

Do Not Despair Under Discipline (Hebrews 12:5)

Hebrews chapter 12. We're going to begin reading at verse 4.

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him;

6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.”

7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.

11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. (Heb. 12:4–11 NASB)

The great preacher Alexander Maclaren once compared Hebrews chapter 12—to this passage, verses 4 through 11—to a lighthouse. Maclaren said that this passage gives the kind of teaching that we don't much notice when the sun is shining, like a lighthouse. You see the lighthouse during the day and you don't necessarily appreciate the light, you don't necessarily appreciate the function of it. But when night comes and the sun goes away and the clouds roll in and the storm begins to assail us with the winds and rains of affliction, then suddenly this passage takes on a blazing glory that guides our steps and really comforts and encourages our hearts. But in the middle of the day you don't notice it.

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In fact, discipline and this whole subject of discipline really is a topic that we care very little about and think very little about until we need it. And then once we need it, suddenly these truths take on a life of their own. Suddenly these truths come to the forefront and we are able to appreciate what the author is saying here. We don't really sense the need to ruminate on the subject of discipline when the sun is out and when the skies are bright and everything is going well, but when everything turns and we face afflictions and trials and difficulties, when we are up against suffering, whether it is physical or spiritual or emotional, when we suffer loss, that is when the truths that are behind Hebrews chapter 12 kind of bubble up to the surface and they become precious to us.

These truths were encouragements to the first-century Christians to whom the book was written. They had endured trials, a conflict of suffering, they had been reproached and reviled, had their property seized, and some of them had even been imprisoned. So this is intended to be an encouragement. Short-lived trials, we can endure those relatively easily. Now, I say relatively, because you can always compare short-lived trials to long-lived trials. And when the short-lived trials come and we compare them to the longer trials, we say, OK, I can endure the short-lived trials. Now, short-lived trials are much more difficult to endure than no trials at all. I understand that. That's the easiest thing of all to do. But short-lived trials can be endured relatively easily. It's the long-lasting, the protracted, the extended trials that come into our lives—those are the ones that are more difficult to endure. Those are the ones where we have need of endurance, so that, having fixed our eyes on Jesus, we will run the race, cross the finish line, and receive the reward that has been promised.

In the last couple of weeks, we've been working through these first few verses with two goals in mind. First, to address the proper mindset with which we view discipline—that is, trials and tribulations and afflictions that come into this life—view those with the proper mindset. To think properly of them and to have a proper perspective of them so that we may embrace them or approach them as God would expect us to embrace and approach them.

The second goal has been to address the manner in which we embrace God's discipline. What is the attitude of the heart? How do we approach God? What is the disposition of our soul toward a God who sends into our lives, always with wisdom and purpose, His loving discipline in whatever form that may take in order to accomplish His purposes in

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our lives? What is the posture that we are to have in the midst of affliction and suffering?

Last week we highlighted two errors that are opposite and equal, and they both threaten to sideline us when we are facing difficulties and trials. The first one is to despise God's discipline, and the second is to despair under it. And last week I gave you four ways that we despise God's discipline. And all this is just for the purpose of review. I know it's a sensitive subject. I just want to bring these four up again and remind you of what it is that we covered last week.

There are four ways that we can despise God's discipline: when we complain about His discipline; when we question His wisdom in that discipline; when we regard it as shameful or dishonorable to be disciplined by Him (it's not, it's a badge of honor); and fourth, when we make light of it—that is, to either ignore it or to keep our focus off His purposes in it. Or we simply just say, “I'm just going to get through this. I don't care what God is doing. I'm just going to endure and get through this,” without any thought to what it is that God is doing in the midst of that affliction. That way of approaching God's discipline—despising it—produces bitterness and anger and resentment and hardens the heart and makes it calloused. It produces a hardened heart, not a holiness that should characterize our lives.

