



*Do you thank God for trials?*

(a Discipleship Snapshot study)

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Hello brothers and sisters in Christ, and friends,

This study will not make much sense to the unsaved or even the false converts. This study is to encourage and strengthen the genuine followers of Christ - the ones who have made and are holding to their eternal-covenant of salvation with God, through Jesus' blood on the cross - something I call "*The Covenant of the Cross*" (Mark 8:34-38; 1st Corinthians 11). And yet, while I know this topic will not all make sense to the unbeliever or false convert, I do sincerely hope and pray that the study gives them some teasers that help them to understand the real God of the Bible and His beautiful and holy character - the one the 501c3 "clergy" (CEOs) are afraid to talk about anymore, because of their fear of man and their fear of losing their "accreditation" and favor with the CFR/mafia/banker/empire of today (Rothschilds, Rockefellers, Vatican , etc). And, many of these 501c3 "clergy" (CEOs) are also driven by fear of man and seeking to please the unsaved and draw them into their "churches" not because they care about the souls of the unsaved, but because they want to increase revenue in their pockets.... Is it any wonder that God is growing the home-church movement worldwide? I dare say, no - it's not surprising at all. We all need to leave pagan corporations who refuse to teach the whole and convicting counsel of the Word of God and stick with a gathering of believers that are growing together, praying together, and reading the Scriptures honestly together. Yes? :)

So with that short intro, let's go back and look at the question I started with: Do you thank God for trials? No, I didn't say trails (paths in the woods or a park). :) - I indeed said trials (testings, temptations, adversity to doing what's right, lessons, consequences). Now, I expect some of you are probably thinking: ***Steven, are you crazy? Trials hurt - why would I ever thank God for trials?*** Good question. Let me put it this way, if you aren't thanking God for trials, then you don't understand how much sin (and your favorite sins and sin-pleasures) are grieving the Holy Spirit and

separating you from active fellowship with God. Want to know more? Let's start at the Word and dig deeper.

Let's start in James, James 1, verse 2.

**"<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."** (James 1:2-5)

Okay, so let's look at some Greek words and definitions to dig deeper. If you don't already have a Hebrew/Greek interlinear, I highly recommend you get one, because I want every honest believer worldwide to become their own scholar (relying on regular study in God's Word, much time in prayer and holy living, and letting the Holy Spirit be their Teacher, and \*not\* relying on the "learned men" that this culture promotes despite their lack of Godly character. I suggest either Jay P Green's Interlinear set, or another on similar. But, my personal favorite tool is found for free from computers and laptops here: (ISA) tool ([www.Scripture4all.org](http://www.Scripture4all.org)).

So, using my Hebrew/Greek "**Interlinear Scripture Analyzer**" (ISA) tool, I find that this Greek word is: "**peirasmos**" which literally means (in context and Biblical definition): testings (to prove our active patterns of choices), adversity (demonic and human opposition to us doing what's right), temptations (imagination and enticements to do sin, accompanied by demons whispering stuff like: "**you'll get away with it**" and "**it'll be fun**"), and all of the lessons that teach us to walk away from sin.

Do you realize that God loves you so much that He wants to teach you to hate what He calls sin?... But do you also realize that He is also the ultimate Gentleman - He won't force you to choose good/holiness or evil/sin-rebellion. He desires that all men and women would walk holy and keep leaving sin behind... but he doesn't force it - He wants eternal partners, so He teaches through His Word and allows the demons to try to test people to either teach them to hate evil and walk away from it more quickly and/or stand up to the ones promoting that evil, or to show that they are walking in intentional darkness and willful rebellion against the parts of God's Word and God's Holy Character that they do understand. James 1 goes on to explain this well. "<sup>12</sup>

**Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**

**<sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed."** (James 1:12-4) So, simply put, trials are testings to prove our patterns and to show us what our own patterns of choices look like: either growing in choosing more and more **holiness**, or growing in choosing more and more **sin-rebellion** and **self-wants**. Please remember, there is "always" a way of escape from sin (1st Corinthians 10:13). We never have to do sin or something evil to get good to happen. Never. What we all need to do is grow in

choosing what's right and holy and honest, even when the world is screaming at us to choose what is wrong, sinful and rebellious against God.

