

Comfort in Suffering

© *Moses C. Onwubiko*

Grace Evangelistic Ministries, Inc.

Nashville, Tennessee U.S.A.

Lesson #7

Preparation to Study God's Word

Personal faith in Christ secures a permanent place in Heaven for you (John 14:1-3, 3:36, 10:28). But faith in Christ does not guarantee consistent fellowship with God.

Personal faith in Christ establishes a relationship with God which creates an opportunity for fellowship with Him. How long we stay in fellowship with God is a matter of choice.

Any moment we commit sin, no matter how little the sin is, we lose our fellowship with a holy God. However, we can regain fellowship with God by confessing or naming our sins to God the Father and the Holy Spirit will take control of our lives again (1 John 1:9; Revelation 3:20).

If we confess [acknowledge] our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [sins, known or forgotten] (1 John 1:9).

You may want to pause and acknowledge, directly to God, any sin that may hinder you from being fully blessed through the Word of God.

Testing in Relationships - Continued from lesson #6

Once in a while Job stumbled. Why? Because he was human. The only difference is that he never allowed his failures to keep him from pushing forward to glorify God. As a believer, you will fail. Will you allow your failures to keep you from fulfilling God's plan for your life? Or will you get up, get back into fellowship with God and keep moving in the power of the Holy Spirit until the race is over? (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Who and what should be your refuge when you are maligned, judged and unjustly accused?

1. Go to the Word of God in your mind - where information and thoughts are stored. Nothing is more powerful than God's Word. With it you can fend off any attack in your soul and still maintain your poise.

"For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword ..."
(Hebrews 4:12a).

Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

2. Give the matter to God and leave it for Him to settle. Why? Because only God understands the whole situation, and trying to get revenge on your accuser only makes the problem worse. Every normal person knows that two wrongs do not make a right. God commands that we do not take revenge.

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. (Romans 12:19).

3. Confide in God rather than in man. Why? Because man may turn against you, but God never changes (Malachi 3:6).

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man (Ps. 118:8).

4. Remember that you are here on earth to glorify God and not yourself.

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:20).

The Last Days of Job

It may interest you to know that after Job's last test was complete, the Bible never says that Satan went back to Heaven to admit to God that He was right after all. However, the final chapters of the book of Job are focused on God's justice. In the end, God finally broke His silence. As a reward for Job's faithfulness during his suffering, God doubled everything Job previously had. Job lived to enjoy life even more because God crowned him in glory. God is the same. He changes not (Malachi 3:6). That means that what He did for Job because Job glorified Him to the maximum, He can do for you if you will take up the whole armor given to you in the Word of God and defend your ground (Ephesians 6:10 - 18). He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).00

Lessons and Applications

Lesson 1. God knows exactly what you are going through right now. If you have personally believed in Jesus Christ, you are also a child of God. Therefore, your comfort should not only rest on the fact that God knows who you are, where you are, and what you are going through, but also that He is in charge of your life. You are kept by His power (1 Peter 1:5).

Lesson 2. If you know that you are doing what He has commanded you to do [taking in His word and growing in grace] (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18), then you have the privilege of claiming His promises in the midst of your suffering. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God [those who obey Him], to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

Lesson 3. If you are in the plan of God, Satan cannot get hold of you in any way without God's sovereign permission (Job 1:10, 12). And when God does permit, He does so for the purpose of blessing you as well as bringing glory to Himself. Therefore, in your suffering, be ready to use the Bible doctrine in your soul to the glory of God.

Lesson 4. God knows your strength. He knows what you are able to bear. No temptation [suffering] has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able (1 Corinthians 10:13a).

Lesson 5. No believer should rely on the details of this life as a source of happiness. The details of this life will pass away, but the word of God stands forever. The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the Word of our God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8).

Application: When your happiness does not depend on your wealth, children, success, or anything else outside of God, then if and when these things are taken away from you, you will not be devastated. In addition, you have a better opportunity to join Job in saying, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21b).

The Comforting Promises of God

No matter what you suffer now as a believer one thing is sure:

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

And at last:

and He [God] will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away (Revelation 21:4).

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man [physical body] is decaying, yet our inner man [soul] is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction [sufferings] is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison (2 Corinthians 4:16-17).

Such is the confidence (hope) of all who are in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

There are about 7,000 promises of God in the Bible for you to claim. They belong to you. You can claim them through faith. In your suffering He has said:

- *Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5b).*
- *Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).*
- *Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7).*

- ... for He Himself has said, “I will never leave you, nor will I ever forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5b).
- Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me (Psalm 50:15).
- The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe (Proverbs 18:10).
- Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous [righteous through faith in Christ] to be shaken (Psalm 55:22).
- The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want (Psalm 23:1).
- How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Psalm 2:12b).
- Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know (Jeremiah 33:3).
- Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phillipians 4:6-7).
- If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you (John 15:7).
- If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:14).
- And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive (Matthew 21:22).
- I, even I, am He who comforts you (Isaiah 51:12a).
- The eternal God is a dwelling place, And underneath are the everlasting arms (Deuteronomy 33:27).
- The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You (Isaiah 26:3).
- Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock (Isaiah 26:4).
- Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes wait for the Lord (Psalm 27:14).
- And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phillipians 4:19).

Closing Prayer

Therefore, Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me the privilege of reading through this doctrinal teaching. Father, only You know what I am going through at this time. You know whether I am lying down sick, or whether I am dying of an incurable disease; You also know whether I have recently lost a loved one; You know whether I am facing the most difficult

suffering of my life, god, I pray that the Bible truths from the material may be a source of comfort to me. I pray this in Christ's name.

Buy Truth, and Do Not Sell It
(Proverbs 23:23a)

Are you aware that sound Bible teaching is a precious and priceless piece of spiritual jewelry? Indeed, church history has shown how difficult sound teaching is to come by, especially in modern day Christianity! So, when God from His oasis of grace leads us to the pearls of truth in His infallible and inerrant Word, we ought to cherish them without reserve. The Bible is the treasure box that holds your capacity to enjoy abundant life, to reap maximum happiness in life, friendship, marriage, business, and to enjoy unprecedented blessings for today and tomorrow; therefore, “buy truth” [stay grounded in the Word] “for wisdom is better than jewels; and all desirable things cannot compare with her” (Proverbs 8:11).

Truth: For you are not under law BUT under GRACE (Romans 6:14b).

This concludes our Study of “Comfort in Suffering.” It is our prayer that you continue to meditate on these truths and to grow in grace in your spiritual life.

4/19/10