



Will It Always Be Smooth Sailing?

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” ~James 1:4

Have you heard something like...

If Jesus loves you dearly ..Christian, then you will never grieve over a loss. You will never have difficulty in this life.. and you will never have really tough days to endure.

I say: Not! But perhaps you too have heard...

Faith filled believer, if Jesus loves you a whole Whole WHOLE bunch, then you will always have a decent job with lots of respect and nice pay checks coming into your bank account regularly.. the sun will always shine.. you will never feel pain... you will never shed tears.. your kids will honor you and you'll never feel deep sorrow inside your heart .. you simply will avoid all suffering while on this planet as you continue to think positive thoughts.

Not!!!

You've heard that sort of teaching right? Yes, you know exactly what I'm talking about.. *all will be absolutely perfect for you with a thick wad of cash in your pocket even ..if we can just confess it and believe right.*

Why do we feel so unloved by God when life goes bad on us? Don't get me wrong... I personally like to think positive thoughts and be realistically practical too—nothing wrong with that. I also love to hear about the cross, suffering and how to endure trials.. how to control my thought-life and how I am to die to my selfish fleshly nature.. I wanna hear more about how to resist the devil during time of temptation, and how to walk in the Spirit without going off on my neighbor in excessive anger while driving down the highway. Man, I wanna and love to hear simple verse by verse Bible teaching that majors on love, prayer, denying self, knowing Jesus intimately and on how to rightly apply all this stuff. How often to we hear about mortifying the works of the old man? We know more about our inner child today! I don't know about you but I need to hear about the stuff that is rare to hear about from the Bible.

I know that God has blessed my socks off before and there have been occasions when He's even healed me before. I'm grateful and filled with joy unspeakable! I enjoy all the goodness and kindnesses of God, but I don't deserve them in this sin-cursed world. Don't ever want to feel that I do! Things go bad on me sometimes too. Together, God and I can handle it.. that's life in the city.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials. ~James 1:2

Our loving God transforms us and makes us like His Son

By using trials and testings until His work is done. ~Sper

All of us were designed and meant for so much more ..in Christ. One day when we reach room temperature here..when we become worm food.. we won't leave home, we'll just go home ..to a perfect environment with God! It'll happen. Trust Him. [Are you ready](#) for that?

But until then, this bogus-environment here is indeed whacked n twisted out of shape ..due to all our wrongdoings. Hey, I won't blame my situation and deeds on my environment or on my parents. Why are so many playin' the victim to excuse themselves? I've blown it before and it was 100% my fault, so I am partly to blame for this cumulative environment weirdness around us.

But perhaps you've heard that word-faith TV jive about God's love that is proved by the perfection He puts in your life here on earth now and that somehow you don't have enough faith if things are not peachy yet? Have you heard about lining up your confession to see all become flawless here? It's flat-out erroneous! **God loves you regardless and I want to encourage you in His love!**

Have you felt really bad lately because God doesn't seem to answer your prayers the way you want.. when you want? Does it feel like He is late? Have you felt forsaken, ignored, abandoned, uncared for by God ..or unloved, because of all those harsh difficulties in your life that haven't gone away though you've tried so hard to do what is right? Have you felt like God is cruel cuz leaders or other people have been that way? He ain't! **God is good and fair!**

Isn't believing that everything in our lives is suppose to be nothing but "smooth sailing" all the time ..the very reason why so many people end up so discouraged or mad at God and then end up ditching Him and bailing out from their church? **Don't ditch God; He agapes (loves) you dearly in spite of what has been playing out before you.**

When ya get hurt you can either go closer to Jesus or farther away from Him.. you can get closer to healthy Christians in a sound Bible teaching church or you can say no to the Spirit and isolate yourself away from them. Hey, go closer! Don't wait for a sign or a prophecy or a dream or an attractive date to take you there young man!

Now, if you are in a dead or a spiritually anemic church with a worldly, hyper-religious or carnal pastor who is not open to the truth on the other hand.. then ditch that church and go look for a healthy one.. until you find it! Why waste your years

trying to resuscitate a dead body that God wants you away from ..before you start to decay? Yup, you become like those closest to you, so get with the wise and on-fire Christians and limit your time with the dead people and carnal Christians.