The next question would be why does God have to use trials? You know - Why can't He just warn us in a quiet form of some sort? Maybe like that "**still small voice**" (1st Kings 19:12)? That's another great question! Curious: Do you ever hear a warning not to get into sin, but ignore it?... Yes, we all do. You see? There's our answer - we don't always want to listen to either our conscience or the Holy Spirit (Who is in us if we are genuinely saved). **That** is why God has to use trials. Trials are His most effective way of showing us our sins **\*and\*** arguing with our drive to sin that we need to become dead to (explained in much detail in Romans 6 and 8 and Galatians 5).

But then, some will say, "But in Christ, there's no condemnation, right?" (Romans 8:1-2). Partially correct, though that is a modern lessening of the passage. Let's look at it better.

**"<sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Holy Spirit... <sup>3</sup> For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the [sin-driven] flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."** (Romans 8:1,3,4)

>> Christ condemned and conquered sin through pure holiness and the becoming a ransom/sacrifice for all who would believe/follow/obey - through His death on the cross.

Now how does that apply to us? Well, did you see it? There is no condemnation... for who? Those who are "in Christ Jesus" (genuinely saved) **\*AND\*** Those who do not walk according to the sin-pleasures of the sin-driven flesh, but walk/practice holiness according to the Spirit of God (who in-dwells all who are genuinely saved). Both of those are tied together and are inseparable - but only for those who are **\*actually\*** saved. You can't have salvation through Christ without the eternal covenant. And you can't have the genuine salvation through the covenant, unless it also includes a commitment to grow in holiness or, as this text says twice: not "**walking according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**"

**Key question:** are you actively walking according to (and excusing) your sin-pleasures and addictions, or are you actively walking according to growth in holiness, moving more and more away from sin-patterns, and moving closer and closer to walking in patterns, thinking, desires, and motivations that are in holiness, God's beautiful character? **Homework for you to do someday soon:** Read through Galatians 5. In that study, I hope you'll notice and take notes of the sins that God lists there and ask God to keep teaching you not to live/walk in those sins nor entice yourself to do those sins with sin-filled entertainment, but to instead grow in the "**fruit of the Spirit**" shown in detail in verse 22 and 23. There are 2 other passages on sins too: Romans 1:28-32 and

2nd Timothy 3:1-5. (There is one in 1st or 2nd Corinthians, but I can't remember where right now).

So, the next question in this study on trials - what's the goal? So, we can't avoid trials - especially if we are genuinely saved... so, what's the point? What does the completion look like? What does growth in holiness look like? Are there Scriptures that describe it? Yes, 3 key ones stand out in my mind from studies over the years: 1st John 2:12-14, Romans 5:3-5, and 2nd Peter 1:5-11.

Passage 1:

"<sup>12</sup> I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. <sup>13</sup> I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. <sup>14</sup> I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one." (1st John 2:12-14)

>> So, where are you? What stage of spiritual growth are you at: spiritual child, spiritual young man, or spiritual father? (Yes, the text includes ladies too, they're just not mentioned.) What stage of spiritual growth and active holiness are you aiming for? Or are you settling down/compromising and drifting downstream - back to the sins Christ rescued/ransomed you from and pulled you out of? It's an either/or. Always.

Passage 2:

"<sup>3</sup> And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations [*better translated: afflictions, trials, & persecution*], knowing that trials produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> and perseverance [*produces God-fearing*] character; and [*God-fearing*] character, [*produces*] hope [*better translated: faith that obeys Jesus*]. <sup>5</sup> Now hope [*faith that obeys Jesus*] does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:3-5)

>> So, What is the point of trials? Purifying. Teaching. Correction. Reproof. Strengthening in truth and holiness - if we let it do that work in our hearts. (Hebrews 4:12 adds to this.)

Passage 3:

"<sup>5</sup> But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, [*add*] to virtue knowledge, <sup>6</sup> [*add*] to knowledge self-control, [*add*] to self-control perseverance, [*add*] to perseverance godliness, [*add*] <sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, and [*add*] to brotherly kindness love. <sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; <sup>11</sup> for so an entrance will be supplied to you

**abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."** (2nd Peter 1:5-11)

>> If you are not aware of how this passage actively applies to all of us, then you need to do some study on the teachings of the Word of God on the "new covenant" and how salvation is a covenant, something taught in Matthew 13 as well as in quite a few other passages, such as Matthew 26: <sup>28</sup> **For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."** (Matthew 26:28)

Back to 2nd Peter 1 though, **"If"** we are growing in those spiritual growth stages, we will be neither spiritually barren or unfruitful. **Unfruitful/Barren** of what - you ask? Good question: **barren/unfruitful** of growth in intentional holy living, and actively sharing the gospel, study and teaching the Word of God, and making disciples of/for Jesus the Christ. Living holy means being set apart from things God says are worldly, carnal, favorite sin, and sin-pleasures and entertaining ourselves with sin and temptations to sin. 2nd Corinthians 6-7 is a great passage for studying the difference between living like the world and living for Christ, and 1st John is also very clear on contrasting rebellion against God with fellowshiping with God.

