

## The Way of the Lord

### 15. Your Relationship With Your Father (Part 6)

We've been discussing how our Father uses distress, hardship and difficulty in your life to refine your faith and to draw you closer to His comforting heart. We know there may be times when you wonder if He's even *hearing* your cry. SUFFERING is to your spirit what BREATHING is to your body. Both authenticate *life!*

Rather than resisting or turning away from your Father during times of suffering, it's crucial that you learn why He's allowing it. Then you can cooperate with Him if the suffering is for your character development and His glory. Or, you can repent and confess your sin if He's chastening you. And while you're suffering, be sure to ask for WISDOM, which is having our Father's perspective.

Understanding from *His* viewpoint helps you mature in your faith. You'll grow in patient endurance so you'll keep pressing on in Father's purposes for you: *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the **testing** of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, Who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"* (James 1:2-5). When you seek to understand the painful events you're going through from *His* vantage point, you can more readily cooperate with Him in what He's trying to accomplish in *you*, and also in the people close to you.

Based on our own experiences and interaction with others, this next comparison will show you some of the changes your heavenly Father wants to make in each of His children:

#### Perception Before Trials & Suffering

- I'm okay just as I am.
- I'm hardly conscious of my sins.
- I'm rarely mindful of my heavenly Father.
- I read the Bible just to gain knowledge.
- My motives and goals are just as worldly as those of unbelievers.
- I live in fear of suffering or being rejected by people.
- I enjoy worship that suits my style and makes me feel good.
- Attending a service pretty much sums up my religious expression.
- I'm apathetic about whether people around me know Jesus as their Lord.

#### Realization After Trials & Suffering

- I'm fully aware of my own depravity.
- My heart grieves when I sin.
- My heart yearns for intimacy with my Father.
- The Bible is a life-giving resource that glorifies my Father and shows me what pleases Him.
- Through the Holy Spirit I diligently pursue a way of life that seeks to do my part in God's Kingdom.
- My love for my Father makes me want to live as Jesus would.
- My worship expresses a loving, grateful heart.
- I'm conscious each day to represent Jesus and His Kingdom to others.
- My heart is burdened through intercession and personal contact for others to embrace our Father's Covenant in Christ.

•I neither seek nor depend on the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

•I rely on the indwelling Spirit to guide, empower, comfort and convict me.

You can see from these examples how your Father wants to transform your character and motives to those of our Lord Jesus. He'll use suffering if He has to in order to bring about these changes. Don't lose sight of the fact that everything about your relationship with your Father must flow from *your heart*. You feel your relationship with Him deep inside yourself.

Your heavenly Father is not an academic topic you can just read about in the Bible. Rather, He's a divine reality that you must experience in your daily life. You need to persistently seek Him with all your heart. If you do, He promises He'll be found by you. (See Jeremiah 29:13.) And while He initially accepted you even with your sin nature and strongholds, He loves you too much to leave you that way. He planned long before you knew Him that you'd become more like His Son Jesus. That's because this is the way of the Lord.

For Further Study:

- Going To The High Places Study Guide*
- Mutually Growing Christ-like Relationships*

Each is a free download on our website: <[restorationministries.org](http://restorationministries.org)>