

Responding to Life's Trials and Problems

Chapter 5

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #50



Objective: To understand more about how suffering is used in our lives and how we can respond to it in a way that honors God.



I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

—Romans 8:18

When we first encounter suffering in the Christian life, we do not really understand why. As we grow and learn from the Bible, however, we begin to find many reasons that people suffer. Great benefits can come out of the trials we face, especially when we are able to stand firm in our faith through them. Even though life puts us through trials and problems, God uses the process to mature us, to affect other people, and to glorify Him. This chapter continues to examine many of the biblical reasons we suffer.



1. True or false? Trials and tribulations help prepare believers to minister to each other.
2. True or false? The apostle Paul never experienced any hardships.

3. True or false? Jesus always helped His people avoid their trials.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. Who is responsible for doing the ministry of the church?

- a. The pastor
- b. Teachers
- c. All Christians
- d. Men

5. Which of the following is most important in our trials?

- a. Getting out of them
- b. Avoiding them before they start
- c. The character and attitudes with which we respond to them
- d. Confessing the sins that caused them

6. Which common item does the Bible use to describe Christians?

- a. A sharp knife
- b. A hammer
- c. A fine garment
- d. A clay pot

7. According to Paul, what is a key to experiencing the power of Jesus?

- a. Sharing in the suffering of Jesus
- b. Memorizing many Bible verses
- c. Attending church regularly
- d. A pilgrimage to Jerusalem

8. Which part of your life is eternal?

- a. Your physical body
- b. Your suffering
- c. The visible part
- d. The invisible part—your spirit

9. What part of us does God burn away?

- a. All of our desires
- b. Everything that we are attached to
- c. Everything that is contrary to His nature
- d. Eventually, every part of us

10. How many reasons are involved each time you suffer?

- a. Only one
- b. Usually several
- c. Always 30
- d. We never can know how many reasons or which ones.

11. What promise did Jesus give us about suffering, especially persecution?
- a. We will receive a heavenly reward.
 - b. God will immediately destroy our enemies.
 - c. If we have faith, we will never experience persecution.
 - d. God will honor our attempts to retaliate.



What kind of seed are you sowing into the garden of your life? Are you sowing more seed into the things of your earthly nature or into the things of the Spirit? What changes do you need to make to produce more eternal fruit?



Thank God for His promise of eternal blessing. Pray that He would help you remain focused on the eternal things of the Spirit rather than on your earthly nature, which soon will pass.



Going Deeper

1. What did Jesus promise His followers regarding tribulation? (Consider John 16:33; 12:24-28)

2. Since the poetry books are addressed to the heart or inner man of God's people, and the first of the poetry books is about suffering, how can you relate this first poetry book to the emphasis of Paul that, though our outward man is perishing through suffering, our inner man can be renewed every day? (Consider 2 Corinthians 4: 7-18) _____

3. Which dimension of our being is the eternal part of us? Relate that to the reality that God is interested in growing and maturing the heart or the inner man of His people by permitting, or even directing suffering into their lives. _____

4. Have you shed tears of suffering that have proven to be seeds planted in your life that have brought forth much spiritual fruit for God? (Psalm 126) Explain. _____

5. How does God use suffering to burn out of us everything contrary to His holy nature, and in this way, to prepare us for the eternal state with Him forever? (Hebrews 12:26-29) _____

6. When God chastens His people through suffering, does this mean that He does not love them, or does it confirm the miracle that they are His children and He is their Father? (Consider Hebrews 12: 5-11) Explain. _____

7. Relate these Scriptures that tell us about access to the grace of God to the teaching of Paul in these same verses, that we should rejoice in our tribulations or suffering (2 Corinthians 9:8; Romans 5:2-5). _____