Now, **"If"** is a big word. It requires a choice from us :) - yearly, monthly, daily, hourly, minutely, even secondly... er, second by second :) **[yes, I think at least one of those is a new word, and no you don't have to send royalties if you use it :) I personally despise the royalties system anyway.. too many times the copyright/royalties system locks up helpful stuff prohibiting it from being shared, for money. :)]** So, are you actively growing? I don't mean passively growing - I mean actively. Remember, God is the only One who saves, but we are held accountable for the choices we make.

Here's a simple way to remember it:

God alone calls (Matthew 22:14), draws (John 6:44), and saves (John 10:27-30; Ephesians 1:13), and yet at each point, He providentially includes choices for which we are held fully accountable for (Matthew 12:36; 1st Corinthians 3:11-16; Hebrews 4:12). Do you know this? Are you letting that understanding soften your heart and yielding to God's Teaching Hand to grow your character and holy living?

Here's a passage on the very same subject that is overlooked way too many times... <sup>32</sup> **But when we are judged [by God, for sin], we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned [condemned, damned, destroyed] with the world."** (1 Corinthians 11:32) ~ Does God chasten you when you do things you know are wrong? Hebrews 12:5-17 talks about this well and covers both sides: genuinely saved/adopted by God, or not-saved/illegitimate. If God does chasten you with consequences to teach you, it's because He loves you. And usually it's a sign/proof that you are an adopted child of God, and that as one of His adopted children, He is training you how to serve Him and teach others to leave sin and follow Christ. However, if God does *\*not\** arrange very many consequences to teach you right and wrong, then you are *\*not\** a child of God - no matter how many other people you have fooled so far.  
>> So, where are you? Where's your heart? How's your soul doing? Those are deep subjects we all need to ask ourselves on a regular basis until the Holy Spirit confirms

it to us through His Word and His activity in our lives. God allows doubts about salvation to come to those who are not walking in obedience to God's truth that they know. It's from this pure teaching of the Word that I continue to learn how to strive to keep holy living as my pattern, because it's what keeps me spiritually alive and growing. So, can I ask you - Are you growing?

Do you remember this passage?

**"<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. <sup>8</sup> For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. <sup>9</sup> And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."**  
(Galatians 6:7-9)

>> That's pretty clear, huh? We are either mocking God's Word and commands and hardening our hearts in rebellion against Him and holiness and sowing sin and reaping corruption to ultimately reap destruction... Or, we are letting God's Word reprove and correct us, and we are intentionally growing to become like Christ - growing in sowing a purer form of holiness living, and reaping the abundant life right now (with accompanying trials) and ultimately everlasting fellowship with Christ and some placement in God's eternal forever unfolding/growing Kingdom. ~

>> Which are you choosing to be headed toward today: sin or God? Lies or Truth? Sin-pleasures or Holiness? Take some time to process those questions and teachings for as long as you need, then we can pick up more on passages in God's Word that make trials make sense - rather than seeming like "bad luck" or similar confusion...

**"<sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."** (James 1:5-8)

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There are some other passages on trials that we need to look at for this short study to be of much use concerning the Whole Counsel of the Word on this topic.

glory in tribulations - Paul

Brethren, what is the meat of the Word that Paul (or Silas) was talking about in 1st Corinthians 3. You have to keep in mind the context here. The pagan city of Corinth had blatant s\*xual immorality of all types from both genders going on at various times throughout the city, they had pagan temples with satanic rituals, sacrifices to idols, and temple prostitution, **\*and\*** they had trade-guilds run by the pagan/satanists that limited the work for those who did not live the same perverse, idolatrous life-styles. So, to this pagan city where the pagan influences were strong and demanding, Paul had to teach them how to live completely opposite many of the practices and customs

accepted by the perverse pagan culture. And in that teaching, Paul said this:  
"2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able..." (1st Corinthians 3:2) If you read about the pagan Corinth culture (*and I hope you do study it at least a little for yourself rather than just relying on my brief synopsis*), you'll easily notice that the pagan culture had so influenced the believers that they wanted to run from some pure teachings of holiness, instead of embracing them and adjusting to what is right and away from what is wrong. In context, this strong teaching that Paul is referring to is 2 things: 1) do not make yourselves slaves of men (*verses 3 thru 7*) and 2) do not despise chastening (*verses 10-17*). The Corinth culture, and ours has some similarities, wanted to convince Christians that they just were going through 'bad luck', and yet God, through Paul, explains quite clearly that no - the hardships that genuine believers go through are carefully arranged consequences to teach us to flee sin more and love righteousness more.