And today we're going to address the second error that we make in responding to God's discipline, and this is in verse 5. You would think that with more weeks behind us now in this subject, we would have gotten beyond the end of verse 5, but we're looking at this last phrase of verse 5: “Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him.” “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord”—that's to despise it, to think lowly of it. Second, “Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him.” And so that we can maintain balance in the force, I'm going to give you four ways that we faint under God's discipline, that we despair under it.

But before we do, let's look at verse 5 and see what it is that the author is describing here with this word *faint*. Verses 5 and 6 are quotations from Proverbs chapter 3, verses 11 and 12. And the author there is quoting those verses to remind us of God's purpose in discipline. Verse 5, let's read it again from the top. “You have forgotten the exhortation [or we might even say encouragement, the encouraging exhortation] which is addressed to you as sons [not as God's enemies, but as His sons], ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord [that's despising it. And second], nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him.’” Two opposite errors. Both of them threaten us in terms of

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getting us off task, as it were, in how we are responding to God's discipline. We can make either of these two errors.

The word *faint* is a word that is used five times in the New Testament. Three times it is translated as "faint." Once it's used here, and it's translated as "faint." It's used twice in the Gospels, once in Matthew and once in Mark, both times referring to the same event in the life of Jesus and the same words in the life of Jesus. Matthew 15, verse 32: "And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, 'I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.'" You can hear there how the word is used to describe a losing of physical stamina, just kind of a coming undone physically because you have no energy, you have no fuel, you have no food. And it's describing there a physical undoing.

It's translated once as "grow weary" in Galatians 6, verse 9. "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary." We do not faint.

And once it is translated as "lose heart" even here in our very own passage. Look up at verse 3. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 3: "Consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." It's the same word. The same word is translated here in verse 3 as "lose heart." It describes a weakness, a weariness, a loosened heart, a heart that just comes undone. It loses its backbone, it loses its stamina. It just becomes weak, it becomes pliable, it bends, it falls down, it loses its energy, its ability to stand up under pressure. That's the idea. We want to fix our eyes on Jesus and consider Him who endured that hostility so that we don't, spiritually speaking, faint like we would, physically speaking, if we had no food and no fuel and we came undone. So it can describe the loosening or the undoing of a heart.

Now, here are the ways that we despise God's discipline. It comes in various formats, comes in various ways. I think I've chosen here four of them that are common ones that probably plague and tempt us most. And this gives us an opportunity, I think, like we did last week, to examine our own hearts and say, am I despairing under God's discipline, under adversity, in one of these four ways? Or am I on the path, the trajectory, toward despairing under His discipline in one of these four ways?

Number one: when we doubt our status as God's sons or children. That is so common. Because we reason that if we are saved and if we truly enjoy His favor and if we are the objects of His love from eternity past, if we are in His family and have been adopted by

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Him, how is it that He treats us like this? That's the sinful—sinful—idea that pops into our head and into our heart. And then we take the very next step and say, well, maybe I'm not a child of God if I'm enduring this discipline, if I'm enduring this kind of affliction and suffering. This seems like the type of thing that God, according to my thinking, would reserve for His enemies, not for His friends. For somebody who's not in His family, not for those who are in His family. And if it is indeed that I have God's favor, then why would He not protect me from this affliction or make it end? Because if I favored me, and I certainly do, then I would bring this affliction to an end right now. It would stop right now. That's what we always want, to be out from underneath of it. Nobody says under affliction and suffering, "I really hope this goes on for a couple more weeks because this is producing so much fruit in my life. This has caused me to draw so much closer to the Lord. I am so full of joy in the midst of this that I never want this diagnosis to go away. I never want the pain to stop. I never want the affliction to disappear. I want it to continue." Very few people, if any, will say such a thing. And yet we reason that if we really had God's favor, that the difficulty would end.

