

Training Tips for Trials

1 Peter 4:12-19

Intro

By way of introduction, would you please open your Bibles to...

1 Peter 1:3-9 (NKJV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 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, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

- [expand — trials will come and they will refine our faith / and enable us to glorify God...]

It is the subject of trials that we come to once again as we turn to the passage that we will be studying this morning...

1 Peter 4:12-19 (NKJV)

12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

4 Training Tips for Trials

#1 — *Expect Trials*

#2 — *Rejoice in Trials*

#3 — *Avoid Self-Inflicted Trials*

#4 — *Trust God in Trials*

Let's move into our first section...

*** Training Tip #1 — Expect Trials ***

12 Beloved,

Peter is reminding believers that they are **beloved** — they are ***beloved by God*** and ***beloved by Peter***...

- This fact is a very important truth to remember — ***especially during trials*** — that as a believer you are loved both ***by God*** and ***by fellow believers***...

Now, to hold on to this truth it is important that you maintain ***consistent fellowship with the Lord*** and ***with fellow believers***...
[expand]

Continuing on in vs 12...

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

*Here we clearly see **Training Tip #1 — Expect Trials**...*

Peter commands believers not to view their trials as **strange**...

do not think it strange — *do not be surprised; do not treat as a stranger...*

- [ex. soldier in a combat zone — he should not think it strange if enemies are shooting at him...]

A.W. Tozer

“People think of the world, not as a battleground, but as a playground. We are not here to fight; we are here to frolic. We are not in a foreign land; we are at home. We are not getting ready to live, but we are already living, and the best we can do is rid ourselves of our inhibitions and our frustrations and live this life to the full.”

Viewing life through this false lens inevitably leads to disappointment...[expand]

- Instead of believing that we can have our best life now, we should expect to encounter trials as we follow Christ...

John 16:33 (NKJV)

“...In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

*Now, Peter warns us in 1 Peter 4:12 that some of the trials that we face will be **fiery trials**...*

fiery trial — *the burning by which metals are roasted and reduced; refiner’s fire...* 🔥

Peter continues in vs 12...

the fiery trial which is to try you,

try — *an attempt to learn the nature or character of something...*

“When God is the One doing the trying, it is for the purpose of proving someone, never for the purpose of causing him to fall...”

- [ex. refining metal to remove impurities / coach training athletes to perform their best...]

[expand — God knows what is in us / and He wants to burn out the impurities that He might conform us to the image of Christ...]

Next Peter writes...

as though some strange thing happened to you;

strange — *foreign; new, unheard of; unknown or unfamiliar...*

- [expand — fiery trials are not foreign to the Christian life / they are normal and expected...]

So, training tip #1 — expect trials, they are a normal part of the Christian experience...

This brings us to...

✳️ Training Tip #2 — Rejoice in Trials ✳️

As we move into verse 13, Peter is continuing on with the same sentence...

13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings,

As believers, we are not to think that our trials are a strange thing — these trials are refining us — and we are to **rejoice** in our trials!...

rejoice — *to be in a state of happiness and well-being...*

- This is radical instruction — rejoicing in our trials is usually the last thing we do in the midst of them...

*And we will see the **why** of this rejoicing in just a moment...*

But for now lets look at the phrase **that you partake of Christ's sufferings...**

partake — *to come into communion or fellowship with, to become a sharer, be made a partner...*

When we suffer for the cause of Christ — we understand a little of what Christ suffered during His public ministry...[expand]

*Next Peter gives the reason **why** we are to rejoice when we partake of Christ's sufferings...*

that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

When we choose to **rejoice** in suffering then we will **walk through the suffering instead of running away from the suffering...**

- [expand on the importance of walking through suffering instead of running away from suffering...]

And when we ***walk through suffering*** we will be **glad with exceeding joy** when Christ's glory is revealed...

For more on this subject, please turn to...

Romans 8:16-18 (NKJV)

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Paul writes something similar in...

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV)

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory...

