

為什麼基督徒要受苦

Why Christians Suffer

作者

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(7) We suffer to manifest the evil nature of evil men and the righteousness of the justice of God when it falls in judgment (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). Suffering at the hands of people (persecution, violent treatments) is used of God to fill up the measure of their sins. It shows the evil character of those who persecute others and the justice of God's judgment when it falls.

(8) We suffer to broaden our ministries (cf. Philippians 1:12-14 with 4:5-9). In the process of producing Christian character and enhancing our testimony to others, suffering often opens up doors for ministry we could never have imagined. Paul's imprisonment (chained daily to Roman soldiers in his own house) resulted in the spread of the gospel within the elite imperial Praetorian Guard. The Apostle was undoubtedly continuing to rejoice in the Lord, but if he had been complaining, sulking, and bitter, his witness would have been zero.

1 Ron Lee Davis, *Gold in the Making*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1983 p. 17-18.

2 Davis, p. 19. See also p. 32.

（七）我們受苦以特顯壞人邪惡的本質和 神在審判中的公義（帖撒羅尼迦前書 2:14-16）。遭人的苦害（如拘禁、暴行）是 神用以「充滿他們自己的罪惡」，這顯出那些拘禁人的惡行和當他們跌倒時 神審判的公義。

（八）我們以受苦拓展我們的侍奉（參閱腓立比書 1:12-14 和 4:5-9）。在產生基督徒的特質和增強我們對他人的見證的過程中，苦難常常為侍奉打開我們無法想像的大門。保羅的被囚（被羅馬兵用鏈子拴住在他自己的屋內）使福音在精銳禁衛軍中傳播。使徒保羅無庸置疑的繼續在主裏面喜樂，但如果他曾抱怨、生氣和懷恨，他的見證就等於零。

1 Ron Lee Davis, *Gold in the Making*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1983 年, 17-18 頁.

2 Davis, 19 頁. 亦見 32 頁。

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引言

為什麼是我？為什麼是現在？神究竟現在做什麼？苦難是神用來使我們注意和在我們生活中實現祂的目的之一種工具，它是用來建立我們對全能上帝的交托，但倘若要成功地達到神的目的，對苦難就需要有正確的回應。苦難迫使我們由單靠自己轉向信靠神的大能來生活。

苦難本身不是高潔的，亦不是一種聖潔的象徵，它又不是一個可於神手上得分或壓抑肉慾（就如禁慾主義般似的）的方法。若果可能的話，苦難是可以避免的。除非是等於不順服父神的旨意，基督也避開苦難。

遇亨通的日子，你當喜樂；遭患難的日子，你當思想。因為神使這兩樣並列，為的是叫人查不出身後有甚麼事。（傳道書 7:14）

下列的問題可以幫我們在遭患難的日子「思想」一下：

- 一．我現正怎樣回應呢？
- 二．我將會怎樣回應呢？
- 三．我從中學會了什麼呢？
- 四．我的回應是否表現出對神與其他人的信心和愛，基督徒的特質、價值觀、委身、優先次序等等？
- 五．神會怎樣用它在我的生命上呢？

給苦難下定義

細想想，究竟神放在我們生命的道路上的這些迂迴曲折是什麼？簡單而言，苦難就是所有傷害和激怒我們的。在神的設計裡，它又是一些使我們思想的事。苦難是神用來引起我們注意和在我們的生命中不可以沒有試探和激怒的情況下而成就祂的旨意的一種工具。

苦難的實例

「苦難可能是癌症或是喉嚨痛，或許是因失去至親的傷痛，又或是你個人在工作或功課上的失敗或者失望，它也許是在你辦公室或是教會內的一些謠言，損害你的聲譽，為你帶來悲傷和焦慮。」¹ 苦難可以是任何事，從微不足道的如被蚊咬，及至如但以理在獅子坑中面對獅子等（但以理書第六章）。

James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7: The key word is the proof of our faith. Proof is the word *dokimion* which looks at both the concept of testing which purifies, and the results, the proof that is left after the test. The Lord uses trials to test our faith in the sense of purifying it, to bring it to the surface, so we are forced to put our faith to work.