If He really loves me, why is this my lot? Why not something else? Because Bill Gates seems like a really happy man. All of the wicked seem especially favored; they enjoy this life. So if God favors me and if I am His, why is this my lot? Why would God treat His children this way? I must not be His child. I must be His enemy. That's the reasoning. That's the danger. And when you start to reason that way, you are beginning to despair under the discipline. You are seeing it as a weight that is so heavy over you that you cannot stand up underneath of it. And if you continue to reason that way, then you will lead on to one of the other ways that we despair under God's discipline.

These assessments that I've just given you, these are all based on wrong assumptions. They're based upon how I feel underneath of affliction, they're based upon what I experience, how I think that God should deal with me in this life. This is, again, a way of questioning His wisdom in giving me affliction. It's to wrongly assume that His discipline is an expression of anger and not love. But it is love and not wrath that is always behind discipline. That's why we talked about the proper mindset with which we accept discipline, always remembering that the rod of God's discipline is baptized in deep affection before it is laid across the back of a believer. If I'm convinced of that, then I cannot despair under His discipline because I have the cure in my mind, which is that this is exactly how God deals with His children. He disciplines us as is appropriate.

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So the cure to this way of despairing is to remember that God does not discipline His enemies, He disciplines only His sons. Again, this is a privilege, a joy, and a blessing that God has reserved for those whom He has loved from before the foundation of the world. And because He has loved them from before the foundation of the world, He has reserved this blessing for us. God is not interested in doing this for His enemies. He is interested in doing this for His children. So it is out of His deep and abiding and redeeming love that He disciplines us. Chapter 12, verse 7: “It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons.” He says that because that is the central point of the whole passage. God doesn't deal in this way with His enemies. He deals in this way with His sons. “They disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them [verse 10], but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.” God does not share His holiness with His enemies. He shares His holiness with His children, those who are inside of His family. And discipline is the means by which God strengthens us, produces fruit in us, purges sin from our lives, protects us from future sins, strengthens us for His trials, and makes us useful in His kingdom. It is the proof of our sonship. When you look at somebody who is under discipline or you look at a child of God who is going through tremendous affliction or suffering, we can never conclude that that is a sign that they are not in the family of God. We can always conclude that that is, in fact, a marker of their adoption.

Your tribulation in this world is producing glory in the next, and your tribulation and affliction in this world is a voucher of your glory in the next. You can look at all the afflictions of this life and say, this guarantees me a glory that I cannot comprehend.

Richard Phillips, in his commentary on the book of Hebrews, says this: “Some believers manifest abounding joy when God is blessing them with worldly goodness but quickly resort to sullen resentment when God is blessing them with trials. Such Christians will never make much progress because they fail to realize that trials are part and parcel of the Christian life and that they are a sign not of God's neglect, but of His fatherly involvement. Affliction is a sign that we are children [listen carefully] and that our conduct is important to God and has a bearing on His glory.” Your conduct is important to God and has a bearing on His glory. That is why He watches over your discipline and your afflictions with an attentiveness that the angels cannot even possibly comprehend. It doesn't always appear like that in this life, I understand that. Sometimes it seems as if God's enemies have the upper hand, as if His children are the ones who are suffering the hardest lot. It appears as if we are cast off. But as the song that we just sang here a few moments ago says, “Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace,

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Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face” (original words by William Cowper, music and add. words by Bob Kauflin, “God Moves”). You can't judge the conduct of God based upon how providence strikes you. You always have to, by faith, look behind the providence to the smiling, loving face that is behind it and seeks your every good and your eternal joy and your eternal glory.

Children who are disciplined by their parents have no idea what is in their best interests. Have you noticed this, parents? Children who are disciplined have no idea what is in their best interests. They do not understand why the rules exist. They do not understand why their hand gets slapped when they reach for a hot surface. They do not understand why you say no, why you deny them privileges, why you deny them what they desire. All that a six-year-old understands is what he craves and desires and wants in the moment. He doesn't even remember what he wanted five minutes ago, but he knows what he wants now. And to him, at that moment, that's the only thing he can think of—what he wants right there at that moment. And when you say no to that, the six-year-old does not understand it. He can't comprehend that. He has to—I would say he has to embrace by faith, but this is more applicable to us. The six-year-old cannot possibly comprehend what you and I comprehend, and that is that behind the no, behind the denial, behind the withholding, there is grace, there is goodness, there is wisdom. It is because of the fact that I am a responsible parent and I have wisdom and experience and a knowledge of the world around here that I would deny my six-year-old child something that they think they absolutely have to have in the moment for their happiness.

