1 Peter 1:6-9 Persevering Faithfully Through Trials

I read a headline the other day about a famous actor (Billy Crystal) who recently abandoned his faith in God because of some tragedies that have happened to him and his friends.

In a recent interview, this celebrity shared that he no longer talks to or trusts God, explaining that too many tragedies and hardships have happened in the world. This marked a shift from his past beliefs. He previously expressed his faith in God. He even produced an award-winning show which featured his conversations with God.

His change in perspective followed a difficult period that included losing his home in a fire and losing a close personal friend to death.[1]

Sadly, the experience of this celebrity is fairly common. Many people abandon their faith in God because of trials and adversities that they or loved ones experience. They figure that God is not trustworthy if he allows people to suffer hardship, pain, or tragedy.

People like that should read the book of 1 Peter; it's all about retaining your faith in the midst of adversity.

Peter's original readers were suffering for their faith. Peter assures them that they have a great inheritance in heaven, but that does not change the reality of the suffering they were currently enduring.

So Peter is trying to encourage his readers—and us—to continue on in faith in spite of persecution and hardship. We all suffer in various ways, and God expects us to endure faithfully through persecution and adversity. We can endure faithfully if we remember what Peter tells us here.

Notice what Peter says about persevering faithfully through trials.

I. .6a We greatly rejoice in the prospects of eternal salvation.

A. Vs. 5b mentions that salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time.

"wherein" refers back to the salvation that will be revealed in the last time. In spite of our current adversities, we have good reason to greatly rejoice in our future final salvation.

B. We find present joy in thinking about our future, final salvation.

[1] From a Google search, 20 Oct 2026.

App: Eschatology—the biblical teaching about the last times—has significance for today. In times of trial, we can encourage ourselves by thinking about our future in heaven.

But, at the same time, …

II. .6b We grieve over various trials.

Peter has been talking about the remote future—the 2nd Coming of Christ—but now he points to the present time and the difficulties his readers have been experiencing. We rejoice in the prospects of heaven, but we grieve over the adversities we are experiencing right now.

He mentions several things about trials that we should keep in mind.

A. Trials are for the present – "now" (ἄρτι).

We experience our trials and troubles here and now. We can rejoice in our final salvation in heaven, but we still have to deal with our current troubles today. And these trials distress us and challenge our faith right now.

We do not deny that human life is full of tragedy and adversity. All of us will face trials and hardships in life. Adversity is inevitable for most people.

But "now" is temporary; now is not much compared to eternity.

B. .6 Trials are brief, "for a season." Literally "a little, to a small extent" (ὀλίγον).

For a little while, Christians may suffer. But it's only a little while in comparison to eternity. Eternity will make our whole life look like the blink of an eye.

Even if we suffer our whole life long, our trials are temporary, while our inheritance is eternal.

Even terrible persecution is only now, for a little, to a small extent.

Any human affliction, for Christians, viewed from an eternal perspective, is little/small. We may indeed suffer horrifically, but even that is small compared to eternal glorification in heaven.

BTW, what hope do unbelievers have when they suffer trials and adversity? Nothing, only the wish that things will get better before they die.

C. .6 Trials are necessary. "If need be," literally "if it is necessary" (εἰ δέον ἐστίν).

1. Christianity does not teach that believers are exempt from trials and adversities. We are realistic; we know that people suffer.

2. Peter says that some trials are "necessary."

   a) We often do not know why trials are "necessary." E.g., Job did not know why his trials were happening.

   b) We trust that God allows them for some reason. We must believe that God has an adequate moral reason for allowing suffering.

   c) We may never understand why our trials are necessary, but we believe that they fit within God's providence.

3. Often, the people God uses most productively experience the greatest trials.

   Read about any of the great Christian leaders of the past, and you'll find that many if not most of them endured significant trials in their lives. E.g., many of the early missionaries—William Carey, Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor—almost all missionaries experience great trials, suffering, hostility, and death.

   And naturally, …

D. .6 Trials cause "heaviness," (λυπηθέντες—aor mid ptc, concessive[2]), i.e., grief, sadness, distress. Christians can rejoice in hopes of future salvation, but they often grieve under present trials.

