

Not Only That; Romans 5:1-5

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1. Peace and Suffering.
 - a. Two words that do not seem to go together.
 - i. We are calm, relaxed, and chill when we are at peace.
 - ii. When we are suffering, everything is chaotic, swirling around us, almost like we are reaching out to grab peace in the spinning chaos.
 - b. We can have peace and be suffering at the same time.
 - i. God's peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of Jesus.
 - ii. Suffering seems difficult and challenging; yet, we know that God is preparing us for the task he has placed before us.
 - c. Suffering has a purpose.

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2. Endurance.
 - a. The capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance.¹
 - b. It takes a lot of endurance to farm.
 - i. The farmer prepares the soil by tilling it.
 - ii. "The major benefits attributed to the annual rite of tilling are that it aerates the soil; chops and kills weeds; and mixes in organic materials, fertilizers, and lime. Not to be downplayed are the psychological benefits of tillage. It induces a righteous-feeling sweat that makes a clean slate of last year's mistakes."²
 - iii. The farmer plants the seeds.
 - iv. The farmer cares for the seeds through watering, fertilizing, and weed control.
 - v. The farmer waits for the crop to grow.
 - vi. James 5:7-8: "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."
 - vii. These are two different Greek words: endurance and patience. However, the NASB Dictionary defines 'patient' as being even-tempered while enduring the trying circumstances.
 - viii. I'm not a farmer, but I would say that farming involves trying circumstances.
 1. I can't imagine, after preparing the soil, planting, and waiting for it to grow, only to watch a hailstorm ruin the entire crop.
 2. That must be so heartbreaking!
 3. The farmer spends a lot of resources (diesel, fertilizer, weed killer, 12-hour days, etc.) and effort to get the seed into the ground. Then, they have to watch as the storm devastates their crops.

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1039.

² Don Burgard, "Tilling Is One Chore You Might Be Able to Skip," *FineGardening*, last modified April 25, 2014, accessed April 24, 2024, <https://www.finegardening.com/project-guides/gardening-basics/tilling-is-one-chore-you-might-be-able-to-skip>.

- ix. You want to learn endurance? Talk to a farmer. (you can substitute whatever your suffering is for the farmer)
- c. We learn endurance through suffering.

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3. Proven Character.

- a. The Greek word is not character but test.
 - i. The experience of going through a test with special reference to the result, standing a test, character.³
 - ii. This Greek word is only used seven times in the New Testament and only translated as ‘character’ in Romans 5:4.
 - iii. The other translations are test, approval, proof, and proven.
 - iv. The idea behind this text is that our suffering produces our endurance, and then we become proven or tried.
 - v. As a process of enduring something amounts to a test that promotes and validates the character of the one undergoing it.⁴
- b. Pawn Stars.
 - i. A Television show about a pawn shop in Las Vegas.
 - ii. Rick, the owner, would always call experts to verify or validate the object for sale.
 - iii. Each expert had ways (or tests) to prove the item was real or fake.
 - iv. I’m sure Rick experienced quite a few items that were fake.
- c. God is looking to prove our character.
 - i. The Father is not a “gotcha” God, hoping we make a mistake and then reveling in it, saying, “See, I told you so.”
 - ii. God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son, Isaac.
 - 1. Genesis 22:1–2: “After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”
 - 2. Abraham’s response to God.
 - 3. Genesis 22:3: “So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.”
 - iii. God tested Job (and didn’t even tell him) by allowing Satan to attack him.
 - 1. We should all strive for God’s description of Job.
 - 2. Job 1:8: “And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”
 - 3. Satan takes his wealth and kills his children.
 - 4. Job 1:22: “In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.”
 - 5. Satan then takes Job’s health.
 - 6. Job 2:9–10: “Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.” But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women

³ William Arndt et al., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 256.

⁴ Ibid, 256.

would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips."

iv. Is it possible for us to give God the glory amid suffering? Yes!

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- d. God's testing always has a view towards success, not failure.
 - i. God wants us to succeed; remember his eternal purpose: that all men be saved.
 - ii. 1 Timothy 2:3–6: "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time."
- e. Remember this when you are suffering.
- f. James 1:12: "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."

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4. Hope.

- a. Confident expectation.
 - i. Christian expectation of the resurrection.⁵
 - ii. Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."
 - iii. Acts 17:1–3: "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."
 - iv. Paul used the Old Testament (because there was not a New Testament yet) and matched that to Jesus' life to prove He was the Messiah.

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- b. Even in our suffering, we have a confident expectation of the resurrection of Jesus, that He is the Messiah, and that His sacrifice cleansed us of our sins and made us righteous (right with God).
 - i. Romans 1:16–17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."
 - ii. 2 Corinthians 5:21: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
 - iii. "And this hope does not put to shame," or, as we may also translate, "does not disgrace" by remaining unfulfilled when the hour for fulfillment arrives. All other hopes put to shame; they do not rest on realities.⁶
- c. We have a confident expectation of the resurrection of Jesus and His return.

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5. Not only that.

⁵ Ibid, 320.

⁶ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1936), 339.

- a. We rejoice in our sufferings.
- b. Our endurance gives us a tried, proven character.
- c. This tried, proven character boosts our hope.
- d. And our hope does not put us to shame.