

KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

1 PETER 01:06–09

Introduction

This passage is one of the great passages dealing with the trials and temptations of believers. The experience of trials obviously includes the experience of temptation. Some temptation always lies at the very core of any trial, no matter how light or severe the trial. There is always the temptation to buckle or to give up under the weight of a trial. Giving in and giving up is a constant threat to us all. Because of this, the subject of this passage is being expanded to cover both the trials and temptations of life.

- I. Know the fact: life is full of trials and temptations (v. 6).
- II. Know the purpose for trials and temptations (v. 7).
- III. Know how to conquer trials and temptations (vv. 8-9).

I. 1 Peter 01:06 Trials and Temptations of Life

Know the fact — life is full of trials and temptations. Any thinking person can look around and see that life is bombarded with all kinds of trials and temptations. There are all kinds of trials, such as...

- sickness
- loss
- disease
- disappointment
- suffering
- criticism
- sorrows
- loneliness
- ridicule
- emptiness
- abuse

There are also all kinds of trials and temptations such as...

- greed
- backbiting
- selfishness
- whispering
- hoarding
- revelling
- drunkenness
- drugs
- deceit
- anger
- strife
- gluttony
- immorality
- envy
- sorcery
- jealousy
- indulgence
- uncleanness

The list of trials and temptations in the world are as unlimited as acts of behaviour. For every act there can be the sin of too much or the sin of too little, the sins of commission or the sins of omission. Life is fraught with trials and temptations.

This is especially true with genuine believers, for believers stand in opposition to the selfish, immoral, greedy and unjust ways of the world. This goes against the grain of the world because the world is in opposition to God. Just note the world's cursing of God and its flaunting of sex even for advertising purposes. These are excellent examples of the world's opposition to God. Therefore, the world often persecutes

believers who proclaim the need for man to turn to God. The world persecutes believers through ridicule, mockery, abuse and silence; through bypassing them, holding them down, shutting them out and ignoring them; through confiscating their property, destroying their reputation and in some cases imprisoning and killing them. Every genuine believer who lives for Christ knows what it is to be shunned and withdrawn from and to be persecuted to some degree, no matter what society he lives in.

This was the case with the believers to whom Peter was writing. They were being severely persecuted because of their stand for Christ. They had been forced to flee for their lives and to leave everything behind: homes, property, estates, businesses, jobs, money, church, friends and fellow believers. They were suffering trial after trial, experiencing what we see so often portrayed in the media: people flooding the roadways fleeing with whatever possessions they can carry by hand, fleeing the tyranny of the persecution of dictators and evil men. The difference with believers is that they often suffer at the hands of people because of their testimony for Christ. And this was, in fact, the case with the early believers who were receiving this letter from Peter.

As stated, the fact of trials and temptations is clear to any thinking person: we live in a world of trials and temptation. In addition, the believer has to bear the added trial of persecution because of his testimony for Christ. Now, note two things that are said.

1. Trials and temptations are only for a season; they are only for a little while, for a short time. The idea is that our salvation is at hand; we shall soon be delivered from the sufferings of this earth. Therefore, we can stand up under whatever suffering is attacking us.
2. Trials and temptations cause a heaviness within us. The words “suffer grief” (*lupethentes*) means to be grieving; to suffer sorrow, stress, pressure and mental anguish. We all know what it is to feel heavy and weighed down with grief; to suffer stress and pressure; to be mentally in anguish, wondering, questioning and suffering under the weight of trial or temptation.

Thought 1. This is a dark picture of the world and of life, a picture of all kinds of trials and temptations. But we must face reality; it is a fact. As we walk throughout life, we are bombarded with all kinds of trials and temptations. Our human experience proves it. But why face it? Why think about it? Why not ignore the fact, think positively, and look at only the good and move on? There is one reason: facts cannot be handled unless they are dealt with. Ignoring and denying trials and temptations will not conquer them, not permanently and not eternally. The only way we can ever conquer anything — no matter the trial or temptation — is to squarely face it and fight against it. The way to conquer the trials and temptations of life is the subject of this great passage.

Acts 14:22 Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.

Rom 5:2-3 *Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.*

Rom 7:15 *I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 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 stand up under it.*

2 Cor 4:8 *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair.*

1 Th 3:4 *In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.*

Rev 2:9-10 *I know your afflictions and your poverty — yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

Job 14:1 *“Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.”*

Psa 119:143 *Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands are my delight.*

II. 1 Peter 01:07 Purpose of Trials and Temptations

Know the purpose for trials and temptations. When a believer is saved, why does God not just go ahead and give him a trouble-free, perfect life? Sometimes it would seem that God should do this. If God loves us and really cares for us then He should not let terrible things happen to us. Why does God let them happen? Why do the trials and temptations of life fall upon us, especially with such heaviness and sorrow? Scripture says there are two reasons why the believer is tried and tempted.