And when fierce storms, trials and tests come into your life, Christian, please know that God is so there for you and deeply ..intensely cares! He ain't passive; He is indeed working. Christ basically said He'd build His Kingdom and no dweeb from the pit would block Him in this good work.. nothing nowhere would impede Him in this! You remember how Jesus suffered and was rejected—He told some Jews who were out to murder Him, ***“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working”*** (Jn. 5:17). Did Jesus doubt the Father's love for him when He was hurting? No! And...

God's love for His Son was never a shield to keep Him from Calvary's cross; God's love for His children demands that we yield to trials that burn out the dross. ~Gustafson

Listen believer, your afflictions have also been working for you in a sense.

Check it out; **Paul suffered a lot but never doubted the love that God had for him.** He said, “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ***For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*** while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Cor. 4:16-18, nkjv emphasis mine).

Of course I think that we each should have and express biblical faith during and apart from all hard times ..as we continue to walk in the Spirit. And the Bible is blunt with us saying that, ***“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God”*** (Acts 14:22, nkjv).

Paul said, ***“You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews..”*** (Acts 20:18-19).

He also went on to describe this sort of hardship to those in Thessalonica explaining, ***“For our Gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth..”*** (1Thess. 1:5-8, nasb).

Pete agreed with Paul saying, ***“For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully”*** (1 Pet. 2:19). It was said as if suffering was a normal part of the Christian experience. Do you still feel like things are out of control? Well...

God chooses what we go through; we choose how we go through it. ~Anon

The next time you face a trial of some kind, make friends with it and allow God to use the situation to make you more like Jesus. ~Joanie Yoder

Personally, I hope that you beat all the odds and will enjoy a long trouble-free life, with health and perpetual prosperity for all your smart labors of love ..that meet people's real needs. I really do. Many Christians expect perpetual blessing and ease and when blessed, it just stops with them. When God blesses us, He wants us to thank Him but He also has others in mind. The blessings of God should never terminate upon the recipient. Spread the love and Good News!

Jesus commanded His disciples to ***"..go preach, saying, 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give"*** (Matt. 10:8). Livin' to wisely give rather than to merely be out on the take ..as some Christians and even some preachers have been on the take.. will be much better for us.

Yup, instead of having.. like so many today.. feelings of entitlement and graspyness, let's be different and work hard to bless other people when we can. Why bring on your own level of poverty for merely existing in the Western world by being lazy? Lets remember the work ethic of that great generation .. a generation that was always ready to lend a hand to help another.. a generation that is now passing off the scene but made this nation so prosperous. Why choose to be selfish and let the prosperity they fought and worked so hard to give this country (while wrestling with their own personal problems..) become a curse of sorts and merely go to feeding a covetous spirit within us?

The Bible tells us that if we don't work we shouldn't eat. it says, ***"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's"*** (Ex. 20:17). It is written, ***"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's"*** (Deut. 5:21). Forced wealth distribution (other's wealth) is not biblical at all!

We are so blessed already, but do we ever stop to say *thank you Lord?* What have we become as a nation? Why are we so graspy, greedy and inverted? Why are we so focused on the Government to replace the role of our real Provider, the Jesus of the Bible?

Did you know that more than half of American Christians believes that they *"never have enough money to buy what they need."* I'm not talking about those who have recently lost their jobs here. And approximately two in five evangelicals *"deny the possibility that pain or suffering could be a means of becoming a better, more mature individual."* For real! Check it out; three out of ten Christians agreed that *"nothing in life is more important than having fun and being happy."* Why are we such friends with this evil world system? Why do we aggressively seek fun so much? Why do we allow Hollywood's perverse, base, sex-monger attitudes to influence us downwards? How did we become such pleasure and entertainment seekers ahead of all else? Are trials and suffering things to avoid at any cost? Now way! Where *in the world* did we get all that jive from?

News Flash Everybody!

* Statistics show that real Christians have about as many health issues as anybody on their block.. as many work issues, and family issues as anyone as well (see Ps. 73:1-16). It's time to face the facts rather than fight all problems off by simply going deeper in debt.