(5) We suffer to bring about continued dependence on the grace and power of God. Suffering is designed to cause us to walk by God's ability, power, and provision rather than by our own (2 Corinthians 11:24-32; 12:7-10; Ephesians 6:10f; Exodus 17:8f). It causes us to turn from our resources to His resources.

(6) We suffer to manifest the life and character of Christ (The Fruit of the Spirit) (2 Corinthians 4:8-11; Philippians 1:19f). This is similar to point (4) above with more emphasis on the process and defining the objective, the production of the character of Christ. This has both a negative and a positive aspect:

- a. **Negative:** Suffering helps to remove impurities from our lives such as indifference, self-trust, false motives, self-centeredness, wrong values and priorities, and human defense and escape mechanisms by which we seek to handle our problems (man-made solutions). Suffering in itself does not remove the impurities, but is a tool God uses to cause us to exercise faith in the provisions of God's grace. It is God's grace in Christ (our new identity in Christ, the Word and the Holy Spirit) that changes us. This negative aspect is accomplished in two ways:
 - (1) When out of fellowship with the Lord:** Suffering becomes discipline from our heavenly Father (Hebrews 5:5-11; 1 Corinthians 11:28-32; 5:1-5). This involves **known sin**, rebellion and indifference to God.
 - (2) When in fellowship:** Suffering becomes the loving and skillful handy work of the Vine Dresser to make us more productive. It involves **unknown sin**, areas we may not be aware of, but that are nevertheless hindering our growth and fruitfulness. In this case, suffering often constitutes mirrors of reproof (John 15:1-7).
- b. **Positive:** when believers live under suffering joyfully (i.e., they endure and keep on applying the promises and principles of the faith), Christ's life or character will be more and more manifested as they grow through the suffering (2 Corinthians 4:9-10; 3:18). This means trust, peace, joy, stability, biblical values, faithfulness, and obedience in contrast to sinful mental attitudes, blaming, running, complaining, and reactions against God and people.

雅各書 1:2-4；彼得前書 1:6-7：那關鍵詞就是「信心的憑證」，「憑證」就是 *dokimion* 那字，是同時指那試煉所煉淨的，和試煉後的結果與驗證。主以試煉來煉淨我們的信心，將其顯露出來，迫使我們把信心行出來。

(五) 我們受苦使我們對神的恩典和大能有持續的倚靠。 苦難使我們不要靠自己，而是倚靠 神的能力、力量和供應(哥林多後書 11:24-32；12:7-10；以弗所書 6:10f；出埃及記 17:8f)，它使我們從自己的謀略轉投到祂的資源。

(六) 我們受苦以顯露出基督的生命和性情(屬靈的果子)(哥林多後書 4:8-11；腓立比書 1:19f)。這點與上述第四點類似，特別着重於那過程和設定目標，就是產生出基督的性情。這是有正反兩方面的：

甲. 反面的： 苦難幫助我們除去生命中的雜質，例如冷漠、信自己、不良動機、自我中心、錯誤的價值觀的優先序、以及當我們尋求處理問題時所用的防禦和逃避機制(人的解決辦法)。苦難本身不能除去雜質，但它卻是一件 神用來使我們實踐那藉着神的恩典所供應而來的信心的工具。就是這 神在基督裡的恩典(我們在基督、祂的話語和聖靈裡簇新的身份)去改變我們。這反面的是以兩個途徑所達至的：

(一) 當與主的關係未復和時： 苦難成為從我們天上的父而來的管教(希伯來書 5:5-11；哥林多前書 11:28-32；5:1-5)，這包括所知的罪、反叛和對 神的冷漠。

(二) 當復和時： 苦難就成為葡萄酒工人忠誠的和熟練的手工一樣，使我們更有效益，這包括不知的罪、我們沒有留意的層面，但無論如何也阻礙我們的長進和收獲。在這種情況下，苦難時常構成斥責的鏡子(約翰福音 15:1-7)。

乙. 正面的： 當信徒喜樂地過受苦的生活時(即是他們忍耐並不住地實踐信心的應許和原則)，基督的生命和性情就因着他們在苦難中成長而越發彰顯(哥林多後書 4:9-10；3:18)。這表示信任、和平、喜樂、平穩、聖經的價值觀、忠實和服從，與滿有罪惡的內心的態度、指摘、逃走、抱怨和對 神和人的反應成為對照。

Introduction

Why me? Why now? What is God doing? Suffering is a tool God uses to get our attention and to accomplish His purposes in our lives. It is designed to build our trust in the Almighty, but suffering requires the right response if it is to be successful in accomplishing God's purposes. Suffering forces us to turn from trust in our own resources to living by faith in God's resources.