1. The believer's faith must be tried. The word “refined” (dokimion) means to prove; to test; to strengthen; to show that your faith is genuine (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 6. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933, p. 83).

It is just like gold. Gold has to be put to the fire in order to clean out all the impurities and dross and to make it pure and clean. Now note what this verse says: we are much more precious than gold. Gold perishes, but not believers. Believers are to live forever. Therefore, if gold has to be put to the fire to be made clean and pure, how much more do we?

The point is striking: God uses the fire of trials and temptations for a good purpose. He uses them to make us clean and pure and to make us trust Him more and more.

=> When we are faced with some trial or temptation, we draw nearer to God. We cry out to God more than when things go well. We even tend to clean up our lives in order to secure His help as we go through the trial. We just live more pure, clean, and righteous lives. In fact, the greater the trial and temptation, the more we see that we need God. And the more we see our need for God, the closer we usually draw to Him; and the closer we draw to Him, the cleaner we live. The fire of trials causes us to live purer, cleaner lives, while learning to trust God more and more.

This is a most wonderful point: our trials and temptations are purposeful. God uses them to make us much more pure and to stir us to draw closer and closer to Him and to trust Him more and more. We become a stronger person through trials — much stronger, much more steadfast, persevering and enduring.

There is another fact that should be noted as well. When our faith is tried and proven, when we walk strongly through the trials and temptations of life, the world sees it. They see the power of Christ in our lives and the rejoicing of our hearts in Him. Some are attracted and want to know Christ for themselves. Standing fast through the trials and temptations of life wins people to Christ. God uses the trials and sufferings of life to pour His strength into us and to attract the lost to want Him in their lives.

***Psa 66:10** For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver.*

***Isa 48:10** See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.*

***Isa 63:9** In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.*

***Luke 6:48** “He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.”*

***1 Cor 3:13** His work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work.*

***Psa 17:3** Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing; I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.*

***Psa 119:67** Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.*

***Zec 13:9** “This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is our God.’”*

***Mal 3:3** He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness.*

Job 23:10 *But he knows the way that I take: when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.*

Heb 12:11 *No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

1 Pet 1:7 *These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

1 Pet 4:12 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.*

2. The believer's faith is refined in order to show forth the praise, glory and honour of Jesus Christ and of the believer. When Jesus Christ appears — when He returns to earth — two things are going to be seen.

=> First, Jesus Christ is going to be seen exalted higher than the heavens themselves; He is going to be seen in all the honour and glory of the universe.

=> Second, believers are going to be seen exalted higher than anyone could ever ask or even think; they are going to be exalted in the very same honour and glory of Christ Himself. They are going to be seen as joint-heirs with Christ in receiving all the inheritance that God Himself possesses. Just imagine! All the honour and glory that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself possesses shall be poured out upon believers.

This is the reason God allows us to suffer trials and temptations on earth: not only to make us purer and stronger, but to better prepare us for the honour and glory of heaven. The more we suffer here on earth, the more we ache for heaven. There is also the idea of vindication, of proving that the claims of Christ and of our faith in His claims are true. In that glorious day when Christ returns, the world of unbelievers — all of them — will see once for all that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God and that our faith in Him is real. Christ and His followers will be vindicated. Christ and all believers shall be exalted in the honour and glory of all the worlds and of all the dimensions of beings. And all unbelievers shall witness the glorious event.

Mat 5:11-12 *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

Mat 13:43 *“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”*

Luke 12:37 *“It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.”*

John 14:3 “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

Rom 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

2 Cor 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Phil 3:21 Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Col 3:4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Heb 10:34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

Heb 11:26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

III. 1 Peter 01:08–09 Conquering Trials and Temptations

Know how to conquer trials and temptations. The trials and temptations of life are not to defeat or discourage us. On the contrary, we are to conquer them. We are to use them as stepping stones to become stronger and stronger in life. But how? How can we conquer trials and temptations when they are so devastating, destructive, powerful, damaging and threatening?

Scripture gives four ways.

