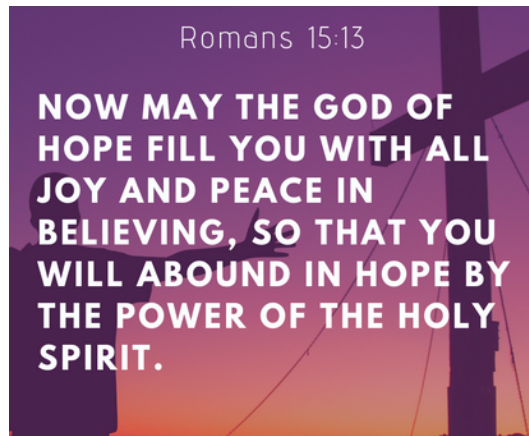


Hope & Joy in Trials & Suffering

READ: 1 Peter 4:12-19 (NIV)



¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

¹³ **But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.**

¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.

¹⁶ However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

¹⁸ And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

¹⁹ So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

James 1:2-4 (NIV)

² **Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,**

³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

REFLECTION: HOW do you find hope and joy in the midst of trials and suffering?

Different types of suffering found in Scripture

- Suffering because we are a part of a fallen creation (Romans 8:18-25).
- Suffering the temporal consequences of personal sin (believers and unbelievers) (Deuteronomy 28:15–30:20; Proverbs 1:20-33; 4:19; 13:15; 15:19; Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 11:27-30.)
- The eternal suffering of separation from God for rejecting Christ (Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15).
- The "involuntary" suffering or discipline at the loving hand of God to enhance our trust and obedience as His children (Job; Hebrews 12:1-13; James 1:1-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7).
- Voluntary suffering in identification with Christ and in living a godly life (John 15:13; Acts 20:33-35; Romans 12:10; 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8-10 [see especially 9:1-27]; Philippians 2:1-4; 3:7-11; Colossians 1:24; 1 Peter 2:12, 18-25; 3:15-17; 4:1, 12-19).

What is the purpose of this "voluntary suffering"?

Christian joy is has two distinct and unique qualities:

1.. Christian joy is...

Happier.com summarizes that joy occurs when these are fulfilled...

Fundamentally Sound, Sure-Fire Top Five Components of Happiness:

- (1) Be in possession of the basics — food, shelter, good health, safety.
- (2) Get enough sleep.
- (3) Have relationships that matter to you.
- (4) Take compassionate care of others and of yourself.
- (5) Have work or an interest that engages you.

What is the LIE about finding true joy in those things?



2.. Christian joy is...

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up.

And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame.

Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

³ Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. Hebrews 12:1-3

What can we learn from Jesus and Peter about experiencing joy as a blessing in the midst of suffering?

- a. It demonstrates that Christ is...

- b. It is part of God's will that we go through suffering as part of our identity with Jesus.

- c. Suffering produces something wonderfully beautiful in us. What is that?

- d. Suffering gives us the ability to detach our desires from this world for something better in the next.

*It is the consciousness of the threefold joy of the Lord,
 His joy in ransoming us,
 His joy in dwelling within us as our Saviour and Power for fruit bearing and
 His joy in possessing us, as His Bride and His delight;
 it is the consciousness of this joy which is our real strength.
 Our joy in Him may be a fluctuating thing: His joy in us knows no change.*
 Hudson Taylor

Respond & Apply: Individual & Small Group Discussion Guide

What are your usual responses when you have to go through suffering of some sort because you love and follow Jesus?

1 Peter 4:19 says, "So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good."

What does it look like for you to daily commit yourself to God?

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and said this about his suffering... "That is why I am suffering here in prison. But I am not ashamed of it, for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return." 2 Timothy 1:12

What did Paul "entrust" to God that was more precious than any suffering he would go through? (note: 2 Timothy 1:8-11)

What are you entrusting to God in your walk with Him right now?

NewDay Envisioning Our Ministry Values

- 1. We are a community that has a passion to serve others.**
- 2. We are a community that longs for deeper life relationships with God and others.**
- 3. We are passionate about investing in children, youth, and families.**
- 4. We are a people who have a desire to be led by and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in everyday life.**

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 (Online giving: <http://www.newdaycov.org/give>)