

Rejoice in Tribulations

What is the Purpose of Hardships?

Romans 5:3-5 Living Bible (TLB)

3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient. 4 And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady. 5 Then, when that happens, we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens and know that all is well, for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

Introduction

Reflecting on the divine purpose in hardship can help us respond to trials in a God-honoring way as we seek to understand the lessons He wants us to learn through life's dark moments.

1- Appears Contradictory

Matthew 5:10–12

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

2- What is Tribulation?

Pressure; distress, affliction

“distress that is brought about by outward circumstances”

“Distress: straits...anxiety, burden of heart”

3- Applied to...

a- Childbirth,

John 16:21 Living Bible (TLB)

21 It will be the same joy as that of a woman in labor when her child is born—her anguish gives place to rapturous joy and the pain is forgotten.

b-War, Matthew 24:20-21 (Lk. 21:23-24)

- **Matthew 24:20-21 Living Bible (TLB)**

20 And pray that your flight will not be in winter, or on the Sabbath.[a] 21 For there will be persecution such as the world has never

before seen in all its history and will never see again.

- **Luke 21:23-24 Living Bible (TLB)**

23 Woe to expectant mothers in those days, and those with tiny babies. For there will be great distress upon this nation[a] and wrath upon this people. 24 They will be brutally killed by enemy weapons, or sent away as exiles and captives to all the nations of the world; and Jerusalem shall be conquered and trampled down by the Gentiles until the period of Gentile triumph ends in God's good time.

c- Divine retribution,

2 Thessalonians 1:6 Living Bible (TLB)

6 while at the same time he is preparing judgment and punishment for those who are hurting you.

1-Tribulations Are...

- **a- Common to all Christians,**

John 16:33 Living Bible (TLB)

33 I have told you all this so that you will have peace of heart and mind. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows; but cheer up, for I have overcome the world."

- **b- Because of the word of God**

Mark 4:16-17 Living Bible (TLB)

16 The rocky soil represents the hearts of those who hear the message with joy, 17 but, like young plants in such soil, their roots don't go very deep, and though at first they get along fine, as soon as persecution begins, they wilt.

- c- External forces of persecution

Acts 20:23 Living Bible (TLB)

23 except that the Holy Spirit has told me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead.

- d- Burdens of the heart,

2 Corinthians 2:4 Living Bible (TLB)

4 Oh, how I hated to write that letter! It almost broke my heart, and I tell you honestly that I cried over it. I didn't want to hurt you, but I had to show you how very much I loved you and cared about what was happening to you.

- e- Not overwhelming,

Acts 14:22 Living Bible (TLB)

22 where they helped the believers to grow in love for God and each other. They encouraged them to continue in the faith in spite of all the persecution, reminding them that they must enter into the Kingdom of God through many tribulations

Romans 5:2-3 Living Bible (TLB)

²For because of our faith, he has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to actually becoming all that God has had in mind for us to be.³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient.

I-How Do We Rejoice In Tribulations?

a- Develop the spirit that counts it an honor to suffer for Christ's sake,

Acts 5:41 Living Bible (TLB) 41 They left the Council chamber rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer dishonor for his name.

cf. Paul, who shared in Christ's suffering on behalf of the church,

Colossians 1:24 Living Bible (TLB)

24 But part of my work is to suffer for you; and I am glad, for I am helping to finish up the remainder of Christ's sufferings for his body, the Church.

Philippians 3:10 Living Bible (TLB)

10 Now I have given up everything else—I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought him back to life again, and to find out what it means to suffer and to die with him.

1 Peter 4:12-13 Living Bible (TLB)

12 Dear friends, don't be bewildered or surprised when you go through the fiery trials ahead, for this is no strange, unusual thing that is going to happen to you. 13 Instead, be really glad—because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterwards you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory in that coming day when it will be displayed.

b-Worthy of God's presence,

1 Peter 4:14 Living Bible (TLB)

14 Be happy if you are cursed and insulted for being a Christian, for when that happens the Spirit of God will come upon you with great glory.

c- Hold Christ's suffering before us and rejoice that we have a part in it with Him

2- How Do We Rejoice In Tribulations?

a- Recognize that suffering prepares us for greater usefulness in the kingdom,

Romans 5:3-4 Living Bible (TLB)

3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient. 4 And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady.

b-Patience that matures faith,

James 1:2-4 Living Bible (TLB)

2 Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, 3 for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.