So, we are to ***rejoice in the midst of trials*** knowing that when we ***suffer for the sake of Christ***, we will ***receive glory from the Lord*** when ***His glory is revealed...***

- [ex. When a team wins a championship, every member of that team — players, coaches, people who work in the team offices, etc receive a part of that glory...{Cowboy super bowl joke}...]

Continuing on in 1 Peter 4 to vs...

14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ,

reproached — *insulted, reviled; assailed with abusive words...*

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

- Please notice that this is another Trinity verse — we have Christ, the Spirit and God all mentioned...[expand]

Now, the imagery that Peter is using is a reference to the glory of God descending upon the Tabernacle of meeting in the wilderness...[expand]

As we move into the last part of vs 14, Peter gives believers a reason to rejoice in the midst of trials because...

On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

When unbelievers revile us because we follow Christ, they are blaspheming Christ — they hate Him and mock His name...

- And though they may do that, as we faithfully endure and continue to follow Christ — we are ***glorifying*** Christ through our obedience...

Those unbelievers are **refusing** to give Christ the glory that He deserves — and as believers we are **choosing** to give Christ the glory that He deserves...

- It is important to understand that every **blasphemer** is a liar — they are saying — in one way or another — that Christ **does not deserve to be honored and praised...**

However, when we choose to continue to follow Christ through trials, we show that we are *the people of the truth...*

- We are *people who tell the truth* — we are lining up with reality — *because Christ is worthy of all of the praise and honor that we can give Him...*

So, training tip #2 — rejoice in trials, knowing that you are glorifying Christ in the trial and He will share His glory with you...

*** Training Tip #3 — Avoid Self-Inflicted Trials ***

*Now, before we move into vs 15, we should be willing to admit that a great number of trials have been brought into our lives **through our own actions...***

- We chose to walk in disobedience and we suffered for it...

As a child I received *many spankings* and I can say confidently that I deserved all of them... 😬

Those were not trials that I had to walk through because I was walking in obedience...

*Instead, those were **self-inflicted trials**...*

And you and I have brought many self-inflicted trials into our lives...

- But we don't have to continue this way — *we can choose to walk in obedience to the Lord and avoid unneeded trials...*

This is the instruction that Peter gives as we move into vs...

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

murderer — *someone who kills another human being without just cause...*

thief — *someone who steals from another...*

evildoer — *general term for someone who does bad things; in this context it refers to one who does what is injurious to the community...*

- This is pretty straightforward — if you choose to become a **murderer**, a **thief** or an **evildoer** then it is likely that you will endure self-inflicted trials...

But then Peter shares something unexpected — in a list with murderers, thieves and evildoers he adds busybodies...

or as a busybody in other people's matters.

Interestingly, the phrase translated **busybody in other people's matters** is one word in the Greek...

“One who takes the supervision of affairs pertaining to others...a meddler in other men's affairs”...

“One who meddles in things that do not concern the person”...

Now, at first glance **busybody** seems like an odd addition to a list that includes **murderers, thieves** and **evildoers**...

- And I would argue that most Christians are not going to slip into murder, thievery and community-wide evil...

But it seems certain that *every believer* has the potential to become a **busybody**...

- And what makes busybodies so dangerous is that they become busybodies with the best intentions — they actually think that they are doing the right thing by interfering in the lives of others...

As we think about this, would you please turn to...

Matthew 7:1-5 (NKJV)

1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.

2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?

5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

- [expand — we should be most concerned with our own sin...]

Now, if we think about it for a moment, Christian community suffers much more damage through **busybodies** than it does through murderers, thieves and evildoers...

- So the lesson is simple — *stay out of other people's affairs...*

Do not invite yourself into the decisions that others are making...

For more on this subject, would you please turn to...

Luke 10:38-42 (NKJV)

38 Now it happened as they went that He [Jesus] entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Now please turn to...

Luke 12:13-14 (NKJV)

13 Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

14 But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?"

One more place to turn...

1 Corinthians 4:1-5 (NKJV)

1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

• [expand — we will each be judged by the Lord Jesus!...]

Now, please understand, when we choose to give other people freedom and refuse to become a busybody in their affairs, we are behaving like the Lord Jesus...