1. Trials and temptations are to be conquered by our love for Jesus Christ. We do not see Christ, but we love Him. Think about it: we have transgressed God’s law. We have ignored, neglected and disobeyed God; rejected and cursed God. We have even committed high treason and rebelled against God. Therefore, we are guilty and must bear the judgment and condemnation. We must bear the punishment for our rebellion against God. We are to die without God — to be exiled and cut off from God forever and ever. But note the glorious love of Jesus Christ. He has stepped forward and offered Himself as a substitute and sacrifice for us. Jesus Christ has taken our guilt upon Himself. He has died for us; He has borne our judgment, condemnation and punishment. No one could ever do any greater thing for us than what Jesus Christ has

done. He has loved us supremely: He has died for us even when we have rejected and disbelieved Him. This is the great love of Jesus Christ for us. And this is the reason we love Him. We love Him because He has done so much for us — gone to the ultimate limit to save us by bearing the judgment for us.

Now, note what the verse says: we have not seen Him, but *we love Him*. We do not have to see Christ to stand up for Him and to please Him. Christ does not have to be standing over our shoulder for us to stand against trials and temptations. We love Christ; therefore, we...

- obey Him
- keep His commandments
- turn away from temptations
- walk through trials

It is our love for Christ that stirs us to stand up for Christ against all the trials and temptations of life, no matter how severe and ferocious they are. True love does all it can to keep from hurting the person loved. In fact, when we love someone, we do all we can to please that person, no matter what it may cost us — even if it costs us our life. So it is with our love for Christ. If we truly love Him, then we will never hurt Him — not by displeasing Him, not if we can help it. On the contrary, if we really love Christ, we do exactly what He says: we stand against all the destructive trials and temptations that devastate human life and doom it for eternity. We stand and bear all the sufferings in order to prove the power of Christ. We want some people to see the power of Christ and the great hope He gives — we want them to see so that they will turn to Him for salvation. How do we overcome trials and temptations? First, we conquer them by our love for Christ.

John 14:15-16 *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever.”*

John 14:23 *Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”*

John 15:10, 14 *“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love...You are my friends if you do what I command.”*

Eph 6:24 *Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.*

Phile 1:4-5 *I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.*

1 Pet 1:8 *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.*

2. Trials and temptations are to be conquered by our belief in Jesus Christ. Again, note the verse: we do not see Jesus, but we do believe in Him. The word “believe” (pisteuontes) is in the present continuous tense. That is, it is continuous action,

continuous belief — a belief that continues on and on in believing and trusting in Jesus Christ. The point is clear: if we are continuing to believe in Jesus Christ, then we are following Christ. We are doing what He says...

- rejecting and turning away from all temptations.
- standing firm and relying upon His presence and power to conquer and to carry us through all trials.

John 6:28-29 *Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”*

Eph 6:16 *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

Heb 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

James 1:2-6 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lack wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*

James 2:17 *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

1 John 3:23 *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

1 John 5:4-5 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

3. Trials and temptations are to be conquered by rejoicing and by an inexpressible joy that fills our hearts. The inexpressible joy of Christ is not always present, but it often is. We are creatures of emotion, creatures who do not experience any one feeling for more than a brief period. But every genuine believer experiences an inexpressible joy here and there. Words cannot describe it: it is just glorious, just as Scripture says in this verse. Mathew Henry states:

“This joy is inexpressible, it cannot be described by words; the best discovery is by an experimental taste of it; it is full of glory, full of heaven. There is much of heaven and the future glory in the present joys of...Christians” (Mathew Henry’s Commentary, Vol. 6, p. 1007.)

The point is this: joying and rejoicing in the Lord and His presence will stir us to stand against temptations and trials. Joy and rejoicing will help us to focus upon Christ and His glorious power.

John 15:11 *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

John 16:24 *“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”*

Acts 5:41 *The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.*

Acts 16:23-25 *After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.*

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

2 Cor 6:10 *Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.*

Phil 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

Heb 10:24 *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*

1 Pet 4:12-13 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

Heb 12:3 *Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Psa 126:2 *Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”*

Isa 61:10 *I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

4. Trials and temptations are to be conquered by keeping our eyes focused upon the salvation of our souls. This is the end, the very goal toward which we are moving, the salvation of our souls. As in any work or task, we must keep our eyes upon the goal. The more focused we are upon the goal, the stronger we become to stand against all obstacles. So it is with salvation. The more we focus upon the salvation of our souls, the stronger we become...
 - to reject and turn away from temptation.
 - to conquer the trials of life.

Mat 10:22 “All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

John 3:18 “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

Rom 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Rom 8:34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Rom 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

James 1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

2 Pet 1:10-11 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Rev 22:14 “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.” ■