

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

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## When Trouble Comes

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### Introduction

It seems to me that very few Churches are teaching believers about dealing with troubles. It seems that the modern messages all deal with getting what you want from God and living a fulfilled, prosperous life. No thought is given to what God wants from us. We need to be aware that the Scriptures do not promise us a rose garden. In fact, it is just the opposite as Paul told Timothy, *“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* (2 Timothy 3:12 NASB)

The Scriptures speak of trials, tribulations, afflictions, persecution and other forms of trouble. I realize that there are differences and distinctions between these various aspects of trouble; but, the bottom line is that all of these are trouble for us and we need to know how we should handle them. Troubles as circumstances are neither good nor bad but designed by God to produce something in us.

In many Churches and other Christian circles you can't speak about any troubles that you may be experiencing because the leadership seems to imply that if you are truly spiritual you won't have any troubles. However, that is not what Jesus said:

**"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."** (John 16:33 NASB)

In Him we have peace; in the world we have tribulation—trouble, affliction, pressure. We physically live in the world; therefore, we will have trouble as a part of our life. It is not a question of “if” but a question of “when”.

In this issue of Present Truth Teaching Letter we will take a look at the reasons that we have trouble and how we should deal with it.

### Why is this Happening to Me?

Whenever real trouble comes to us our first response is usually, “why me?” or “why is this

happening to me?”. Then we add to it with “I’m a good person” or “I didn’t do anything wrong? We react this way because we have not been taught the biblical view of trouble. Trouble coming has nothing to do with whether we are good or bad (although being bad does produce consequences that can be real trouble for us). Normally, for the believer, trouble comes because of the work of the Lord in our life. This may be a shocking idea to some of you and it certainly contradicts some of the teachers who present you with a trouble free life if you will only have faith.

I think that we can all agree that Paul the Apostle had faith but look at what he said about some of his troubles:

Are they servants of Christ?--I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. (2 Corinthians 11:23-27 NASB)

Paul considered his troubles as proof that he was a servant of Christ. However, we tend to say, “but that was Paul, he was an exceptional apostle leading an exceptional life”. We tend to think of ourselves as leading ordinary lives in ordinary circumstances. But, God doesn’t think of us that way. If we have made a commitment to Christ then we are His servants and as such are subject to trouble. “*Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*” (Acts 14:22 NASB)

It is sobering to read Jesus’ explanation of what we call the parable of the sower. This is what He said about those whose hearts are rocky soil:

“In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. (Mark 4:16-17 NASB)

These are believers because they hear the word and receive it with joy. Then, when (not if) trouble comes because of the word they received, they fall away. Remember that the word is living and active and as sharp as a sword; it pierces asunder soul and spirit; it is a discerner, judge of the thoughts and intents of our heart (Hebrews 4:12). When the word goes to work in us it affects all aspects of our being and begins to conform us to the image of Christ. This will always produce some form of trouble.

If we don’t understand the ways of God, trouble can cause us to fall away from the things of God. This is what happened with the Children of Israel when they were in the wilderness.

“THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, ‘THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS’; (Hebrews 3:10 NASB)

They did not understand that the trouble that was happening to them in the wilderness was designed to teach them God’s ways.

"You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. (Deuteronomy 8:2-3 NASB)

Do you not think that God will do similar things to us in our personal wilderness in order to teach us His ways? After all, "...God is not one to show partiality," (Acts 10:34 NASB)

## Response to Trouble

Since it is a fact of life that trouble will come to us at some point in our walk with the Lord. The question is how will we respond to it? James gives us an answer.

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4 NASB)

Our troubles are designed to produce something good in us. Because of what troubles produce we should be joyful and embrace the troubles as an instrument of the Lord. Troubles cause us to endure in the ways of the Lord. They cause us to hold on to the Lord with all of our strength. This is how our faith is tested. Endurance is produced through long term testing. This results in a perfect result; that is, endurance will have its full effect in our lives. This causes us to be "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." Isn't that what we all want? To be "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing". The way that we get that is enduring through troubles.

However, because many of us are not being taught properly by our teachers about troubles, we don't know what to do when they come upon us. We are ignorant of the ways of God because no one has taught us about the purpose of going through troubles. However, James also gives us a simple answer to our dilemma.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5 NASB)

Wisdom is the application of the appropriate knowledge to our circumstances. God will give us wisdom about our troubles if we will ask Him for it. However, we must ask in faith not only believing that God will answer but also believing that what we receive is actually God's answer.

But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:6-8 NASB)

If we haven't been taught about God's ways it is hard to believe that we have truly received an answer from the Lord because, many times, the answer is at odds with what we have been taught. A positive confession, no negativity, feel good, rebuke the devil, denial of our circumstances will not help us endure. We must receive the Lord's wisdom concerning the troubles that have come upon us or they will not have the desired effect and will not produce endurance.

Remember, we must "count it all joy" but if we don't understand why then we need to ask God,

who will give us wisdom and understanding.

This is why we are able to do what Paul told the Thessalonians.

in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ([1 Thessalonians 5:18 NASB](#))

Notice that it is “in everything” not “for everything”. There is a difference. We don't thank God for troubles but in the middle of the troubles we can thank God for the work He is doing in us making us “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”.

For further expanded study along these topical ideas please see:

Process of Change Series: [Lesson 4: How the Process Works](#)

Paradigm Shift Series: [Place of Temptation](#)

Paradigm Shift Series: [Bad Decisions and Bad Counsel](#)

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