So when your kid comes home from Adventure Club and says, “Hey, there was a new kid at Adventure Club tonight. I met him; his name is Mark—whatever it is—his name is Mark. And this weekend it's his birthday, and he invited me to his birthday party. It's a two-night sleepover at his house out in the woods. Can I go, Dad?” And I say to him, “No, you cannot go.” “But his parents are really cool.” “I don't care who his parents are. I don't care what they can offer. The answer is no. I don't know these people. Everything you've described to me is a recipe for a national news story. And I'm not interested in having my name or your name in that national news story. So the answer is no.” All the child can think of in the moment is that they want that; that is for their good. But all of my wisdom in the moment—because I understand the world in a way that my child can never understand the world—all my wisdom and my experience and my skill and my common sense says no. The answer is no, my number is no, everything about this is no. Don't ask me about it again because the answer is always going to be no to a question like that.

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But the child in the midst of that cannot possibly comprehend that, that behind that denial, behind what they think is the most painful thing they have ever experienced in their life, that there is wisdom and love and benevolence and understanding and skill and knowledge that is outside of their entire worldview or their entire ability to comprehend. Children don't understand it in the midst of it. And yet the reason for those things from a parent's perspective is because you love them and because you know them and you know what is for their best.

Do you think it's possible that there might be a parallel there with God? You and I think this affliction cannot possibly have a good outcome, cannot possibly have a good point, a good work in it, and yet He knows because of His wisdom, His skill, His knowledge, because He sees the beginning from the end. He knows exactly what it is that we need right there at that moment. I think it's possible. I think it's actual.

First, we despair under God's discipline when we fail to remember that we are His sons. We start to doubt that we are in His family. And second, when we believe that we are forgotten by God in our affliction. This is the danger for long and enduring trials. Give me a day or a week, and I can endure that. But when trials go on for weeks and months or even years, we start to feel like maybe God has forgotten us. He knows us; we understand He knows us. He knows all things. But God has a lot going on, doesn't He? There are people starving on other continents around the world. The church is being persecuted to some degree, some measure, in almost every country on the planet. And there's war in Europe. Again. The Europeans are always at war, so there's always a war in Europe. And God's got that. And then there's these weird balloons flying across the sky, and there's somebody with dementia who has his fingers on the nuclear codes. God has a lot of plates spinning, a lot of balls that He is juggling. He has a lot going on. And so here I am in my difficulty, and maybe it is that God, in the moment of sending that affliction to me, was paying attention and knew exactly what He was doing, and then that started. And here I am over on the sideline waving my arms and saying, God, we could really use this to stop. I need this to end, and I need it to end now; I can't bear up under this. But He's got a war in Europe—again—that He's got to deal with and all the weird stuff going on around the world that He's trying to get sorted out. And so maybe it is that He has just forgotten us.

This is the sentiment of the psalmist. Psalm 13, verse 1: “How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?”

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Psalm 44, verse 24: “Why do You hide Your face and forget our affliction and our oppression?”

That's the feeling. But then there's fact. And what is the fact? The fact is Psalm 22, verse 24: “He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard.”

The fact is Isaiah 49:15: “Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you.”

