

## Trusting God in Life's Trials

Dear Reader,

Life on this earth has many hardships. Some relate to health: we struggle with pain or illness. Some relate to possessions: rather than finding happiness in things, we find they cause much trouble. Some relate to work: we are laid off, or struggle to pay bills. Some relate to relationships: a friend betrays us; a child is in trouble; our marriage is not happy.

These hardships are trials. What are trials? Who sends them? Why must we endure them? What must be our response to them?

### What are trials?

In general, trials are tests. We often use the word "trials" this way - a trial run is a test of a new product or service, to see how marketable or how easily produced it is.

Earthly trials are tests of our strength and endurance. Trials in our relationships test how committed to them we are. Trials in our health test how strong our body is. Trials regarding our possessions test how high a value we place on them, how greatly we think we need them.

For the child of God who believes in Jesus Christ as the only and complete Savior, trials are tests of our faith. We live by faith - faith that God truly exists (Hebrews 11:3); that His love for His people in Jesus Christ is an unchanging and inseparable love (Romans 8:31-39); that His good, higher purpose for us is that we live with Him in heaven; and that all events in our lives serve to prepare us for heaven (Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4:8-18).

Our trials put our faith to the test: will we continue to trust God's love in Christ, and believe that He does good to us, even though we suffer? Or will we suppose that God owes us more than He gives, and turn from Him?

### Who sends trials?

Jehovah God sends these trials to His people. This is clear from passages such as Deuteronomy 8:2-5 and Job 1. Though He considered the Old Testament nation of Israel to be His child, and though He loved Job, Jehovah sent them trials. Besides, Jehovah controls all of the events in time and history, to accomplish His purpose: "But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Psalm 115:3).

Some deny that Jehovah sends trials, saying that a good God would not do bad things. They teach that trials come from Satan, or from other forces beyond God's control.

Then how can I be sure God will be able to cause good to come out of my trial?

In fact, God is good; and He does only what is good, even in sending trials. For, though trials *feel* bad, and are not pleasant to us, they are good, because through them God prepares us for heaven.

We all know that men love gold. As evidence of his love for gold, man uses it in his beautiful and expensive jewelry. Suppose, though, that a piece of gold, newly mined from the earth, and passing through the refiner's fire, cried out in pain that all men hated it. Yet, man cannot use gold in his jewelry, in the form in which it is mined; it lacks the purity, luster, and value. Gold must be tried with fire.

So with God's people. As part of preparing us for heaven, God causes us to hate sin more and more, and to see that this life offers no lasting joys. He uses trials to do this. When at last He is finished purifying us, we come forth as gold (Job 23:10). We are made perfect, sinless, in heaven!

The trials of God's children always reveal that our faith is genuine, and they always make our faith stronger. In this way, God uses trials for our good (Romans 8:28).

### What is a godly response to my trials?

God's children must bear the trials He sends in a godly way.

We may not rebel against God who sends them. We may not accuse Him of being unfair. We must be as Job, who was sorely tried, and of whom we read: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22).

Rather, we are to rejoice - a hard word, but this is what James 1:2 teaches us: "count it all joy." Rejoice, because of what God is doing in us!

We are to pray - indeed, we learn to pray fervently in our trials.

We are to serve God in our trials - He placed us in them, to show the power of His grace to keep us faithful to Him even in trials.

This we can do, in the power of Jesus Christ, who makes us strong!

## **Pastor Douglas Kuiper**

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . .*

*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:35, 37-39