

No one is immune to suffering, but Christians have the hope of glory to look forward to in and through their suffering. If you are experiencing extended periods of hardship, you might struggle to hope in that future glory, but the promises of God's Word do not fail.

The apostle Peter knew that the early church was going to experience trials of persecution, and he wanted them to be prepared. As he ended his letter, Peter gave the church family three important instructions to obey so that they could glorify God in the difficulties to come

Be Humble (1 Peter 5:5-7)

Submitting to Elders

Peter exhorted the young people to submit to their elders in humility. A healthy church honors the voice of all generations. Submission requires humility (see v. 6). As we submit to God, we are to humbly submit to and prefer one another in love.

Clothing in Humility

Peter exhorts all of us to clothe ourselves in humility, the same humility that Jesus displayed as he walked the earth (see Philippians 2:6-8).

Pride is the root of all sin; therefore, humility is the most powerful weapon in our arsenal. Humility is not thinking poorly of ourselves; it is simply thinking of ourselves less and preferring others first.

Treating Our Pride

Verse 6 begins with the following phrase, "*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God...*" When God begins to do a powerful work in our lives that brings Him glory, sometimes we feel God's mighty hand as a heavy weight. God allows us to feel the heavy weight of suffering, which is naturally humbling. Suffering can serve as a remedy for pride.

Learning Patience

The glorious hope we have is the promise of the rest of that verse, "*...so that at the proper time he may exalt you*" (see v. 6b). The key, of course, is the phrase "*at the proper time.*"

The hardest part of suffering is learning patience. Our impatience is a remnant of pride that God is working out through suffering.

Giving Over Our Worries

God doesn't simply put us under His heavy hand like a cruel master; He gives a promise in verse 7, "*casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*"

Giving God our anxieties must come from the realization that we cannot handle them ourselves. God does not forcefully take our worries and our anxieties; He invites us to hand them over to Him in humility.

Holding on to our anxieties is prideful, and the heavy hand of God lovingly gets heavier until we release our burdens to Him.

When we are suffering, we struggle to believe what Peter says in verse 7—that He cares for us. We don't trust that He is good. These are lies from Satan.

As we give Him our concerns, **God promises to minister to us in four ways:**

- (a) He gives us the **courage** to face our cares honestly and not run away (Isaiah. 41:10).
- (b) He gives us the **wisdom** to understand the situation (James 1:5).
- (c) He gives us the **strength** to do what He has called us to do (Philippians. 4:13).
- (d) He gives us the **faith** to trust Him to do the rest (Psalm. 37:5)

Be Watchful (1 Peter 5:8-9)

We have an enemy who comes to steal, kill, and destroy (see John 10:10). Peter writes, “*be sober minded*”. In other words, he wants us to think rightly about the situation we face. This is hard when we are suffering, but it is crucial. To have right thinking is to have God's perspective, keeping His promises and the scope of eternity in view.

We give the enemy a foothold when we are not watchful. Satan devours by bad thinking: discouragement, hopelessness, pridefulness, and arrogance. These are just some of the tools that Satan uses when we don't adopt sober mindedness.

Whatever God designs for good, Satan produces a counterfeit, and the fruit of the counterfeit is death. Be watchful.

One of Satan's most effective tools is twisting the Scriptures. He knows the Bible, and he is a master at twisting the Word to deceive. This is why we need to be people who know the Word (see Psalm 119:105).

We are to be watchful, and, at the same time, resist the enemy, standing firm on the promises of the Word of God (1 Peter 5:9). We see this in the letter that Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus (see Ephesians 6:10-11). When we stand on the Word of God, we can stand firm.

Peter reminds his readers at the end of the verse, “you are not alone in this”; many believers around the world are wrestling with the same struggles.

Be Hopeful (1 Peter 5:10-11)

Peter ends the letter with the powerful and glorious conclusion about suffering: no matter how difficult the trial, we always have hope of a certain victory. Verse 10 reads, “*When you have suffered a little while...*” For some people, the suffering feels like it has lasted their whole lives. But when seen in the light of eternity, it is just for a “little while” (see 2 Corinthians 4:17).

The reality for many is that the burden doesn't feel light, and it certainly doesn't seem to be momentary. So, does God lie in His Word? Not at all; God sees all of eternity. Someday we will see it from His perspective(see Romans 8:18).

The Christian's Hope in Trial

Our Heavenly Father is incredibly invested in developing our character in this life. He is intent on preparing the church as a bride for Christ by constantly refining and equipping us. His methods of building Christian character in us often involve suffering.

Peter used four words to underline the promise of God to all believers in verse 10:

He will *restore, confirm, strengthen and establish* His children.

This is the Christian's glorious hope in times of Suffering!