

We Must Go Through Many Tribulations

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

In the book of Acts we read that Paul and Barnabas strengthened the disciples, encouraging them to remain true to the faith, and they taught that we must go through “many tribulations” to enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). These many tribulations or hardships that God has ordained for our lives will drive us to Him in prayer, and they are one way in which He draws us close to Himself for fellowship.

Knowing that we would face many tribulations and hardships, Paul encouraged believers when he wrote: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7).

This peace that Paul mentioned is the kind of peace that only God can give. It is a peace that transcends human reasoning and understanding in that it is not dependent upon the presence of favorable circumstances in our lives. Rather, it is a peace and contentment that God promises to us even in the midst of our troubles, as we bring our requests to Him in prayer, with thanksgiving.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Paul gave us three exhortations. He said that we are to always be joyful; we are to pray continually, and we are to give thanks to God in all of the circumstances of our lives. Our circumstances themselves, and the giving of thanks in the midst of these circumstances, are both God’s will for us. The Scriptures teach us that God is working for our eternal good and glory together

with His Son through everything He allows to affect our lives (Romans 8:28-30), and this is the reason that we are exhorted to be joyful, and thankful, in every circumstance and condition of our lives.

Bringing our prayers to God with thanksgiving is something that can be very difficult for us when we are confronted with trouble and suffering, because we know that our sovereign and omnipotent God could easily have spared us from these painful things, but He has not. Neither did He spare His own Son from the sufferings that He endured (Romans 8:32).

Many of us will question why we should be thankful when we know that God could have prevented our suffering from occurring in the first place. And we will also question why we should be thankful when we know that God could remove our burden at any time, and yet He chooses not to do so.

The reason given to us in the Bible as to why God allows these “many tribulations” to affect our lives, even as we walk in obedience to His word, is perhaps best summarized by Paul’s teaching in Romans 8:17-18. In this passage, Paul revealed that we as the children of God must share in the sufferings of His Son, in order that we may also share in His eternal glory.

God has ordained that each of His children will experience reflections of Jesus’ sufferings in their own lives, becoming in some measure as He was: “A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). Through this share in His sufferings, we will bear fruit to the glory of God and receive a share in Christ’s eternal glory (John 12:24-26, John 16:20-22). When we begin to understand these truths from the word of God, we can begin to understand why we are exhorted to present our requests to Him with thanksgiving for all that He is accomplishing for us, even though the losses, troubles, and hardships that affect our lives (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

For eternity, we have God’s promise of a share in the glory of His Son. For the days of our hard service now, we have His many promises given to us throughout the Scriptures, promises of His peace, help, sustenance, and His all sufficient grace and power for our every weakness and need. All these promises give us hope, comfort, a sure and certain future, and reason for thanksgiving to God, even in the midst of the many tribulations of our present lives here on earth.

