

How can one rejoice in trials? And furthermore; what is the meaning of rejoice from a biblical standpoint?

Believers should remember that they have a godly inheritance. Should they be dead or alive, they are kept by the power of God—their: body, soul, mind, spirit and reward (1 Pe 1:3-5). Whether Christians are: suffering, being imprisoned, or even being put to death, they can rejoice (v. 6).¹

The natural man cannot count it all joy when he suffers (Jas 1:2). It is only with God's indwelling spirit that one can experience a supernatural peace that passes all understanding (Phil 4:7). God guards the believer's heart and mind during difficult times (Phil 4:7). The Lord told the apostle Paul that his grace was sufficient for him in his suffering (2 Co 12:9). All Christ followers are provided grace for difficult days (Jer 2:13) through various trials (Jas 1:2).² It is not uncommon for Christians to suffer for Jesus (1 Pe 4:12–14). Paul wrote:

We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body (2 Co 4:8–10).

The believer's faith is worth more than gold (v.7). Peter wrote:

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 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, whom having not seen you love (1 Pe 1:6–8).

This lifetime “a little while” as the apostle puts it (Piper), will be like a blink of the eye when compared to the backdrop of eternity (1 Pe 5:10). John Piper said:

“Tests of faith produce steadfastness...they separate the man from the boys, the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tears...All believers will face trials. Not some—all....Those who don't have trials—they aren't even his!”

¹ Be glad with exceeding joy (χαρήτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι). Lit., ye may rejoice exulting. Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Vol. 1, p. 663). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

² *Ye greatly rejoice* (ἀγαλλιᾶσθε). The word is always employed in the New Testament for great or lively joy. See Matt. 5:12; Luke 1:47; 10:21.

For a season (ὀλίγον). More literally and correctly, as Rev., for a little while. Compare ch. 5:10. The word is used nowhere else in the New Testament in this sense.

In heaviness (λυπηθέντες). Lit., having been grieved. Rev., ye have been put to grief.

Through (ἐν). But Rev., better, in; the preposition not being instrumental, but indicating the sphere or environment in which the grief operates.

Manifold (ποικίλοις). Literally the word means variegated. It is used to describe the skin of a leopard, the different-colored veinings of marble, or an embroidered robe; and thence passes into the meaning of changeful, diversified, applied to the changing months or the variations of a strain of music. Peter employs it again, ch. 4:10, of the grace of God, and James of temptations, as here (1:2). Compare πολυποικίλος, manifold, in Eph. 3:10, applied to the wisdom of God. The word gives a vivid picture of the diversity of the trials, emphasizing this idea rather than that of their number, which is left to be inferred. Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Vol. 1, p. 632). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

The bible says that chastening is proof of sonship:

'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.' If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons (Heb 12:5–8).

The bible teaches that the believer's faith triumphs during times of trouble:

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Ro 5:3–5).

Paul knew all about suffering. "No man suffered like the apostle Paul (J. Vernon McGee)." He wrote in 2 Corinthians:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Co 4:17).

God will reward the one who overcomes:

So that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels (2 Th 1:4–7).

The bible refers to trials with various terms: suffering, hardship, difficulty, chastening, discipline, etc. Whatever the believer undergoes, he can trust that 1. God is sovereign and 2. God is good. He collects his children's tears in a bottle (Ps 56:8) and their suffering is never in vain (Ga 3:4). "It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." (Deut 31:8, ESV)."

How one responds in times of trouble matters. The natural man will fall away when tested but true believers will draw near to him:

'Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.' But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul (Heb 10:38–39).

Job knew "when he has tested me, I shall come forth as gold (Jb 23:10, KJV, 2000)." David trusted in Him: As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness (Ps 17:15).

The faithful who wait on him will hear: *Well done, good and faithful servant* (Mt 25:21).