Suffering is not in itself virtuous, nor is it a sign of holiness. It is also not a means of gaining points with God, or of subduing the flesh (as in asceticism). When it is possible, suffering is to be avoided. Christ avoided suffering unless it meant acting in disobedience to the Father's will.

In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider God has made the one as well as the other so that man may not discover anything *that will be* after him. (Ecclesiastes 7:14)

The following questions are designed to help us "consider" in the day of adversity:

1. How am I responding to it?
2. How should I respond to it?
3. Am I learning from it?
4. Does my response demonstrate faith, love for God and for others, Christ-like character, values, commitment, priorities, etc.?
5. How can God use it in my life?

Suffering Defined

What are these bends in the road that God puts in the path of life that we are to carefully consider? Simply stated, suffering is anything which hurts or irritates. In the design of God, it is also something to make us think. It is a tool God uses to get our attention and to accomplish His purposes in our lives in a way that would never occur without the trial or irritation.

Illustrations of Suffering

It may be cancer or a sore throat. It may be the illness or loss of someone close to you. It may be a personal failure or disappointment in your job or school work. It may be a rumor that is circulating in your office or your church, damaging your reputation, bringing you grief and anxiety.¹ It can be anything that ranges from something as small and irritating as the bite of a mosquito to facing a lion in the lion's den as did Daniel (Daniel 6).

一般帶來苦難的原因

- (1) 我們受苦是因為我們生活在一個墮落的世界，在此罪支配了眾人的心。
- (2) 我們受苦是因為我們自己的愚昧，自食其果（加拉太書 6:7-9）。
- (3) 有時候我們受苦是因為這是神的管教。「因為主所愛的，他必管教，又鞭打凡所收納的兒子。」（希伯來書 12:6）
- (4) 我們可能因信而受逼迫—尤其是當我們在聖經上的爭論點堅持自己的立場，如為義受逼迫（提摩太後書 3:12）。

所有上述的未必適用於同一時間上。譬如不是所有的苦難都是因自己的愚昧，自我形造的痛苦，或者是罪所帶來的結果。但真的是，通常苦難很少沒有顯露出有需要或是軟弱的一方面，又或是需要被除去的錯誤態度，就如煉金過程需要被除去的浮渣一樣（比較彼得前書 1:6-7）。

因此，你們是大有喜樂。但如今在百般的試煉中暫時憂愁，叫你們的信心既被試驗，就比那被火試驗仍然能壞的金子更顯寶貴，可以在耶穌基督顯現的時候，得著稱讚、榮耀、尊貴。（彼得前書 1:6-7）

苦難的本質

（一）苦難是痛苦的。苦難是艱難的，它永不會是容易的。不論我們有多認識或者怎樣用心去應用所有的原則，它只會帶來傷害。（比較彼得前書 1:6—「試驗」的希臘文為 *lupeo*，解作「帶來痛苦、遺憾、悲傷」）

（二）苦難是會使人困惑的。有時苦難是難以理解的，我們或許已從聖經中認識到苦難的在神學上的一些原因，但當它突襲我們時，這仍然會是一個謎。為什麼是現在？神究竟現在做什麼？苦難是被設計成建立我們在全能者內的信心。

（三）苦難是意味深長的。苦難雖然是一個謎，卻不是沒有意義的。苦難的主要目的就是形成似基督的特質（羅馬書 8:28-29）。

(3) We suffer to keep down pride (2 Corinthians 12:7). The Apostle Paul saw his thorn in the flesh as an instrument allowed by God to help him maintain a spirit of humility and dependence on the Lord because of the special revelations he had seen as one who had been caught up to the third heaven.

