

WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: SECTION TWO

Three Promises That Encourage the Hurting – Promise One/Enough is Enough

In addition to the false notion that adversity is something unique, many followers of Christ function under the misconception that being a child of God grants them an exemption from suffering. So, when an ordeal arrives, this surprising event can have a devastating effect upon that unsuspecting Christian's view of God; causing them to conclude that God is guilty of being unfaithful in fulfilling His promise to care for them. This inclination can only be overcome through a firm belief in God's faithfulness. Without it, no believer will ever successfully handle adversity. Instead, he will turn away from God when he needs Him the most.

This is why Paul affirms God's unswerving loyalty in the very midst of declaring the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13. He wants the suffering Christian who is doubting whether God cares, to know that God is indeed faithful. He is always so, or else He would cease to be God. His allowance of adversity into our lives should never be interpreted as a failure on His part to care for us. (Romans 8:37-39; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Hebrews 13:5-6)

Rather than viewing the negative circumstance as a flaw in God's loving plan for our lives, it should be seen as proof positive of the opposite. Times of suffering serve as an affirmation of His faithfulness. God always uses such occasions in a positive manner, either for the purpose of correcting blatantly wrong behavior, or in the refinement of our inner character. He does so because He is our loving and faithful heavenly Father; and **not** our earthly indulgent grandfather! He is too devoted to His family to leave us in a sinful or unrefined condition. Sometimes we may wish that He would leave us alone, but He won't. This is the precise point of the author in Hebrews 12:4-11. There we are told not to become discouraged by difficult times because they are a critical part of God's hands-on care for, and training of, His children. The writer of Psalm 119 learned this lesson well and shares it in a series of statements which confirm to us the faithful character of God, at work on our behalf, in the midst of our suffering –

“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word . . . It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes . . . I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.”
(Psalm 119:67, 71, 75)

Paul understood the importance of this perspective, not only in the aftermath of suffering, but especially in the midst of it. Thus, he makes this point of emphasis in sharing the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13. Our faith in God's faithfulness during adverse events is the key to maximizing the spiritual benefit of such an experience. Such steadfast faith in the faithfulness of God during the worst of times will determine whether or not it will be one of the best of times in developing our relationship with Him.