

Trials

Why do Christians have to go through difficulties and problems in life?

1 Pet 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, (7) 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, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

The trials of life serve the purpose of testing and purifying our faith, just like gold is purified by heating it and removing the impurities.

Is it possible to avoid these trials?

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

It isn't possible to avoid the trials of life.

Although Christians are often very good at claiming the promises of God, one promise that is rarely, if ever, claimed is Jesus' promise that we would all experience the trials of life.

If these trials are unavoidable, what's the best way to handle them?

James 1:2-5 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, (3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (4) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (5) 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 gives a three-point plan of action when undergoing trials.

First, we need to go against our natural inclinations to give in to anger, fear and despair.

Instead, we are to rejoice; this has nothing to do with our emotions, but is a choice to praise God through difficult circumstances.

Rom 12:12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;

Second, as the test produces patience (perseverance) we need to let it "have its perfect work".

There's no use fighting against it; God is wanting to do a work in our lives during tough times.

Third, we need to ask God for wisdom in how to respond to tough times.

What hazards should I look out for during the trials of life?

Mat 13:21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

Although God wants us to succeed, many stumble and give in during their trials.

How can I avoid stumbling during the trials of life?

Rom 8:35-37 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We

are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” (37) Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Recognise that the ability to overcome during tribulation comes through Christ Himself; He has made us more than conquerors.

What sorts of results can I expect if I come through trials successfully?

Rom 5:3-4 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; (4) and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Successful completion of a trial sets off a chain reaction.

First, God builds into our lives perseverance – stickability.

Perseverance brings about the kind of character development that God is aiming for.

And finally, that character produces hope.

Where can I get the strength I need to come through trials successfully?

2 Cor 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, (4) who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (5) For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

We have to learn to draw our strength from God who is the Source of all comfort and strength.