(4) We suffer because it is a training tool. God lovingly and faithfully uses suffering to develop personal righteousness, maturity, and our walk with Him (Hebrews 12:5f; 1 Peter 1:6; James 1:2-4). In this sense, suffering is designed:

As discipline for sin to bring us back to fellowship through genuine confession (Psalm 32:3-5; 119:67).

As a pruning tool to remove dead wood from our lives (weaknesses, sins of ignorance, immature attitudes and values, etc.) The desired goal is increased fruitfulness (John 15:1-7). Trials may become mirrors of reproof to reveal hidden areas of sin and weakness (Psalm 16:7; 119:67, 71).

a. **As a tool for growth** designed to cause us to rely on the Lord and His Word. Trials test our faith and cause us to use the promises and principles of the Word (Psalm 119:71, 92; 1 Peter 1:6; James 1:2-4; Psalm 4:1—The Hebrew of this passage can mean, You have enlarged, made me grow wide by my distress). Suffering or trials teach us the truth of Psalm 62:1-8, the truth of learning to wait on the Lord **only**.

As a way of learning what obedience really means. It becomes a test of our loyalty (Hebrews 5:8). Illustration: If a father tells his son to do something he likes to do (i.e., eat a bowl of ice cream) and he does it, the child has obeyed, but he hasn't really learned anything about obedience. If his dad, however, asks him to mow the lawn, that becomes a test and teaches something about the meaning of obedience. The point is, obedience often costs us something and is hard. It can require sacrifice, courage, discipline, and faith in the belief that God is good and has our best interests at heart regardless of how things might appear to us. Regardless of the reason God allows suffering into our lives, rarely does it not reveal areas of need, weaknesses, wrong attitudes, etc., as it did in Job.

Suffering itself is not the thing that produces faith or maturity. It is only a tool that God uses to bring us to Himself so we will respond to Him and His Word. It forces us to turn from trust in our own resources to living by faith in God's resources. It causes us to put first things first. Ultimately, it is the Word and the Spirit of God that produces faith and mature Christlike character (Psalm 119:67, 71).

(三) **我們受苦是要征服驕傲** (哥林多後書 12:7)。使徒保羅視他肉體上的刺為一件 神容許的工具，幫助他保持有一個謙卑的靈和對主的倚靠，因為他曾被帶往第三層天上得見特別的啟示。

(四) **我們受苦因為這是一件訓練的工具**。神滿有愛和信地用苦難去建立個人的義、成熟、和與祂同行 (希伯來書 12:5f; 彼得前書 1:6; 雅各書 1:2-4) 為此，苦難被設計成為：

對罪的管教，藉着真正的懺悔把我們帶回團契的生活 (詩篇 32:3-5; 119:67)。

甲. **修剪的工具**，剪掉我們生命中的枯枝 (軟弱、愚昧的罪、不成熟的態度和價值觀等)，那希望達到的目標就是要多結果子 (約翰福音 15:1-7)。試煉就成為斥責的鏡子，顯露出罪和軟弱隱秘的一面 (詩篇 16:7; 119:67, 71)。

乙. **長進的工具**，使我們倚靠主和祂的話語。試煉測驗我們的信心和使我們行使聖經的應許和原則 (詩篇 119:71, 92; 彼得前書 1:6; 雅各書 1:2-4; 詩篇 4:1 —— 這篇在希伯來文中可解作：你已釋放，我在困苦中，你曾使我寬廣)。苦難或試煉教導我們詩篇 62:1-8 中的真理，就是學習「單單等候主」。

學習什麼是服從之真正意義的一種方法。它成為對我們的忠誠的一個考驗 (希伯來書 5:8)。舉例：假若一個父親叫其兒子去做一些他喜歡做的事 (例如吃一大杯雪糕)，他做了，孩子服從了，但他一點也沒有學會服從。但是如果他的爸爸是叫他去刈草，這就成為一個考驗，並教曉他何謂服從了。那要點是，服從是要我們付出和艱難的，是需要犧牲、勇氣、管教和信心，相信不論事情是怎樣也好，神是美善和為我們着想的。撇開 神容許有苦難的原因，苦難很少不顯露出有需要、軟弱或不正確態度等的地方，如同在約伯記中。

苦難本身不能製造出信心和成熟來的，它只是一件 神用來將我們帶到祂面前的工具，好使我們回應祂和祂的話語。苦難迫使我們從信靠自己的謀略轉向憑信心倚靠 神的供應，使我們把首要的放在最先，最終是神的話語和祂的靈創造出信心和成熟的、基督似的性格 (詩篇 119:67, 71)。

General Causes of Suffering

(1) We suffer because we live in a fallen world where sin reigns in the hearts of men.

