

PATHS TO PATIENCE

TEXT:

James 1:2-3:

² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

**Romans 5:3: And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:
knowing that tribulation worketh patience;**

INTRODUCTION

Many people would like to be more patient. Few welcome the journey to this goal. The path to patience winds thru areas of temptations, and even tribulations. Even so, James tells us we are to have Joy in the temptations, and Paul says we are to know glory in the tribulations.



TEMPTATIONS ARE CHOICES TO MAKE

Spiritual strength, like physical strength, is capable of being increased through exercise.

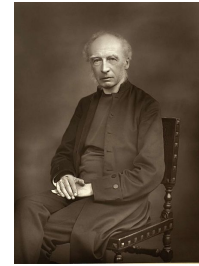
Jesus knew temptation in the wilderness at the beginning of his ministry. After He overcame three temptations, satan withdrew, for he had been rebuked.

Jesus demonstrates how to count an experience with temptation as joy, for it is joy to get victory over temptation and to let no evil come into our life to mar our relationship with God.

Through the grace and strength of the Spirit, we can return from temptation stronger than when we went in, because God causes us to triumph in Christ:

2 Corinthians 2:14a: Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ,

Note: C. J. Ellicott¹ wrote, *“Innocence is a grace, yet there is a higher stage of the same virtue – purity – which has been won by bitter conflict with the thousand suggestions of evil from without, stirring up the natural impurity within. Temptation is not sin, unless yielded to.”*



TRIBULATIONS ARE UNAVOIDABLE ROUGH PLACES

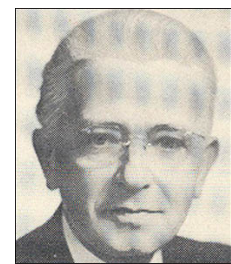
Can we believe that nothing can touch us unless it has first passed the Will of God for us, and therefore, it can be a source of blessing?

What is God trying to tell us through trials and misfortunes?

- ***Not to depend on “things” or on other people – but on Him alone! (loss of home; loss of loved ones)***
- ***Not to judge others, for you don’t know what pressures they are under.***
- ***Not to center your attachments on things of this earth, but to seek first of all His Kingdom!***

Matthew 6:33: But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

NOTE: Paul Scherer² has said, *“When things go wrong, and trouble is pressing hard, throw your shoulders back and thank God that the present circumstances don’t change any of His eternal plans!”*



Paul E. Scherer

The apostle Paul gave good advice to Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:3: Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

¹ C. J. Ellicott was a distinguished English Christian theologian, academic and churchman. (Wikipedia)

²Paul Ehrman Scherer was an American Lutheran Minister, Chairman and Brown Professor of Homiletics at Union Theological Seminary and later at Princeton Seminary, and an Author. (greatthoughtstresury.com)

As a **Soldier of the Cross**, we must not appeal for special favors.



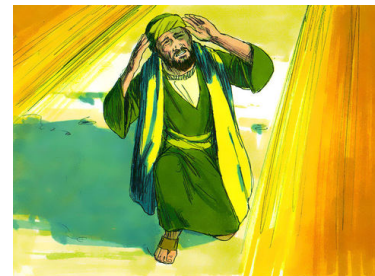
***“Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the Lamb:
And shall I fear to own His cause, or blush to speak His Name?
Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize, and sailed thru bloody
seas?
Sure, I must fight if I would reign; increase my courage, Lord;
I’ll bear the toil, endure the pain, supported by the Word!”***

We can see tribulations as a mess, or as a message.

Troubles are inevitable in this life, as the sparks fly upward. It is my attitude toward them that makes or breaks me.

We can “kick against the pricks” like Saul of Tarsus; or we can become sullen and sour.

Acts 26:14: And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a Voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.



Or – we can let perfect love of God cast out fear. We can have joy in His sustaining Presence. We can be made patient.

THE GOAL

James 1:4: But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing

This speaks of a mature Christian — complete in the Fruit of the Spirit.

For each test and tribulation . . .

- ***God provides strength and sends the victory of joy and patience to those who call upon Him.***

- ***The Christian is eternally richer for having gone victoriously through difficult experiences.***

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Samuel Rutherford, imprisoned in Aberdeen, wrote: *“Jesus Christ came into my room last night, and every stone shown like a ruby.”*

The Apostle John was exiled to the isle of Patmos. There he wrote of visions of Heaven that came to him, transporting him beyond earthly sorrow although he was in the midst of tribulation.



CONCLUSION:

Through testings and trials of every kind, we may take the promise made to the Apostle Paul from the words of Jesus:

2 Corinthians 12:9: And He [Jesus] said unto me, “My Grace is sufficient for thee: for My Strength is made perfect in weakness.” Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me.

In His strength we can be patient. We cannot be impatient!

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