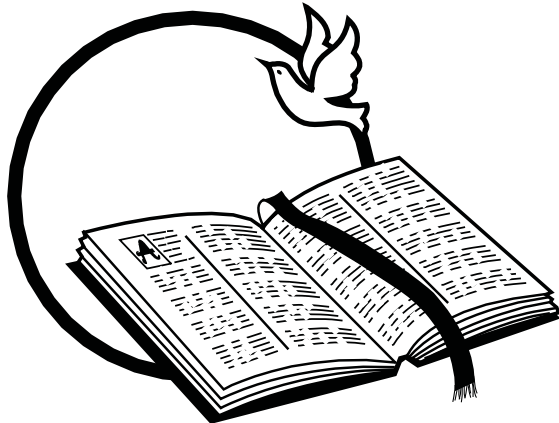


Discipleship



Life Application: Focusing on the rich spiritual gain that can be ours as we endure and triumph in affliction.

Key verse for meditation: But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. – 1 Peter 5:10

For personal study:
2 Corinthians 6:1-10, James 1:2-4

Gain from pain: God’s intention, in every occasion of suffering, is to bring gain from our pain. More than one hundred years ago, on June 6, 1882, one man’s experience of heartbreak gave birth to a hymn that has provided balm to many other aching hearts.

George Matheson went blind shortly after becoming engaged, and his fiancée, whom he dearly loved, broke the engagement. The grief he felt coupled with the inevitable loneliness and agony of rejection could have caused anger or depression. However, Matheson found his trial to be the very means of illuminating the love of God. He turned his thoughts away from his loss, away from the powerful temptations to self-pity and bitterness, and turned the gaze of his soul to a far greater love—one that would never let him go. And his grief was transformed. The simple and profound words of his hymn, written in a matter of minutes on the eve of his sister’s marriage, reflect that fact:



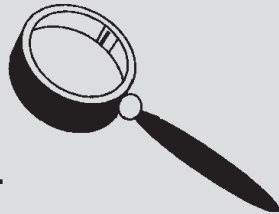
*O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.*

*O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.*

God could have spared George Matheson the pain he went through, but He chose instead to give him something far more precious—“beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (Isaiah 61:3). Matheson entered the wilderness of suffering—as we all will at some point in life—but he emerged with God’s own sweet treasure. His faith laid hold of the promise and, amazingly, he found that the pain had been exchanged for joy.

The verses written as a result of suffering became one of the great hymns of the church.

“The Lord gets his best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction.” – C. H. Spurgeon



Think about it . . .

1. What attitude toward suffering is displayed in Romans 8:18? How will having this attitude help us endure?
2. What are some of the thoughts that Satan will bring in the midst of affliction? How can we withstand those thoughts?
3. Does God always have a reason for the things we go through? Explain your answer.

No Scar?

*Hast thou no scar?
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,
I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star,
Hast thou no scar?*

*Hast thou no wound?
Yet I was wounded by the archers, spent,
Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent
By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I swooned:*

Hast thou no wound?

*No wound? No scar?
Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,
And pierced are the feet that follow Me;
But thine are whole: can he have followed far
Who has not wound nor scar?*

– By Amy Carmichael

Challenge: With the help of a concordance, look up the words “suffer” and “suffering” along with synonyms such as “affliction” and “trial.” Make a list of all the benefits you find that can result through properly enduring such a time.