Remember, God's mind is an infinite mind. I gave this observation a couple of weeks ago. This has been a profound realization for me even in the last few weeks, and it comes from Dan Phillips, who was here for our Cessationist conference. I think it was in his Sunday school lesson. He talked about the infinite mind of God, and because God's mind is an infinite mind, that means—listen carefully—that everything God does, He does as if it is the only thing that He does. Everything God does, He does as if it is the *only* thing that He does. Which means that when He sends an affliction into your life or my life, He is as focused and attentive on that with His infinite mind and all of His resources as if it is the only thing in the universe that He is doing. Because He can do it to an infinite degree, with infinite wisdom and infinite attentiveness. And because His mind is an infinite mind, He is ever-present—ever-present—in every affliction, every temptation, every trial, and you and I have no reason to doubt that. We have never been given a just or a good reason to doubt that truth, that He is always present in it. And He is working to accomplish something, namely, that we may grope for Him and trust Him and embrace Him in the midst of the difficulty and the darkness.

J. I. Packer said this: “This is the ultimate reason, from our standpoint, why God fills our lives with troubles and perplexities of one sort and another: it is to ensure that we shall learn to hold Him fast. . . . God wants us to feel that our way though life is rough and perplexing, so that we may learn to lean on Him thankfully. Therefore He takes steps to drive us out of self-confidence to trust in Himself.”

You and I must inform our feelings with this. You and I must make how we feel about difficulties and afflictions—we must take that and we must bend it to the truth. Because we're crooked; the truth is straight. And we have to either take what is crooked and bend it so it matches up with the truth, or the truth will break us. But the truth is not going to change. The truth is always going to be straight. So we can either be conformed to it or be destroyed by it. I've been pleading with all of us for the last several weeks

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that we would be conformed to that truth and begin to, with a mind and a heart that is submissive to God's purposes, embrace the discipline that He brings into our lives.

The third way that we despair under His discipline is to despair that we are ever coming out of the trial. Not just to doubt that we're in the family of God, but also to despair that we will ever come out of the trial, to give up hope that it will ever end. Listen, dear saint, I want to promise you something. Your suffering will end. I promise you it will end. You say, "Jim, you don't know that. I may die in this condition." And then what? Then it will end! That's right. You're not going to be the first person to die under affliction, and you're not going to be the last person to die under affliction. But I promise you that it will end.

For the believer, all affliction is temporary. Listen to that. For the believer, *all* affliction is temporary. For the unbeliever, all affliction is a preview of what is to come. But for the believer, it's all temporary. It will end the moment God stops doing something in your life with it. I promise you that. If that means that you die under it, then that is the moment that God has stopped using it in your life. And if He intends to use it to a certain point in your life and then to cause that affliction to end, then it will end as soon as He is done using it. God is not going to waste affliction in our lives. So as soon as it has accomplished the purpose that He has for it, it will come to an end. At that very moment. Not one second longer. Not one day longer. Why? Because then it would be to waste that affliction in the life of His child. So as soon as He is done using you, as soon as He is done developing you, training you, as soon as He is done instructing you and teaching you with that affliction, then it will come to an end.

The cure is to remember that all our afflictions are temporary, but the glory that it produces is not. It is producing a glory that cannot be weighed, it cannot be compared. It is a glory that cannot be taken away from us. It is a glory that will not fade, it will not be stolen from us. It is a reward and inheritance that is described in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 as an eternal weight of glory. Romans 8 [verse 18] says that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

Listen to how in Psalm 43 the psalmist speaks this truth to his own soul. Psalm 43, verse 5: "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me?" Now that's the question. Listen to what the psalmist is doing. He is stepping out, as it were, and becomes a third party from himself. And he is looking at his soul, and he is addressing the state of his own soul. He's speaking to himself. If you do this in the

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grocery store, people will look at you, but it's OK when you are in the quietness of your own home to do that very thing, to step out of your situation, as it were, and to look at the state of your own soul and to address it. And what does he say to his soul? "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me?" That's the question. Listen to the answer: "Hope in God." He's not just saying this generically to people—it's a good idea to hope in God. He is addressing his own soul and saying to his own soul, "Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God." Why are you disturbed, O my soul? Here's the remedy: you, soul, hope in God, for you will praise Him again. When the affliction ends . . . after death . . . at some point your soul will praise Him again. Therefore, hope in God. That's the answer. It is speaking truth into our own hearts, truth to our own souls, which are weary and in despair.

