

Purpose of Trials

By Santiago Lange



God “promises” us trials, AND he promises to help us in and through our trials. Why does God allow any evil? We do not fully know, but we know that God does allow evil, and Jesus himself was willing to endure it, and he is still enduring it patiently. The Scriptures tell us about a few benefits of trials:

"Suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Rom. 5:3-4).

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:11).

"You may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

In short, we learn things from suffering that we cannot learn from studying. Suffering shapes our character in a way that words cannot fully describe. Even Jesus learned from his sufferings, and we are also called to take up a cross and suffer with him.

"If we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Rom. 8:17).

Trials are not pleasant, but we are comforted by the fact that God is at work in our lives, and he is able to retrieve good from all things. He has the knowledge, and the compassion, to work in our lives for his glorious purpose. We do not always understand what specific lessons or perspectives we are supposed to learn from a particular trial, but the overall aim is always to trust in God. Often, a trial of faith is just that — a trial of faith. In trials, we are to trust God despite our physical circumstances, and by trusting God, we are growing in our faith relationship with him. This is of infinite importance, since in Christ we are everything we can be, and without him we are nothing.

An untried faith is weak. Anyone can persevere when things are well. A proven faith is stronger, and the bond between us and God tightens. God desires a deep personal relationship with his children, a relationship characterized by trust and love. Trials teach us to rely on God for our every need. Whether our trial is health, finances, or relationships, we are to always look to Christ and trust in him. □