suffer for doing the right thing. God will get glory through your life.

Thinking Deeper

In 2004, approximately 75 million speeding tickets were issued to drivers in the United States, according to one estimate. Some of those speeders were Christians, who sheepishly pulled over to face the fact that they broke the law. But some were likely not sheepish, but peeved, or even angry. Others may have been angry and kept their anger hidden. "At least I kept my temper when the cop pulled me over." But what good is that? The policeman was doing his job, and any heathen knows that if you get caught breaking the law, you pay the fine. It is no badge of honor to keep your temper when you are caught for doing wrong. There is little redeeming value in having a meek spirit when you've done wrong. You just plain deserve what you get. Take your medicine.

What counts as pleasing to God is when you've done a good thing and suffer for it, yet keep a good attitude. "For if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God."

Wednesday Week 49 Facing Trials

Bible Reading: 1 Peter 3:8-18

Q 195 What kind of witness is it to the world when Christians suffer well?

A. Christians suffering brings shame on their accusers.

A mechanic became a Christian. The other mechanics in the shop watched his life. Was he a real Christian? As they watched him, they saw that he lived like a Christian every day. He trusted God even when it was hard and he had to do things differently than he did before he was saved. After some time, one of the workers said, "If I ever get religion, I want the kind Merle has." The workers saw that Merle really tried to live the Christian life even when it was difficult. They were convinced that he was a real Christian.

Have you noticed that the most interesting stories about Christians are about how they came through very hard places and still trusted God? Don't give up when you face a trial. It may be that God wants to show the world through you that Christian faith is real. Your faith can help you in your trials. God will be with you even when you don't see or feel Him. Keep trusting. God will use you to be a blessing.

Thinking Deeper

A man was preaching on a college campus. He was speaking in a loud voice outside of a classroom building. The campus police came and told him that he was disturbing the classes and he should quiet down. The preacher became very agitated. He ran to his briefcase and pulled out some papers which he said showed his Constitutional rights to preach in public. He yelled at the policemen that he could keep preaching. They tried to calm him down. A Christian who witnessed the encounter was ashamed of the preacher – not because he was preaching but because of the attitude of the preacher when he was being confronted by the police. He did not exhibit a meek spirit. Any message the preacher had tried to preach was obscured by the angry spirit he showed during the encounter.

One of the best witnesses of a Christian is to exhibit a Christ-like spirit. When people see the quality of Christian grace in a person's reaction to difficulty, it is much easier for them to have confidence in that Christian.

Thursday Week 49 Facing Trials

Bible Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:10

Q 196 How is a Christian to respond who suffers for Christ?

A. A Christian who suffers for Christ is to give glory to God.

The fifth grade class was learning how to dance. One of the boys in the class was not comfortable being part of the dancing lesson. His family values didn't allow dancing. He went to his teacher and told her his problem. He didn't feel clear about dancing. She understood and excused him. But the other students in the class did not understand. They thought he should be forced to dance. They began calling the boy names. "You're the teacher's pet," they said. The boy didn't think he was the teacher's pet. He only wanted to follow Jesus. He let the students talk. He was happy to be able to try to keep pleasing Jesus in school.

Sometimes you have to take a stand for Jesus. Other people may not understand and some of them may become angry. What is most important is to have God's blessing in your life. Then you can rejoice even if things get difficult. Stand for God. He will bless you.

Thinking Deeper

A man had been a Christian for only a few months. Another Christian wondered how he was doing in his Christian life. "Are you suffering any persecution for being a Christian?" asked the interested man. The new Christian answered, "A little." "That's good," said his friend. He knew that everyone who follows Jesus would have some hard times. If it is very easy being a Christian, then it is hard for the Christian's faith to grow. Years went by and the Christian kept following Jesus. At work one day one of his fellow workers made an attempt to make fun of the Christian's walk with Christ. "You're all wrapped up in your Lord!" he sneered. The Christian listened to the words, not the tone. He felt good inside. He was all wrapped up in Jesus. His life was "hid in Christ." For years after that he remembered those words "all wrapped up in your Lord" and rejoiced.

You can rejoice when you are called on to suffer for Jesus. He will smile on you.

Friday Week 49 Facing Trials

Review the Week's Questions

Q193 What is the benefit of having your faith tested?

A. Faith that is tested brings glory to God.

Q 194 When does God get the most glory from Christians suffering?

A. When Christians suffer well for doing good.

Q 195 What kind of witness is it to the world when Christians suffer well?

A. Christians suffering brings shame on their accusers.

Q 196 How is a Christian to respond who is called to suffer for Christ?

A. A Christian who suffers for Christ is to give glory to God.

“Can you drive a truck?” the foreman asked a young man who was looking for a job. “Yes,” he answered. “Then be here in the morning,” said the foreman. The young man reported for work. Part of his job was to mix concrete into the truck. He had to break open forty bags of concrete weighing 94 pounds per bag for each load of concrete. That first day he was worn out. The work was really hard. But at the end of the summer, he could easily lift the bags and break them open. He had gotten stronger and bigger. The hard work made him strong.

Just as hard work builds strength, so testing can build faith. Faith only grows when it is tested. At first, it seems hard to walk by faith. But as you keep doing things by faith, and learn to trust God, you will find that your faith develops. It is good to have your faith grow.

Thinking Deeper

Preparing for the 2008 Christmas season, the Creation Museum worked for months with the Cincinnati Zoo on a promotion that would allow people to visit both facilities and also view their spectacular special Christmas displays. When the promotion was made public, some atheists began a campaign against the partnership. They said some very ugly things about the Creation Museum and organized a major e-mail campaign to the zoo that resulted in the promotion being cancelled after two and one half days. “It’s a pity that intolerant people have pushed for our expulsion simply because of our Christian faith. Some of their comments on blogs reveal great intolerance for anything having to do with Christianity,” responded Ken Ham, the director of the Creation Museum.

Mr. Ham did not react in anger and the results probably weren’t what the opponents of the museum expected. The Museum leaders were glorifying God for how he used the incident. There were so many reports in the press that Ham stated, “The media has promoted us far more than we could have imagined.”

Rejoicing in persecution gives glory to God and confuses the enemy.