

# How to handle Persecution & Suffering

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**Main Scriptures: 1 Peter 3: 12 - 18**

**Supporting Scriptures: Matthew 26:39; Acts 2: 22-23; Acts 9: 11-16; Hebrews 13: 5-6; Romans 8: 28; 1 Peter 4: 14; 2 Corinthians 4: 11; Matthew 5: 7; 2 Timothy 2: 12; 2 Timothy 4: 18; Isaiah 41: 13; Matthew 10: 13; Galatians 2: 20; James 1:12; 2 Peter 2: 9; 1 Peter 5: 7 - 12**

Notes:

Whatever comes my way Jesus does all things well. There is a myth that says that if bad things happen in the life of a believer then something is wrong with his relationship with Christ. In the case if you are questioning if this is true let's go into the word of God to see if he has an answer to those in doubt.

If we look at Matthew 26: 39 we see Jesus presented with the cup of suffering

Acts 2: 22 - 23 Jesus died and was resurrected and when the question was asked with those who attended the feast and Peter said he was delivered by the council of God ...have been crucified and slain. The will of God was that Christ would suffer and be killed at the hands of wicked men; it is not by chance God allowed it and willed it. Now someone may say that's Jesus but let's look at Acts 9: 11-16 - this is the same Saul that was persecuting the saints this same one the Lord met him on Damascus road and Ananias was instructed now to talk with Saul and we must take note of verse 16 that he was chosen and must suffer for Jesus' name sake. This tells us that God will allow a believer to suffer for his name sake.

Before we begin to think about how much we are suffering or being persecuted or in the future will suffer we should have an awareness that the eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right.

1. His eyes watch over us - this means he is seeing what the righteous person is experiencing
2. His ears are open to their prayers -
3. God turns his face away from those who do evil.

This verse allows us to understand that as followers of Christ we stand up for him and we are eager to suffer for righteousness.

1 Peter 3: 18 gives us the idea of a follower of Christ who has a zeal to do good.

How do we handle persecution?

- 1. Be zealous for doing what is good no matter what the end result is.
- 2. God will give that person a spirit of Glory - 1 Peter 4: 14
- 3. the life of Christ will be manifested in our flesh - 2 Corinthians 4: 11
- 4. God will reward you - Matthew 5: 7
- 6. He will not deny us 2 Timothy 2: 12
- 7. God will deliver you from Evil and preserve you - 2 Timothy 4: 18
- 8. Don't be afraid Isaiah 41: 13; Matthew 10: 13

- 9. Worship Christ as Lord of your life: You must accept the will of God, allow what God wants for us and agree with it.
- 10. Dedicate our lives to Christ - not floundering - Galatians 2: 20
- 11. Be ready to talk about the hope you have - 2 Peter 3: 15
- 12. Make sure you have a clear conscience. The life you live will prove that you live for Christ and your accusers will be ashamed. - It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong.
- 13. Understand the death and the triumph of Jesus Christ - He suffered for our sins. (1 Peter 3: 18) - this will speak to our hope - if he died for sinners and he was resurrected now my salvation is alive and my suffering is just for a season and there is hope for me even if I face death in persecution because one of these days I will inherit salvation.

This is a genuine belief because there are some folks who have a careless attitude to doing good. It doesn't matter if they practice to do good or not and there are some who will only do good when it matters but if they have a selfish desire they will abandon doing good to satisfy themselves. But there are persons who want to remain in a pleasing relationship with Jesus so they practice what is good.

God will reward the person who does good and suffers. As we look at the system of the world and the coming of the Lord is so close that the end of all things is coming, the pressure is coming against the believer and doing good will sometimes allow us to suffer. Doing good will at times place us at odds with our co-workers, friends and in society but the person who is zealous will stand in the hour of testing.

Doing good and suffering God will provide all the necessities of life for such a person. - Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you.

God does not want the believer to worry. It doesn't matter the persecution and the threats - threatening your ability to work - some folks may be threatened to be placed in prison if we call on the name of the Lord but we are not to be afraid of their threats - why? because God is with us and he will strengthen us to bear the persecution.

Isaiah 41: 13; Matthew 10: 13

The believer's heart must be filled with Christ and his only hope is in Christ and because of that he will dedicate his entire life to Christ.

Galatians 2: 20

If I believe in him I must be dedicated to love. Worship Christ as Lord of our life because he is in control of our life. If I face threats my life is not my own, Christ now is living in me. If he takes me through suffering he is giving me what is needed to go through.

Any opportunity we have to witness we should not miss it. It should become part of our lifestyle but we must do it in a gentle and respectful way. How we present Christ is with much grace. Don't present ourselves - that self righteous attitude- make sure when we have an opportunity to share make sure we present Jesus Christ and Him only. We must develop compassion for the soul that needs Christ.

Keep your conscience clear - the only way we have a clear conscience is by having a good conduct that our lives are lived out according to the will of God. That we are not just saying we are followers but not doing the right thing.

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Every experience we have has a time limit - 1 Peter 5: 7 -10 even though it may seem lonely others are experiencing it too and it is becoming more clearer in these last days. Even the persecution has an end. It is true that some will die in the midst of suffering and some will die in faith.

He has given us what it takes to handle persecution:

- zeal for good works
- a dedicated life
- witnessing and worshiping
- Hope of his triumph over death