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Trials and the Coronavirus - Lessons We Need to Learn



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #164 ~

The coronavirus is very small, and yet has resulted in a very big trial that's affecting millions of people around the world. God wants to use this trial, or any trial for that matter, to train His children. Now that we live in the end-times, we will encounter *"birth pain"* trials, like this coronavirus plague, and for many Christians in the future, the trial of *"great tribulation."* That's why you need to understand the nature and purpose of trials, for they are one of God's means to help you be a growing, mature, and fruitful Christian.

What is a trial? It's a difficulty, a pressure, a problem, an affliction, a

test from God (James 1:3), a humbling circumstance (James 1:9). It can be internal or external in nature. It can be physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, or any combination of these. Trials are hard, painful, unpleasant and distressing. The Bible passage that best explains what God wants you to learn about trials, in my opinion, is 1 Peter 1:3-9. Starting at verse 6, let's see what it says:

1. God says you have trials *"now"* which means you only go through trials during your life on earth. Jesus told the disciples, *"In this world you have tribulation"* (John 16:33). Paul said, *"We must go through many tribulations to enter the kingdom of God"* (Acts 14:22). Being saved doesn't mean you will have no problems, that life is a bed of roses. All of you can testify to the fact that you have had trials. And when you leave this earth and are in heaven, then all your trials will be over, forever gone. Amen!!! Rev. 7:15-17, 21:3-4

2. God says trials last only *"a little while."* Some trials, humanly speaking, are very short, lasting an hour or two, or a month or two. Some are longer, lasting for many years. But what you need to know is that your entire life, in view of all eternity, is very short, for *"You are just a vapor that appears for a little while"* (James 4:14). Therefore, your earthly trials will not last very long, are only *"momentary troubles."* 2 Cor. 4:17

3. God says trials are *"necessary."* God is not careless, unthinking or unloving. He is all-loving, all-wise and knows exactly what He is doing in your life. Indeed, the trials you go through are personally planned and designed by God for you, and are necessary, are some of His primary tools to help you spiritually grow up and become a mature Christian.

4. God says we are *"distressed"* by trials and, as other translations say, result in grief or sorrow. Trials are hard, painful, and can be extremely wearing on your body and soul. In 2 Cor. 1:8-9, Paul describes how he and Timothy felt when they were going through a trial – *"We were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed we had the sentence of death within ourselves."* Have you ever felt this way? Some of your trials will be the most difficult and distressing experiences you will ever go through.

5. God says there are *"various"* trials, which means there are all kinds of trials. There are job trials, financial trials, family trials, marriage trials, school trials, relational trials, church trials, health trials, weather trials, car trials, etc. There are personal trials, trials unique to you. In the Bible we read about Joseph being sold by his brothers, Job physically suffering, Moses leading the unruly Jews, David being chased by Saul, Jesus being punished for our sins, and Paul being in jail. Then there's this unique coronavirus trial, unlike anything we have ever experienced, designed by our Father to teach us lessons we need to learn.

But why do we have trials? Because your Father knows best, knows that trials are necessary for your Christian life. Here are some of the main reasons why you go through trials:

1. It's for your faith (1 Peter 1:7). Having faith, which means you are trusting God and His word, is more valuable than all the money in the world. God gives you trials so your faith, your reliance on Him, grows and gets stronger. When you continue to trust God as you go through a trial, then you are persevering, are patiently enduring. Rom. 5:3-4, James 1:2-3

2. It's so you grow in your love for God (1 Peter 1:8, James 1:12, Deut. 13:4). As a Christian, you love God, which is the most important thing you are to do. But the trials you go through will test your love for God, and will result in you loving Him all the more.

3. It's so you grow in hope. 1 Peter 1:3-4 gives you the big picture of your salvation, that you were born again in the past, have a living hope in the present, and will realize this hope in the future. You need hope, you need to see the light at the end of the tunnel when you have no trials, when everything will be perfect, and you will be blessed in heaven. Fix your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus is revealed (1 Pet. 1:13) for then you will see Him, your salvation will be complete, and you will receive a brand-new body. 1 John 3:2

