

PURIFIED BY FIRE

1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Why do bad things happen to good people? This is an age-old question. It is one often asked and discussed at the time of a tragedy. You may have thought this question when you or a loved one was diagnosed with a serious illness, at the loss of a limb, when a paralysis occurred, or at the time of an untimely death.

Satan loves to cause Christians to believe that their earthly lives should be void of trials and tribulations. The fact is, Christians are not immune from life's difficulties, set-backs and adversities. Christians have accidents, are afflicted with serious illness, lose loved ones and suffer under a host of other problems.

Why would God let these things happen to you and your fellow believers? To answer this question, it is good to answer first another question. When do you pray most fervently, frequently and passionately? I suspect it is not when your life is going well. Rather, if you charted your prayer life on a line graph you would see that the frequency of your prayers increased each time a problem, difficulty, issue came into your life. Another question to help wrestle with the question why does God permit bad things to happen to good people is to reflect on the prayer requests and prayers prayed during worship services. The vast majority of them are for people experiencing illness, recovering from accidents, dealing with personal problems, etc.

Pure gold is not found in the earth. First ore, rocks with gold embedded in them, are taken from the earth. These rocks are crushed, immersed in chemicals and finally passed through extremely hot flames. The flames must reach a temperature greater than the melting point of the gold. Once that temperature is reached, the gold melts. . .it is then passed through additional flames until all of the impurities are "burned away."

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness" (James 1:3) The Greek word

for “testing of your faith” has in mind the smelting process. This is what 1 Peter 1:6-7 also has in mind. God permits difficulties, trials, tribulations of all kinds to come into your life to put you on your knees, into His word and at the Communion table.

It is important to note God’s promise to you found in 1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation (test, trial, problem) has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted (test, trial, problem) beyond your ability, but with the temptation (test, trial, problem) **He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.**”

Prayer: Dear Jesus, You have invited me to “cast all of my tests, trials and problems upon You.” Send Your Holy Spirit to give me faith to recognize that even in adversity You are my Good Shepherd who will lead me to green pastures and quiet waters. In Your holy name. Amen.

I walk in danger all the way. The thought shall never leave me
That Satan, who has marked his prey, Is plotting to deceive me.
This foe with hidden snares May seize me unawares
If I should fail to watch and pray. I walk in danger all the way.

I pass through trials all the way, With sin and ills contending;
In patience I must bear each day The cross of God’s own sending.
When in adversity I know not where to flee,
When storms of woe my soul dismay, I pass through trials all the way.

And death pursues me all the way, Nowhere I rest securely;
He comes by night, he comes by day, He takes his prey most surely.
A failing breath, and I In death’s strong grasp may lie
To face eternity today As death pursues me all the way.

I walk with angels all the way, They shield me and befriend me;
All Satan’s pow’r is held at bay When heav’nly hosts attend me;
They are my sure defense, All fear and sorrow, hence!
Unharm’d by foes, do what they may, I walk with angels all the way.

I walk with Jesus all the way, His guidance never fails me;

Within His wounds I find a stay When Satan's pow'r assails me;
And by His footsteps led, My path I safely tread.
No evil leads my soul astray; I walk with Jesus all the way.

My walk is heav'nward all the way; Await, my soul, the morrow,
When God's good healing shall allay All suff'ring, sin, and sorrow.
Then, worldly pomp, begone! To heav'n I now press on.
For all the world I would not stay; My walk is heav'nward all the way.
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