The hardships genuine believers go through, I believe fall into 4 categories.

- 1) consequences (Galatians 6:7-9; 1st Peter 4:15)
  - 2) testings (Matthew 4:1-10; 1st Corinthians 10:13)
  - 3) teaching/training (Ephesians 2:8-10; Hebrews 12:5-17)
  - 4) persecution (Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:9-27; 2Corinthians 4:7-15; 1Peter 4:1-6)
- >> All four of those are controlled by the Hand of God for the believe so that it \*will not\* destroy them, but will either teach them to leave the sin behind, or will show what level of hardness of heart they have in holding onto that sin that He's arguing with them about. Romans 8:28 explains this well: "28 **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**" (Romans 8:28)

I hope you'll look up each of those passages - they will help you more clearly identify what you are going through in various times of your life, and how to stand. Sometimes it's only one of those categories - usually it's at least 2, and sometimes it's all 4 :)

Just picking out and quoting 2 essential passages that I want you to especially read in this study, right now.

"1 **Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,** 2 **that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.** 3 **For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.** 4 **In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.** 5 **They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.** 6 **For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**" (1 Peter 4:1-6)

**"<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."** (1 Corinthians 10:13) ~ God will never allow Satan to tempt you or me harder than we can handle. If it seems to be getting to that point, pray until you find an escape from that sin. There is always a perfect way to escape and at least a few lesser ways to escape. I'm not smart enough to explain some complex scenarios I have been through or have read/heard from others... what I do know is that the more we grow in loving holiness and embracing the love of the Truth and the healthy and holy "fear of the Lord", we will find escaping/fleeing sin will become not only easier, but also more and more a part of us. And as we've seen in this study, that's one of God's main aims to teach us, despite our love of and run-toward the sins that He needs to rescue us from.

I myself have been through a lot of stressful trials. Some of them, I wasn't sure I'd make it through. But after going through years of trials in God's caring teaching Hands, I have found clearly that if we are in Christ, then these consequences are not to destroy us - they are to press us to seek His wisdom and pray until we find what sin He is trying to teach us to let go of and walk away from, permanently. He doesn't allow these to destroy us. He values all who walk in holiness - even if we don't always remember that. This is one promise I hold to, and I suggest to all my friends to do the same:

**"<sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls."** (1st Peter 1:6-9) ~ Do you realize that your faithful following Jesus and the heart behind that is, when mature, more precious to God than gold refined? Think about that! ~ When we understand that these consequences are arranged at a pace we can handle, but that's pressing us to keep growing in more and more holy living, then we understand that there's a very loving Person and pattern behind it. It dispels the bitterness quickly and easily. Are trials painful? Yes, of course. Are trials too hard? No. They may seem to be, but they never are. As we saw above - there is always a pure, holy escape from sin, but when we don't choose that out of our own love for holiness, God has to use trials to grow us to that solid level of conviction and living, so that we can teach others to grow to and walk the same. Make sense?

Has this caused you to re-evaluate things and thank God? I pray that it has. And if it hasn't yet, message me and we can talk through things. Either way, I pray that in time, this pure meat of the Word will grow you strong in Him, to be a bold, gracious, honest and effective ambassador for Jesus the Christ - till He returns or till your last breath.

I want to leave you with a few passages to ponder, and I'll close with them. Please message or email me anytime if you have Bible questions and/or prayer requests, and my family and I will be glad to pray for you and/or help you with your questions and showing you passages in God's Word that can point you toward answers.

The Lord be with you as you seek and serve Jesus the Christ!

Watching, Preaching, Praying, your growing bro, SH ~ Steven.H3(at)gmail.com

**"<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. <sup>18</sup> Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.**

**<sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2nd Corinthians 5:17-21)**

**"<sup>11</sup> And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. <sup>13</sup> But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light." (Ephesians 5:11-13)**