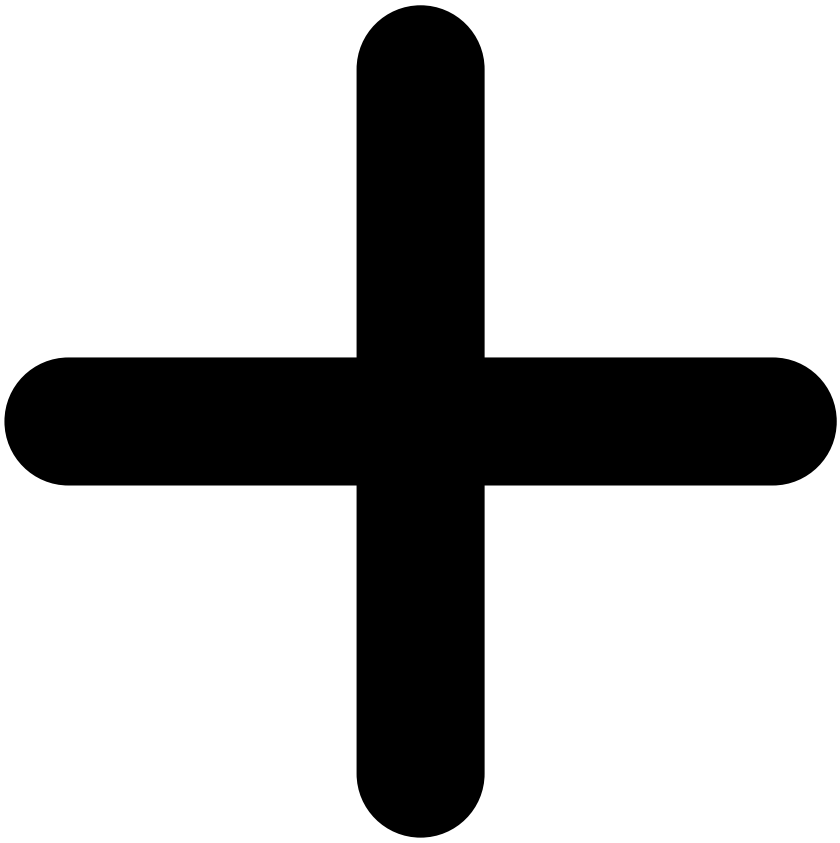
4. It's for the salvation of your soul, for your spiritual growth (1 Pet. 1:9). Besides faith, hope and love, God tells us other essential ingredients that we need to be mature and fruitful:
– You need God's grace. Going through trials reveals your spiritual weakness and your need for God's grace and power so you can, in a Christ-like way, persevere and get through them. *"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."* 2 Cor. 12:9
– You need to obey God. Trials are designed to teach you to obey God, to keep His word. *"Before I was afflicted, I went astray but now I keep Your word."* Ps. 119:67, 71
– You need to be holy. God gives you trials to teach you not to sin, to do what is right, to be holy. *"He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness."* Heb. 12:4-11
– You need to be comforted. Our lives are about others, and the comfort you receive from God when you go through trials is to be shared with others who are going through trials. *"... who comforts us in all our affliction so we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."* 2 Cor. 1:3-11
– You are to rejoice. Twice you are told to greatly rejoice (1 Pet. 1:6,

8), which means it's very important. As you understand the past, present and future of your Christian life, as you see how your trials are an important part of God's work in you, then you will greatly rejoice – you will be a glad-hearted, spiritually-happy Christian. James 1:2, Rom. 5:3-5

5. It is so Christ lives in you. As a Christian, your life is not about you, but about Jesus Christ living in you. God gives trials so you turn to Him and trust Him. When you do this, then the Holy Spirit works in you, and Christ is revealed in and through your life. *"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves... we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh"* (2 Cor. 4:7, 11). When you encounter a trial, remember that it's not about you, but about Christ being manifested through your life. Gal. 2:20, Phil. 1:21

God is your teacher, and you are His student. Be a good student and a fast learner, and grow from the trials God so lovingly and wisely gives you. At this present time, might God help you go through this coronavirus trial gracefully, obediently, lovingly, hope-fully, and joyfully. And for many of us, our Father is training us for the future, for the tough times we will face in the last years leading up to Christ's return to rapture the church. *"Blessed be the Lord, my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer."* Psalm 144:1-2

P.S. Trials are such an important part of our lives, and we must see God behind the trial, in that He is sovereign and wants to teach us through them. Here is a helpful post on trials – "Christians Will Go Through Great Tribulation." Here is a comprehensive article on this subject – "A Biblical Perspective on the Trials of Life."



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