

# Understanding Suffering & Affliction

By Bill Scheidler

Some of the words that are part of the Christian life that are not the most exciting of words include affliction, suffering, persecution.

## I. The victorious Christian life includes suffering and affliction.

A. There are several words that are associated with the concept of affliction.

1. These words include some of the following:

- Affliction
- Adversity
- Chastening
- Distress
- Opposition
- Persecution
- Pressure
- Purging
- Suffering
- Testing
- Tribulation
- Trials
- Trouble

2. None of these words minister very well to the feeling or emotional side of our lives (Ps. 32:4a).

*For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me...*

3. All of these words can be summarized with one phrase, “the dealings of God” (Heb. 12:7).

It is God dealing with us as sons and daughters.

*If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*

B. There are different sources from which trials and tribulations may come.

1. They can come as a direct attack from the devil and his agents (Rev. 2:10).
2. They can come from other people who seek us harm (Acts 20:19).
3. They can come as a result of our own bad choices and decisions (Ps. 107:17).
4. They can come as part of God’s agenda for our lives (Pro. 3:11-12).

*My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.*

C. There are several passages of scripture that promise affliction as a part of our lives as Christians.

1. Hebrews 12:3-11

*For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

2. Hebrews 10:32-36, NLT

*Don't ever forget those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering. Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail. When all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew you had better things waiting for you in eternity. Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord, no matter what happens. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.*

3. I Peter 4:12-16

*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.*

Problems do not indicate that you are out of the will of God (I Pet. 4:19).

*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. Psalm 34:19

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.*

5. I Thessalonians 3:1-3

*Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.*

1. John 16:33

*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

7. Acts 14:21-22

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

## **II. There is a purpose for the dealings of God.**

It is much easier to go through trials when we understand why we are going through them.

“Adversity can be our greatest motivation for spiritual growth or our deadliest means of discouragement. The difference depends on our understanding of God’s purposes through adversity.” –Bill Gothard, Alumni Supplement Volume 7, 1981, pg. 3

### **A. We need the dealings of God in our life.**

1. We need the dealings of God because we have not arrived at perfection (Phil. 1:6, Amp.).

*And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of*

*His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.*

2. We need the dealings of God because there are hidden things in our life that keep us from perfection (Ps. 19:12b).

*Cleanse me from secret faults.*

3. We need the dealings of God because we often need motivation outside of ourselves to continue to progress toward perfection.

B. God has a purpose in His dealing with us.

1. God wants to change us into His image (II Cor. 3:18).

*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The word that is used in this passage for “transformed” is used four times in the New Testament and is the same word from which we get the English word “metamorphosis.”

It is used here and in Romans 12:1-2. The other two times it is used, it is used in connection with Jesus’ transfiguration. Think of what happened to Jesus on the mount when He was transfigured before them and the light of God’s glory shone through Him (Mt. 17:1-13). In the same way, God wants us to be reflectors of His light to the world. In order for this to happen we must be transformed.

- a. We need to go through a metamorphosis much like the caterpillar does so that it can become a beautiful butterfly.
  - The caterpillar is an earthbound creature that eats everything green and destroys things in its path.
  - The butterfly is a heavenly creature that is admired for its beauty and it reflects the glory of the sun.
- b. We need to go through the same kind of change that took place when a talent of gold was made into a beautiful lamp stand to bear light (Ex. 25:31-40). It was of beaten work.

*You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work...all of it shall be one hammered piece of pure gold.*

Exodus 25:31, 36b

2. God wants to purge out the dross from our lives (Is. 1:22, 25; Mal. 3:3).

*I will turn My hand against you, and thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy. Isaiah 1:25*

*I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities. –NIV*

The smelting process looks a lot like what God does in our lives (Ps. 66:10).

*For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.*

- a. He digs us out of the quarry of this world as unrefined ore (Is. 51:1).
- b. He puts us into the furnace of affliction and trials (Job 28:1; Is. 48:10).

*Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. Isaiah 48:10*

- c. He skims off the dross that is revealed by the process.
- d. He stamps us with His inscription as a logo on a gold bar.
- e. He sends it to the jeweler to make a beautiful piece of jewelry (Pro. 25:4).

*Take away the dross from silver, and it will go to the silversmith for jewelry.*

3. God wants to cleanse us and wash our garments (Mal. 3:2; Zech. 3:3-4).

*But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap.*

Malachi 3:2

The root for the word “launderer” or “fuller” (as in the King James Version) literally means to trample or stamp with the feet. Evidently that is how garments were cleansed. How often do you feel that you have been walked on or trampled down by the Lord.

The process of washing a garment in the biblical culture was a little different than it is today. The process included the following:

- a. Going down to the stream where water could be found.
- b. Submerging the garment in water to moisten it fully.
- c. Rubbing soap into the fabric (the soap was made from lard, an oily base).
- d. Beating the fabric on a rock and hitting it with a club to loosen the stains.
- e. Thoroughly rinsing the fabric in the running stream water.
- f. Hanging the fabric in the sun to brighten and bleach it white.