1. We don't deny that trials may make us "heavy," i.e., sorrowful, sad, grief-stricken. It is normal to grieve over our trials. We can have a sense of joy in the midst of our sorrows, but we don't pretend that we have no sorrows.

2. We do not grieve as others who have no hope (1 Thes 4:13), but we do grieve.

3. Even Jesus wept over the death of a friend, so it's no shame to be grieved by adversities, trials, and temptations.

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[2] Mark Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 11.

E. .6end Trials may amount to "temptations" (πειρασμός)

1. The word means "something put to the test."

a) A trial may be an occasion to sin, a solicitation to evil.

b) Or a temptation could be any kind of test or adversity; not necessarily a temptation to do evil.

2. It's in the plural here, so these tests/trials are the many kinds of tests that challenge our faithfulness to God or that present an occasion to sin. We find these trials to be very distressing.

F. .6 Trials may be "manifold" (ποικιλος), i.e., various, diverse, or of different kinds. Trials and temptations can come from many different sources and directions. Trials may be unexpected and unusual.

Virtually everybody at some point in life will be grieved because of various kinds of trials, temptations, and adversities. That is the nature of human existence. The world is broken; we are broken.

App: I assume that some of us here today are grieving over various trials. Even if we are not suffering, some of our loved ones are. We probably know people who are grieving because of adversity. E.g., the Markle family. We should not expect Christians to be exempt from suffering.

But these trials and temptations give us an opportunity…

III. .7a We prove our faith by persevering through trials.

A. Trials are an occasion to prove our faith.

1. The word "trial" (τὸ δοκίμιον)

a) as a verb, the word describes the testing of metal,

b) or it can refer, as a noun, to metal that has been found to be genuine through the testing process.

c) So the trial results in something that is "tested and approved, refined and genuine."

2. Thus, the word describes that which emerges authenticated from testing.[3] So this is proven faith, faith that endures through the testing of trials.

3. If the faith endures through the trials, then the faith is genuine.

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[3] Mark Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 12.

App: Sadly, the faith of many people does not withstand the testing of trials. Many people renounce/abandon the faith under the pressures of adversity. E.g., that celebrity that I mentioned

Mr 4:19 *And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.*

Many people expect that God is going to prevent trials or shield them from adversity; and when that does not happen, they become angry and resentful. "If God does not treat me the way that I want to be treated, then I'm no longer going to believe in God."

Good thing Job did not think that way.

Job 13:15 *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: …*

Persevering through the trials and adversities of life is a way of demonstrating that our faith is genuine. Genuine faith perseveres through the trials of life.

4. .7b Proven faith is more valuable than gold.

You remove the impurities in gold by subjecting it to fire. Likewise, you remove the impurities in Christians by subjecting them to fiery trials.

Quote: Trials do to faith what fire does to gold. They purify it and reveal its true value and genuineness.[4]

a) .7 The words "more precious" (πολυ τιμότερον) actually refers to the trial/test rather than to "faith." Because the trial proves or authenticates your faith, it is "more precious than gold."

App: Most of us have trouble seeing the value in suffering. And the idea that suffering is "more valuable than gold" is hard to understand.

But if God is using the trial to purify us, then the trial is valuable.

[4] Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Pe 1:7.

E.g., exercise and self-discipline—not fun, can be hard and uncomfortable, even painful, yet the results are good. "No pain, no gain."

Romans 5:3–4 … *we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

b) So Peter is affirming that his readers have been through the fires of adversity, but those adversities have served to prove the genuineness of their faith.

App: Likewise in our lives, the trials of life are a purification process that causes our sins to rise to the surface. Trials can purify our lives by clearly displaying our sins and failures. And we should get rid of those impurities that rise to the surface during times of trials.

It's often during trials/adversities that the true nature of our faith—or lack of it—comes out/is exposed. It's easy to have faith when everything is going well. It's not so easy to have faith when life is falling apart. It's easy to abandon the faith when tempted by the things of this world.

So the trials of life are precious in that they *prove* the sincerity of our faith and they *purify* us from sin. That's what they do if we retain our confidence and hope in God through the trials of life.

