

Enduring the Struggle

I'm sure you are probably aware of the fact that being a born again Christian does not exempt you from tribulations in life; as a matter of fact, it almost feels at times that being one of God's children increases the probability of struggle. It's not that tribulations are a prerequisite for being a Christian, but facing adversity and having the strength to endure struggle gives you a new understanding of what faith is all about. Exercising faith is one of the most crucial elements of Christianity, because faith pleases God. Hebrews 11:6; NKJV says, *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*

The Bible tells us the kind of struggles we can expect once we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. In John 15:19-20 (NKJV), Jesus told the disciples: ¹⁸ *"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you."* ¹⁹ *If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."* ²⁰ *Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."*

Whether it's problems with your family, pressures at work, or financial woes, this world system is dominated by the demonic influences. The devil has corrupted every facet of the world. The Christian has to know that he or she cannot win using the devil's devices—you can't win by implementing the strategies of this world. God has told us how to achieve abundance. He has told us how to be over-comers and over-achievers. We do it through His Word.

As long as we stay in the Word, God will be with us. He'll help us beautifully navigate through the turns and twists of life. When we study His Word, we find out that no matter what we go through, we are not, and never will be, alone in the struggle. This is how adversity strengthens your relationship with the Father, because when you're going through struggles and tribulations, you begin to really see that it is Him pulling you through. God does not orchestrate the struggle. He does not cause it. The devil is the thief, liar, and destroyer, so we cannot blame our struggle on God, but we can have every confidence that He will see us through it. Our Heavenly Father will give us the victory!

This is the realization He desires you to have. He wants you to know that nothing can separate you from His love. You see, this is something you have to know way down deep in your innermost. You can't just talk about it or read about it. You have to live it!

God wants you to grow to the point where you have so much faith in Him that doubt is not even a temptation for you. But sometimes it takes a long while for us to get to this place. When

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troubles come, some of us instantly cave. We develop an attitude of defeat and sadness. Then, our lives spin even more out of control and we become unbalanced and fragmented. When this happens you have got to get a grip. This is the time to really dig in your heels and hold tight to the love of Jesus Christ, because He's your help. He's the one that will hold it all together for you. It's not your strength, but his.

God designed life to flow effortlessly, with ease and synchronicity, but sin entered the picture, and this sin causes us to be out of synch with the flow. We can't afford to allow our minds and hearts to remain out of balance with God's harmony. 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NKJV) says that we ought to be *"casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."* We have to capture our thoughts, take a look at them, and whip them into shape by consciously and continually thinking the Word.

To struggle in Christ is to know that you are going through it to get to the other side. So have faith and be unmovable through the crisis. Stay fully persuaded amidst the obstacles, and be convinced that you have the victory through any struggle. God is preserving and keeping you through the storm. You are building spiritual muscle and your relationship with Him is growing stronger day by day. He is teaching you to endure, so that you can see firsthand what it is to truly live by His power.●

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