J. C. Ryle said this: "By affliction He teaches us many precious lessons, which without it we should never learn. By affliction He shows us our emptiness and weakness, draws us to the throne of grace, purifies our affections, weans us from the world, makes us long for heaven. In the resurrection morning we shall all say, 'it is good for me that I was afflicted.' We shall thank God for every storm." We shall thank God for every storm.

A fourth way that we despair under God's discipline is when we give up all effort in discipline. Or as the kids say today, "I just can't even." I can't even. I stop praying, I stop reading, I stop serving, I stop thinking of anybody except myself. I stop striving, I stop pursuing holiness, I stop being productive. I just slip into an apathetic, indolent, lazy, careless state, a spiritual torpor. I don't even feel like doing anything, but I just give up, say what is the point? I'll just do nothing then. That is to despair under His affliction.

What is the cure for that? To tell yourself the truth. And what is the truth? God calls you to obey Him in this, and He will strengthen you to do it. That's the truth. God calls you to obey Him in this, and He will strengthen you to do it. He calls you to pursue holiness, to share in His holiness, for He is producing in you the peaceful fruits of righteousness. You have to remind yourself, I am here to run a race. He will strengthen me for that race because there is a finish line and that finish line is closer than it appears. And the Savior standing on the other side of the finish line, He is holding the reward in His hands, and His eyes are fixed on me.

And so my job, our responsibility, is to fix our eyes on Him, the author and finisher of our faith, and to consider Him who has endured such hostility against Himself from hostile sinners, so that you and I will not lose heart. That is our goal. And to give up under discipline is to take your eyes off Jesus and to become so obsessed with yourself,

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your own situation, your own lamentations, your own despair, your own pain and affliction in this, and off everything that you expected in this life. It is to take your eyes off Jesus and put them there, and to become so obsessed with you and what you have to endure, what you have to give up, what you have to exert. Friends, let's be honest with that. That is peak sinfulness to do that. That is peak sinfulness.

Let me close by giving you three passages. You don't have to turn here; write them down if you'd like. Hebrews chapter 10, verse 36–39. “You have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. ‘For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.” Verse 39: We are not of those who shrink back to destruction. We are those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

First Peter chapter 1 [verses 6–7], “In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while [Do you hear that? Peter, undergoing the church's first persecution, real government-sponsored persecution in AD 63: “Even if now for a little while . . .” What did I promise you? All affliction for the righteous will cease. Even if now for a little while], if necessary [and it obviously was necessary. For a little while, if necessary], you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

What is Peter saying in 1 Peter chapter 1? He's saying that God takes you through the furnace of affliction so that when you come out the other side, all of the dross, all of the garbage, all of the sin, everything that is not worthy of eternity, comes out of that. And on the other side of the furnace of affliction, you look at a faith that is like pure gold, all of its dross removed from it. It's pure gold. And you can rejoice in that. That is the kind of faith that endures the trial.

You know what kind of faith does not endure the trial? The kind of faith that comes to Christ for what they can get in this life. Because then when the trials come, that kind of faith is consumed in the fire. Those are the people who walk away and say, I want nothing to do with the church. I gave the Jesus thing a whirl for a couple of months. It didn't work out. Nothing but suffering and affliction. It wasn't as good as they said it was going to be. And so I'm done with Christianity; I'm done with the church. And they want nothing else to do with Christianity after that. It's that shallow, pathetic, man-centered

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faith that is preached, quite frankly, from most pulpits in America. That is the kind of faith that does not endure through the trials.

Last passage, James chapter 1, verses 2 and 3 and verse 12:

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

12 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.

That is your hope. Persevere under trial and you receive the crown of life. All those do who love the Lord and whom He loves.

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