4. God wants produce greater fruitfulness from our lives (John 15:1-2).

*I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*

God wants us to move from some fruit, to more fruit and on to much fruit (John 15:5, 8)

*By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. John 15:8*

The word used for “more” fruit refers to more in both quantity and quality. Apple trees that are never pruned eventually bring forth puny, spotted and unappetizing fruit.

The pruning process involves cutting away unproductive areas of our life. He is not just looking for leaves, he is looking for fruit (Mt. 21:19; John 15:16).

*Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, “Let no fruit grow on you ever again.” Immediately the fig tree withered away. Matthew 21:18-19*

*You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. John 15:16*

5. God wants to prepare a vessel of honor for His service (Jer. 18:1-6).

*The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 “Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.” 3 Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 6 “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?” says the LORD. “Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!”*

The Bible presents God as a potter and we are the clay in His hands (Is. 64:8).

*But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand. Isaiah 64:8*

The Lord wants to make us into vessels of honor that will be suited to His use.

*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. II Timothy 2:20-21*

The clay also went through a process before it could be used as a vessel of honor. This process involved sifting, spinning, pressure and fire.

- a. It had to be dug from the earth and sifted.
  - b. It had to be moistened and made into clay.
  - c. It had to be put on a spinning wheel.
  - d. It had to respond to the pressure of the potter's hands both on the outside and the inside.
  - e. It had to go through the fire to be tempered and hardened.
  - f. If it cracked in the fire it was either thrown out or ground to powder to start the process over again.
6. God wants to bring enlargement to our lives (Ps. 4:1, Amp.).

*Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness (uprightness, justice, and right standing with You)! You have freed me when I was hemmed in and enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me and hear my prayer.*

The Hebrew word in this passage that is translated “enlarged” means “to broaden, to make wide, to make room or to open up.”

When God takes us through affliction and distress He does it to stretch us and to increase our capacity much like a weight trainer builds his strength. He builds his capacity or strength by putting his muscles under stress or pressure.

God wants to enlarge us. He wants to enlarge our heart, our vision, our faith, our ministry and our effectiveness.

7. God wants to provoke us to seek Him (Job 36:15; Hos. 5:15; Ps. 119:67).

*I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me. Hosea 5:15*

*Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word. Psalm 119:67*

This is one of the ways that God uses to get our attention. Too often when things are going well it is easy for us to begin to neglect our relationship with the Lord. As soon as trouble comes, we look up and come running back into the arms of the Lord.

8. God wants to shape us into an arrow that is sharp and that will accurately hit the intended target (Is. 49:1-2).

*Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar! The LORD has called Me from the womb; from the matrix of My mother He has made*

*mention of My name. And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has hidden Me.*

Each arrow is constructed individually with a certain type of use in mind.

- a. An arrow is made from a branch that has been cut down.
- b. The branch is stripped of its bark to become a shaft.
- c. The shaft is whittled, sanded and polished to remove anything that would cause wind resistance.
- d. A sharp point or an arrow head is put on the arrow.
- e. The arrow is kept in the quiver (hidden place of darkness) until the perfect occasion for this particular arrow arises.
- f. The arrow is aimed by the master and shot out to hit the target.

Someone has once said, “Christians are like tea bags! They don’t come to full strength until they are in hot water.”

### **III. The key to understanding affliction is gaining a proper perspective.**

“When I am getting the worst of it, God is making the most of it to see that I get the best of it.” --Dr. C.S. Lovett

God’s purpose in every trial is to do us good in the end (Deut. 8:15-16).

*He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. –NIV*

“God does not permit adversity in our lives for the purpose of defeating us but for the purpose of benefiting us.”

--Bill Gothard, Alumni Supplement Volume 7, 1981, pg. 17

A. Our afflictions can work for us (II Cor. 4:16-18).

*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. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Notice the comparative phrases in this passage:

- Light affliction
- Which is but for a moment

Afflictions can test various things in our lives:

1. They can test the strength of our foundation (Mt. 7:24-27).

*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. Matthew 7:24-25*

2. They can test the genuineness of our faith (I Pet. 1:6-7).

*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 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...*

3. They can test our motivation and our work (I Cor. 3:12-15).

*Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

4. They can test our friendships (Pro. 17:17).

*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

5. They can produce Christian character in us (Rom. 5:3-5).

*And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

- B. Our afflictions are part of the “all things” that work together for good (Rom. 8:28).

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

Sometimes when we read this we translate the word “good” to mean “comfort and ease.” What God means by good is often “growth and change.”

- C. Our afflictions are part of our complete identification with Christ (Rom. 8:17; Phil

3:10; Col. 1:24).

*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 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. Romans 8:16-17*

*I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church...*

Colossians 1:24

- D. Our afflictions can destroy pride and produce patience and humility (Deut. 8:1-5; II Cor. 12:7-10; Jam. 1:2).

*Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. 2 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4 Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. 5 Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.*

Deuteronomy 8:1-5, NIV

Humility and patience put us in a position of being able to minister to others in the same way that Jesus did.

*To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. II Corinthians 12:7-10, NIV*

- E. Our afflictions can position us to be more effective in our ministry to others (II Cor. 1:3-7; Heb. 4:15).