B. .7end Proven faith results in "praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

1. The "appearing" (ἀποκάλυψις) of Jesus Christ refers to his 2nd Coming. The word means "revelation, uncovering."

2. When Christ returns, we'll recognize the value of the trials we've endured.

a) I don't think he means that the trial *itself* was valuable. Some trials we endure seem to have no benefit to anyone; they are completely negative.

b) But the outcome/results of the trial, if we endure it with our faith intact, will result in praise, honor, and glory. The trial was beneficial in that it proved that our faith was genuine and purified us from sin.

c) Christ will greatly honor those who have faithfully endured the trials of life. Faithful endurance will result in the faithful believer experiencing praise, honor, and glory when Jesus returns.

3. So this is another motivation to remain faithful under trials—when Christ returns, he will reward his faithful followers with praise, honor, and glory because they endured faithfully through the trials and tribulations of life.

And if we endure faithfully…

IV. .8-9 We receive the "end" of our faith in spite of trials.

A. .8 Faith is not based on sight.

1. Peter states twice here that the faith of his audience is not based on sight.

a) They had become Christians through the preaching of the apostles, not because they had actually seen Jesus.

b) They had accepted the Gospel message by faith, not by sight.

App: This is the normal situation for most believers. We have not seen Jesus with our own eyes, yet we still believe.

2 Cor 5:7 *We walk by faith and not by sight.*

John 20:29 *Jesus said… "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

2. Love of God is not based on sight.

These people heard and believed the message about Jesus. They loved Jesus based on what Peter and others taught about him.

B. .8b Faith results in joy – "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"

1. It's hard to be filled with unspeakable joy and glory while we are experiencing hardships and trials.

2. Still, because of the promise of salvation (vss. 1-3), we can rejoice in spite of our adversities.

Quote: [Our] faith enables [us] to pass beyond [our] present sufferings to the joy which belongs to the [future] glories.[5]

That's how we can encourage ourselves during our trials—focus on Christ and the blessings of our final salvation.

And that salvation comes to us by faith…

C. .9 Faith grants "salvation."

1. This salvation is a present reality. "Receiving" (κομίζω) is in the present tense—you are right now receiving it (pres mid ptc).

2. This salvation is the "end" (τέλος) of your faith. The "end" here is the result of faith—the outcome of faith in Christ is salvation.

   Note that he states that faith causes the soul to be saved. He does not include any works in the process of salvation, only faith. That's one reason we believe in salvation by faith alone.

   Eph 2:8-9

3. .9end This salvation pertains to the soul.

   a) The soul is the entire self, both body and soul, the entire person. So the reference here is to the salvation of the person altogether.

   b) Final salvation pertains to the whole believer, not just his soul.

      (1) The body will be raised and glorified at the resurrection.

      (2) The glorified body will be reunited with the soul, and that will be a permanent condition.

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[5] J.H.A. Hart, "The First Epistle General of Peter," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament: Commentary*, vol. 5 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 45.

c) So the salvation that we experience right now is not the final outcome. Our salvation is not finished yet. During this life, we will continue to suffer distress from "manifold temptations" – various kinds of trials. These temptations and trials are temporary and sometimes necessary.

d) Eventually, Jesus will return and will usher in the eternal state—the new heavens and the new earth. That's when we will experience final and full salvation.

e) Meditating on that fact brings us "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (vs 8b).

It's sad to read about celebrities or others who abandon their faith because of personal adversity. It would be nice if belief in God would exempt us from trials, tribulations, pain, and suffering. But read the book of Job. Read 1 Peter. Even godly Christian people grieve because of various trials.

As we endure our trials and temptations here and now, we have good reason to rejoice in spite of our circumstances. We know that God is with us through our trials. We have a confident expectation of the 2nd Coming of Christ, his coming kingdom, the eternal state, and our final glorification.

As we endure our trials faithfully, the experience *proves* the validity of our faith and *purifies* us from sin. If need be, for now, for a little while, we are suffering, but that distress is temporary. If we can still rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory in spite of our trials, it demonstrates that our faith is real.