



The Reality of Suffering and Persecution

Why Does a Holy God Allow Evil to Exist?

Part Three - 1 Peter 3:13-18

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All Scriptures are printed verbatim with translations noted. • Pew Bible Page Number is 1115.

In the STUDY VERSE SECTION, God's Word is printed in regular faced text with Pastor Joe's commentary in the smaller faced text. Biblical words, underlined with dots, are explained in the brackets. • Pastor Joe's email: Joe@southreno.com

Life's Testing Times:

1. The Reality of testing times.

James 1:2, NASB95 -² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

James 1:2, NLT -² Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

2. The Reaction to testing times.

James 1:2, NIV84 -² Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds....

Biblical "joy" is the ability to see spiritual truths and eternal realities in the midst of any situation.

3. The Reason for testing times.

James 1:3-4, ESV -³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

"Your outlook determines your outcome!" - Anonymous

4. The Resource in testing times.

1 Peter 3:15, NASB95 -¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts...(so you can) give an account for the hope that is in you....

What to do (and not do) initially in a crisis:

1. **You need to talk it out.** The most important thing you can do in the initial stages following a crisis is "talk it out". Do not isolate yourself from family, co-workers, friends or helpers. (Counselors say "talk, tears and time" are essential for the healing process.)
2. You need to **eat, exercise, drink plenty of water** and reduce caffeine, fat and sugar.
3. **Do not use alcohol, illegal drugs or misuse prescription drugs to cope** with a crisis—it only leads to more pain.
4. **Give yourself permission to hurt.** Expect the incident to bother you.
5. **Give yourself time to heal**—do not set unrealistic expectations for recovery.
6. **Reduce your schedule and responsibilities** if possible.
7. Make **no "major" decisions following a critical incident.**
8. **Let people know you are hurting.** Family members, co-workers, church members, and friends would want to know. You need a healthy support system during this time.
9. **Develop good resources on grief management and stress management** (i.e., take a course, read a book, download a podcast, or download a good article—this is needed and important).
10. **Initially, you need some idle time**, but transition back to activity as soon as you feel you can.
11. **Watch for fixation on the incident.** Limit your time seeking news and media updates.
12. **Do not become obsessed with finding reasons for the tragedy.** Answers do not heal our hearts!
13. **"Watch the crowd."** Too many people around you can drain you. Know yourself. Do not let yourself be angered when people who do care make stupid statements to you—they do not know what you are going through.
14. **Do something that will help!** Consider journaling your feelings, find a truth for your life, honor a life in some way, help someone else, write a book, write a letter, cook a meal for someone, leave a flower, paint a picture, plant a tree, donate blood, raise money for a cause, tell a story, remember the loss, make a memorial, build an altar—do something to manage the stress of this moment. Memorialize this event in a tangible way.
15. **You are not alone in this—please, do not act like it.** You need others; they need you. Find other people and minister to them. It may help you both/all.
16. **"Watch your stress voices."** What does your body do to tell you that you are under stress? (e.g., legs ache, diarrhea, fatigue, irritability, appetite changes, etc.) **If you need professional help, seek it, it is okay!** Contact a counselor, pastor, and/or chaplain. You will be glad you did! If I (Pastor Joe) can help, call me at 775.827.3227 or email me at joe@southreno.com. I would love to visit with you.

With every crisis, you will make a decision
to run from God or run to God. – Pastor Joe