(2) We suffer because of our own foolishness. We reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7-9).

(3) We sometimes suffer because it is God's discipline. For those whom the Lord loves he disciplines, and he scourges every son He receives? (Hebrews 12:6).

(4) We may suffer persecution because of our faith. Especially when we take a stand on biblical issues, i.e., suffering for righteousness sake (2 Timothy 3:12).

Of course, all of these do not apply at the same time. All suffering is not, for instance, a product of our own foolishness, self-induced misery, or sin. It is true, however, that rarely does suffering not reveal areas of need, areas of weakness, and wrong attitudes that need to be removed like dross in the gold-refining process (cf. 1 Peter 1:6-7).

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (1 Peter 1:6-7)

The Nature of Suffering

(1) Suffering is Painful. Suffering is hard; it is never easy. Regardless of what we know and how hard we apply the principles, it is going to hurt (cf. 1 Peter 1:6 [distressed] *lupeo*—to cause pain, sorrow, grief).

(2) Suffering is Perplexing. Suffering is somewhat mysterious. We may know some of the theological reasons for suffering from Scripture, yet when it strikes, there is still a certain mystery. Why now? What is God doing? Suffering is designed to build our trust in the Almighty.

(3) Suffering is Purposeful. Suffering is not without meaning in spite of its mystery. It has as its chief purpose the formation of Christ-like character (Romans 8:28-29).

我們曉得萬事都互相效力，叫愛神的人得益處，就是按他旨意被召的人。因為他預先所知道的人，就預先定下效法他兒子的模樣，使他兒子在許多弟兄中作長子。(羅馬書 8:28-29)

(四) 以苦難證明(試驗)自己。在雅各書 1:2 中的「試煉」，希臘文為 *peirasmos*，是指對某些事物的特性或完整性作出調查、測試和驗證。在下一節中的「試驗」，希臘文為 *dokimion*，意義相近，是指一個求證或證實的試驗。苦難就是驗證一個人的性格和人格，以及其信心的動機和質素。與彼得前書 1:6-7 比較，同樣的希臘字與動詞 *dokimazo* 一起用，解作「拿去做測試」，「以試金的測試來證明」等。

(五) 苦難是一個過程。既然是一個過程，這是需要時間的。神設法去成就對生命試煉的結果是需要時間，也因此而需要忍耐力。

羅馬書 5:3-4 不但如此，就是在患難中也是歡歡喜喜的。因為知道患難生忍耐，忍耐生老練，老練生盼望；

雅各書 1:3-4 因為知道你們的信心經過試驗，就生忍耐。但忍耐也當成功，使你們成全完備，毫無缺欠。

(六) 苦難是一種淨化器。無論如何，即使那不是神對公然的肉慾的管教，它也是一種對我們這生也不能成為完美的人的淨化器。

腓立比書 3:12-14 這不是說我已經得著了，已經完全了，我乃是竭力追求，或者可以得著基督耶穌所以得著我的(註：“所以得著我的”或作“所要我得的”)。弟兄們，我不是以為自己已經得著了，我只有的一件事，就是忘記背後，努力面前的，向著標竿直跑，要得神在基督耶穌裡從上面召我來得的獎賞。

Before affliction	Straying and ignoring (v. 67a)
During and in affliction	Learning and turning (v. 71, cf. vs. 59)
When under affliction we need to:	(1) Determine Causes if we can (Is it because of something I have done?) (2) Determine Objectives (What is God wanting to do in my life or in others?) (3) Determine Solutions (How does God want me to handle this?)
After affliction	(1) Knowing and changing (vs. 67b, 97-102) (2) Resting and valuing (vs. 65, 72)

We must understand God's chief purpose for our lives is to be conformed to the image of Christ and He has determined in His plan to use suffering for our spiritual development. If we are going to endure suffering and the trials of life, however, we must also understand and believe in the other purposes and reasons for suffering as they are related to the chief purpose.