*All praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of every mercy and the God who comforts us. 4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. 5 You can be sure that the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. 6 So when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your benefit and salvation! For when God comforts us, it is so that we, in turn, can be an encouragement to you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. 7 We are confident that as you share in suffering, you will also share God's comfort.*

II Corinthians 1:3-7, NLT

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15*

- F. Our afflictions can lead to a display of God's glory (John 9:1-2; 11:3-4; Rom. 8:18).

*Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." John 11:3-4*

*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. Romans 8:18*

- G. Our afflictions can become a testimony of the power and faithfulness of God (Ps. 34:19; II Cor. 4:7-12).

*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed--10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.*

II Corinthians 4:7-12

- H. Our afflictions can be a teacher of God's ways (Ps. 119:71; Is. 30:20-21).

*And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.*

Isaiah 30:20-21

*It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.*

Psalm 119:71

- I. Our afflictions can do for us what adverse winds do for the eagle.

Note: The following points are extracted from *Understanding the Winds of Adversity*, Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, Supplementary Alumni Book, Volume 7, 1981.

1. Turbulent winds cause the eagle to fly higher.

There is a tremendous lifting power in the thermal updrafts of turbulent winds. These updrafts cause the eagle to reach great heights as he soars with them.

2. Turbulent winds give the eagle a larger view.

The higher the eagle flies, the larger will be his perspective of the land below him. From this higher position the sharp eyes of the eagle are able to see much more.

3. Turbulent winds lift the eagle above harassment.

At lower elevations the eagle is often harassed by suspicious crows, disgruntled hawks and other smaller birds. As the eagle soars higher, he leaves behind all these distractions.

4. Turbulent winds allow the eagle to use less effort.

The wings of the eagle are designed for gliding in the winds. The feather structure prevents stalling, reduces the turbulence and produces a relatively smooth ride with minimum effort—even in rough winds.

5. Turbulent winds allow the eagle to stay up longer.

The eagle uses winds to soar and glide for long periods of time. In the winds, the eagle first glides in long shallow circles downward and then spirals upward with a thermal updraft.

6. Turbulent winds help the eagle to fly faster.

Normally, the eagle flies at a speed of about 50 miles per hour (75 km). However, when he glides in wind currents, speeds of 80-100 miles (120-150 km) per hour are not uncommon.

#### **IV. Not all affliction is designed by God.**

- A. Some of the affliction that we experience is the fruit of our own bad sowing (Ps. 107:17, 19).

*Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities...19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.*

For this reason it is appropriate if we are in an extended season of trial that we do some self examination to be sure that we are not violating one of God's principles of prosperity (I Cor. 11:31-32).

*But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.*

The following are some of the things that will produce long lasting problems:

1. Repaying evil for good (Pro. 17:13).

*Whoever rewards evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.*

Proverbs 17:13

2. A lack of true repentance (Pro. 28:13).

*He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*

3. A lack of respect for parents and other authorities (Pro. 20:20).

*Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.*

4. Being greedy for gain (Pro. 15:27).

*He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes will live.*

5. Robbing the needy (Pro. 22:22-23; 14:21; 17:5; 21:13; 28:27).

*Do not rob the poor because he is poor, nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; for the LORD will plead their cause, and plunder the soul of those who plunder them. Proverbs 22:22-23*

6. A lack of personal discipline and receiving instruction (Pro. 5:21-23).

*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He ponders all his paths. His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin. He shall die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.*

7. A lack of complete commitment to Jesus Christ (Pro. 13:21; Ps. 32:10; Is. 47:10-15).

*Misfortune pursues the sinner, but prosperity is the reward of the righteous.*

Proverbs 13:21

8. Being careless with your lips (Pro. 21:23).

*Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.*

9. Associating with fools (Pro.13:20).

*He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm. Proverbs 13:20, NIV*

10. Being lazy (Pro. 6:11; 19:15; 20:4, 13; 28:19).

*He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty. Proverbs 28:19*

- B. The only way to escape long lasting problems is to repent, change and begin sowing for a new harvest (Rev. 3:19; Pro. 28:13).

*Buy your gold from me. It has been refined in a fire, and it will make you rich. Buy white clothes from me. Wear them and you can cover up your shameful nakedness. Buy medicine for your eyes, so that you will be able to see. 19 I correct and punish everyone I love. So make up your minds to turn away from your sins. 20 Listen! I am standing and knocking at your door. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and we will eat together. 21 Everyone who wins the victory will sit with me on my throne, just as I won the victory and sat with my Father on his throne. 22 If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. Revelation 3:18-22, Msg*

**V. There is a proper way to respond to the dealings of God.**

- A. We are to endure (Mt. 10:22; II Tim. 4:5; Jam. 5:7-11).

*Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. 8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! 10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. James 5:7-11*

*But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. II Timothy 4:5*

1. This means that we stay under.
2. This means that we do not run away from.
3. This means that we let patience have its perfect work.

- B. We are to count it all joy (Jam. 1:2).

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials...*

- C. We are to remain faithful (Rev. 2:8-10).

*And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, "These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 'I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into*

*prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.’”*

D. We are to praise God (I Th. 5:16-18).

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*