- Think about the tremendous freedom that the Lord Jesus gives us — He lets us do what we choose and when we choose to invite Him into our lives, then He will intervene...

But if we resist the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit then we will be allowed to go our own way...

- So how is it that we rush into situations that we have not been invited into?...

How is it that the Triune God chooses not to intervene unless invited and yet we rush in no matter what the person wants?...

- The reality is that we will greatly simplify *our lives* and *the lives of others* if we simply choose to stop being busybodies...

If we really want to help others then we should *pray for them* and ask the Lord to lead and guide them according to His unfailing wisdom...

If you would, please turn back to 1 Peter 4 as we move into...

* Training Tip #4 — Trust God in Trials *

And as we enter into this final section, I want to make it clear that I believe the fundamental question for the believer is simply this:

“Is God good?”...[expand]

- If we are going to trust God in trials then we must believe that ***He is good — that He wants the best for us and that He is telling us the truth...***

Now, if you are doubting God today then I would suggest rereading the gospels while reminding yourself that in the Lord Jesus “dwells the fulness of the godhead bodily”...[expand]

- If the the Lord Jesus can be trusted then the Triune God can be trusted...

With this in mind, let’s move into vs...

16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian,

As we have already seen — suffering trials — even fiery trials — is not an unusual thing for a believer...

- And what Peter is speaking about in this section is not *self-inflicted trials*...

Instead, Peter is giving instruction on how to respond to the suffering that is *an inevitable part of the believer’s life*...

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed,

Shame is the natural reaction to suffering...

- We suffer and we feel embarrassed and dishonored — we feel sorry for ourselves — and say “**why me?**”...

But Peter — under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit — instructs us not to respond to suffering in this way...

- And this reminds us that we have a choice when we are suffering!...

So, instead of allowing ourselves to wallow in shame — Peter guides us into making a better choice...

but let him glorify God in this matter.

When we are suffering, we should turn our attention toward **honoring, praising** and **trusting** God in the midst of our suffering...[expand]

For an example of this sort of response, please turn to...

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NKJV)

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Back now to 1 Peter 4 as we move into vs...

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Here, Peter is contrasting the *temporary judgment that believers suffer in this world at the hands of unbelievers* with the *eternal judgment that unbelievers will suffer at the hands of God...*

[expand]

- [expand — this life is as close to Hell as believers will get — for believers, the best is yet to come...]

18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

Peter is once again contrasting the end of the believer and the end of the unbeliever by quoting **Proverbs 11:31**...

- And Peter is highlighting *the difficulty with which the believer is delivered through this life* and the *terrible fate that awaits unbelievers...*

To better understand this verse, I think it is helpful to remind ourselves of what the Lord Jesus said in...

Matthew 7:13-14 (NKJV)

13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

This also connects with what we read in...

Acts 14:21-22 (NKJV)

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch,

22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

This brings us to the final verse of our study...

19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

As Peter brings the pieces together in this final verse, we see the utmost importance in trusting God — in trusting that He is good...

Because the difficult truth is that God allows suffering in our lives — even when we are seeking to follow and obey Him...[expand]

- So, when we suffer **according to the will of God** we have a choice to make...

Will we rebel against Him because He has allowed this suffering or will we **commit our souls to Him in doing good?**...

- [ex. Ultimate Example — the Lord Jesus' suffering and death...]

Peter closes vs 19 with the words...

as to a faithful Creator

faithful — *trustworthy, dependable...*

Creator — *the one who made us...*

As believers, we are to fully commit our souls to the Lord in doing good because ***He is the One who made us — He made us for Himself — He wants our ultimate good and we can trust Him...***

This brings us to the conclusion of our study...

Conclusion

And as we close, please allow me to remind you of the Training Tips for Trials that we examined in our study...

#1 — Expect Trials — trials are an inevitable part of a believer's life...

#2 — Rejoice in Trials — because choosing to walk through trials with the Lord leads to future glory...

#3 — Avoid Self-Inflicted Trials — simply walk in obedience to the Lord and take care of your own business...

#4 — Trust God in Trials — remember that the Lord knows best and that He wants the best for you...