* Even if it were true that our vertical faith was some kind of sham as secular thinkers say, what believer would regret having been a Christian at the end? None that I know. It's because of all the cool ways our life on earth has been totally enriched by serving Jesus (see Gal 5:22-23). Man, I just celebrated my 27th wedding anniversary yesterday and it's because of God's love and His grace, not because of my intelligence! I have a lot to learn about marriage. I've made mistakes but the Lord has helped me. People in the world are breaking up daily (it's so sad to see the current stats on divorce). It's so terrible that the love of many is waxing cold ..that hearts are getting harder.. but Christ can help those people as well. Paul said, ***"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"*** (1 Cor 15:19). Why? He knew that the church has irrefutable evidence that Jesus is alive and that what He said was all true! We have hope for a live beyond the grave.

* In spite of what happens during our earthly existence here, total well-being in the life to come ..while we rejoice with full-tilt-worship of Jesus in close friendship with the Father.. will soon be all that matters to us (see Ps. 73:3-5, 13-14, nlt).

* Even though there have been times during my walk with the Lord where a few church folk have gone sideways on me or gotten mean or weird ..or worse yet, when I have really let not only God down.. but myself down as well (..man, it can be so radically embarrassing when I've flesh-out thinking only of myself ahead of others). But I still can quickly find encouragement because Jesus remains so steady and loyal and quick to forgive when I/we turn. In fact the Bible affirms this saying, ***"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself"*** (2 Tim. 2:13). That's why I wanna be quick to run to Him.. to confess and repent.. to keep growing. When I remember how Christ really is, I then forget about blowing it all off ..ya know.. this walk of faith with the Lord.. and I'm much more inclined to run my entire race with patience forgetting what's behind and pressing on 'til the end. Perhaps you've blow it before too. Well check out how Pete let himself and God down and then how he got back up on is feet again to follow the Lord all the way home (see Lk. 22:55-62).

* Even if we aren't better than others (due to our excellent choices and moral determination), we are still way better off than others outside of Christ, because we have entrusted ourselves to the only One who didn't seek pleasure first, but rather suffered, died, and rose again from the grave for our full rescue (see Rom. 7:14-8:1). Yup, He did it for you too so whatcha gunna do 'bout it?

Having all the Bible answers upstairs would be great for us (God does. Hey, I'm still a learner in this area—got a lot to dig for at times still..) but having those answers ...and all the benefits that God can bless us with as we wisely apply the Word of God.. it still won't make us immune to many everyday pains or issues that unbelievers also have to endure or deal with.

For real! Christian, we aren't home yet. When head-knowledge ain't enough for ya to make your fierce trials go away, Mr Saint, as much as I'd like to see that happen.. there is Jesus and He Himself ..with His loving presence is enough for you. Rest in Him and keep praying in faith inspite of the junk. I like how the psalmist prayed...

Have mercy on me, O Lord! Consider my trouble from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death, that I may tell of all Your praise In the gates of the daughter of Zion. ~Psalm 9:14

Don't let yourself become distracted or choked out by the cares of this world. Please do not worry about tomorrow or put off the good that you can do today. Don't let anyone or anything rob you of your joy in Jesus. Don't fret about health care reform, the public option, the rising political tensions, or the stimulus that is not stimulating.. for tomorrow will bring its own worries with it and God's grace will be there for each of us to then confront our troubles (I'm not saying do nothing about these things or remain silent here). But obey Jesus today! Today's trouble with congress, with rising the price of gasoline and food, with self-willed children, with joblessness, with bills and inflation etc.. it's enough for us together with God to deal with today (see Matthew 6: 19-34). God is still in control and can handle all of these things. Let's do our part and believe!

Stop believing the lies of Mr LuCifer who says *"Hey you, look around at all your problems and know assuredly that God does not love you." ... "You have been ditched by the God who said He was there for you and wouldn't forsake you."*

No, God does love you and you are in His loving presence right now. He is right there next to you waiting for you to call out. And He ain't done with you yet so it's too soon to quit!

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