Romans 12:12 Living Bible (TLB)

12 Be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble, and prayerful always.

c- Church is strengthened when each of us rejoice in tribulation

Romans 5:3-4 Living Bible (TLB)

3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient. 4 And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady.

d- Perseverance...Approved Character...Hope

e-Rejoice in spiritual blessings,

2 Corinthians 12:10 Living Bible (TLB)

10 Since I know it is all for Christ's good, I am quite happy about "the thorn," and about insults and hardships, persecutions and difficulties; for when I am weak, then I am strong—the less I have, the more I depend on him.

3-How Do We Rejoice In Tribulations?

a- Tribulations help us long for heaven with greater intensity

1-Rejoice in heavenly reward,

Matthew 5:12 Living Bible (TLB)

12 Be *happy* about it! Be *very glad!* for a *tremendous reward* awaits you up in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted too

b- Heaven becomes more real and impactful in our lives,

1 Peter 1:6-7 Living Bible (TLB)

6 So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though the going is rough for a while down here.

7 These trials are only to test your faith, to see whether or not it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests gold and purifies it—and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold; so if your faith remains strong after being tried in the test tube of fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day of his return.

1 Peter 4:12-13 Living Bible (TLB)

12 Dear friends, don't be bewildered or surprised when you go through the fiery trials ahead, for this is no strange, unusual thing that is going to happen to you. 13 Instead, be really glad—because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterwards you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory in that coming day when it will be displayed.

c-Do not faint – Be renewed,

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Living Bible (TLB)

16 That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our inner strength in the Lord is growing every day. 17 These troubles and sufferings of ours are, after all, quite small and won't last very long. Yet this short time of distress will result in God's richest blessing upon us forever and ever! 18 So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.

4- How Do We Rejoice In Tribulations?

a-Remember that God's grace is sufficient to sustain us,

Romans 5:2 Living Bible (TLB)

2 For because of our faith, he has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to actually becoming all that God has had in mind for us to be.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 Living Bible (TLB)

9 Each time he said, "No. But I am with you; that is all you need. My power shows up best in weak people." Now I am glad to boast about how weak I am; I am glad to be a living demonstration of Christ's power, instead of showing off my own power and abilities. 10 Since I know it is all for Christ's good, I am quite happy about "the thorn," and about insults and hardships, persecutions and difficulties; for when I am weak, then I am strong—the less I have, the more I depend on him.

b- Stand on solid ground of faith

Hebrews 11:1 Living Bible (TLB)

11 What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead.

c- Tribulations cannot separate us from Christ's love...Victors in Christ,

Romans 8:35-37 Living Bible (TLB)

35 Who then can ever keep Christ's love from us? When we have trouble or calamity, when we are hunted down or destroyed, is it because he doesn't love us anymore? And if we are hungry or penniless or in danger or threatened with death, has God deserted us?

36 No, for the Scriptures tell us that for his sake we must be ready to face death at every moment of the day—we are like sheep awaiting slaughter; 37 but despite all this, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us enough to die for us.

d- Do not fear because God knows and does not forsake His faithful ones,

Revelation 2:9-10 Living Bible (TLB)

9 “I know how much you suffer for the Lord, and I know all about your poverty (but you have heavenly riches!). I know the slander of those opposing you, who say that they are Jews—the children of God—but they aren’t, for they support the cause of Satan. 10 Stop being afraid of what you are about to suffer—for the devil will soon throw some of you into prison to test you. You will be persecuted for ‘ten days.’ Remain faithful even when facing death and I will give you the crown of life—an unending, glorious future.

5- Rejoice in Tribulations

a- Rejoicing in tribulations is more than rhetoric or a trite expression

1-We share in the suffering of Christ,

Revelation 1:9 Living Bible (TLB)

9 It is I, your brother John, a fellow sufferer for the Lord’s sake, who am writing this letter to you. I, too, have shared the patience Jesus gives, and we shall share his Kingdom!

I was on the island of Patmos, exiled there for preaching the Word of God and for telling what I knew about Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:10 Living Bible (TLB)

10 Now I have given up everything else—I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought him back to life again, and to find out what it means to suffer and to die with him.

b-We will glory in this!

1-Our approach to living for Christ, because “all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”

2 Timothy 3:12 Living Bible (TLB)

12 Yes, and those who decide to please Christ Jesus by living godly lives will suffer at the hands of those who hate him.

CLOSING

What is the Purpose of Hardships?

Reflecting on the divine purpose in hardship can help us respond to trials in a God-honoring way as we seek to understand the lessons He wants us to learn through life's dark moments.