



THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

TESTED TO BE REFINED

Sis. Techie "Soar" M. Rodriguez, Elder-Founder, TLF
October 4, 2023

The word "refined" means cultured, classy, polished or tasteful. Gold is refined in a furnace through the use of intense heat to liquefy it, thus separating the gold from impurities and other metal traces. Isaiah 48: 11 tells us that God tested the Israelites in the "furnace of affliction" which referred to the years of suffering of the Jews. In Deut. 4: 20, Egypt was referred to as the "iron-smelting furnace." In the same way, God allows us to be tested by fire to purify us. He always has a purpose for these trials. Experiencing the refining fire of God is very difficult, but necessary. God allows it for our own good.

1. **There is always a purpose for suffering.** God permits trials to prepare us for His plans and purposes. God wants us to be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (James 1: 2-4).
2. **Times of suffering are times of testing** (Ps. 66: 10). He tests us to see if we will do what He has taught us, if we will remain faithful despite suffering.
3. **God allows trials to test our heart** (Prov. 17:3). He tests us to know what is in our hearts, to see if we are going to obey His ways or not.
4. **Trials are meant to fortify our faith.** God uses our trials to draw us closer to Him and to strengthen our faith. Without faith, we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6).
5. **Trials prove the genuineness of our faith.** Our faith is the real deal if we are able to praise, honor and give glory to God in spite of sufferings (1 Pt. 1: 7). With genuine faith, we become like mirrors reflecting the glory of God (2 Cor. 3: 18).
6. **Testing in life removes all the "dross" in our lives.** God turns up the "heat" to purify us. He desires to purge out impurities in our lives.
7. **The furnace of suffering is a way of testing the genuineness of our relationship with God.** Do we love Him for Who He is or for what He does for us?
8. **Times of testing, trials and suffering build our character.** In the same way that fire refines gold or silver in the smelting process, trials refine our

character. God wants us to grow and become more and more like Christ. He is perfecting our character.

9. **Trials grow our joy in the Lord.** Even in our darkest times, God is with us, guiding and leading us toward the joy we can have, no matter our circumstances. Despite trials, we can still choose joy because we are being made more like Jesus. We also have the everlasting joy of heaven promised to us, and we can look toward it with great hope (1 Pt. 4: 12-13). Sadness and gladness often exist side by side as one of the paradoxes of Christianity.
10. **We are partakers in Christ's suffering** (1Pt.4:13). James 1: 12 tells us that if we persevere under trial and withstand the tests, we shall receive the crown of life. We are victors!
11. **Treat our trials as gifts from God.** Trials are signs of God's love. To be corrected and disciplined by God is never pleasant. However, His discipline is a sign of His deep love for us as His children (Heb. 12: 6-7). We need to pay attention when God corrects us because He is trying to teach us.
12. **Put problems into perspective.** View our trials according to God's viewpoint. When hard times come, we know that God is at work for our good and for His glory (Rom. 8: 28).

What Should We Do In Times of Trials:

1. Confess our bitterness to God. Bitterness is like drinking poison.
2. Give up our demand to know why. Do not try to figure it out.
3. Give God the right to say "No."
4. Use our suffering to minister to others.

CONCLUSION: When we experience testing and suffering, it may not be easy to understand God. Hence, just trust God! He loves us so much and He will never allow these trials to ruin us. Instead, those trials are meant for our betterment.

Reflection:

1. Do you fret or complain when we are suffering?
2. Do you tend to turn away from Him during trials?

Transcriber/Writer: Sis. Te Florentino
Edited by: Sis Jo Advincula
For more Teachings, visit our website:
www.Lordsflock.org/Teachings/Digests
Tags:#suffering, #faith