Purposes and Reasons for Suffering

(1) We suffer as a testimony, as a witness (2 Timothy 2:8-10; 2 Corinthians 4:12-13; 1 Peter 3:13-17). When believers handle suffering joyfully and with stability, it becomes a marvelous testimony to the power and life of Christ that we claim and name. Suffering provides key opportunities to manifest and magnify the power of God through His servants in order to verify and confirm the messenger and his message. It provides opportunities to reveal our credentials as ambassadors of Christ (1 Kings. 17:17-24; John 11:1-45). This includes the following areas:

To glorify God before the angelic world (Job 1-2; 1 Peter 4:16).

To manifest the power of God to others (2 Corinthians 12:9-10; John 9:3).

To manifest the character of Christ in the midst of suffering as a testimony to win others to Christ (2 Corinthians 4:8-12; 1 Peter 3:14-17).

(2) We suffer to develop our capacity and sympathy in comforting others (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).

痛苦之前	迷失和逃避 (67 節上)
痛苦當中	學習和回轉 (71 節, 對比 59 節)
在痛苦中我們需要:	(一) 如果我們可以的話就去找出原因 (是不是因為我做了些什麼?) (二) 找出目的 (神要在我或者其他人的生命作什麼呢?) (三) 找出答案 (神想我怎樣處理呢?)
痛苦之後	(一) 認知和改變 (67 節下, 97-102 節) (二) 安息和評估 (65, 72 節)

我們必須明白 神在我們生命中的主要目的是要我們順應基督的形象, 在祂的計劃裡祂已經決定用苦難作為我們靈性上的操練。但如果我們將要忍受苦難和人生的試煉, 我們亦必須明白和相信與這個主要目的相關的其他目的和原因。

苦難的目的和原因

(一) 我們受苦是要作見證、做證人 (提摩太後書 2:8-10; 哥林多後書 4:12-13; 彼得前書 3:13-17)。當信徒喜樂和平穩地處理苦難時, 這就成為對我們時常聲稱和述說基督的大能和生命的一個令人驚奇的見證。苦難提供重要的機會藉着 神的僕人去彰顯和讚美祂的能力, 以驗證和確立祂的使者和訊息。它給予機會我們去展現作基督特使的憑證 (列王紀上 17:17-24; 約翰福音 11:1-45)。這包括以下範疇:

在天使的世界前歌頌 神 (約伯記 1-2; 彼得前書 4:16)。

向其他人展示 神的能力 (哥林多後書 12:9-10; 約翰福音 9:3)。

在苦難當中展示基督的性情, 作為為基督贏得生命的見證 (哥林多後書 4:8-12; 彼得前書 3:14-17)。

(二) 我們受苦是要建立我們安慰其他人的能力和憐憫 (哥林多後書 1:3-5)。

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; (Romans 8:28-29)

(4) Suffering Proves (tests) Us. Trials in James 1:2 is the Greek *peirasmos* and refers to that which examines, tests, and proves the character or integrity of something. Testing in this same verse is *dokimion* which has a similar idea. It refers to a test designed to prove or approve. Suffering is that which proves one's character and integrity along with both the object and quality of one's faith. Compare 1 Peter 1:6-7 where the same Greek words are used along with the verb *dokimazo* which means, put to the test, prove by testing as with gold.

(5) Suffering is a Process. As a process, it takes time. The results God seeks to accomplish with the trials of life require time and thus also, endurance.

Romans 5:3-4 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; James 1:3-4 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

(6) Suffering is a Purifier. No matter the reason, even if it is not God's discipline for blatant carnality, it is a purifier for none of us will ever be perfect in this life.

Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

(七) **苦難帶來機會。**苦難為 神的榮耀、我們的轉變、見證和侍奉等帶來機會。(見以下所述苦難的原因)

(八) **苦難需要我們的合作。**若要成功地成就 神的目的，苦難就需要有正確的回應。「我們全都只想要成果——性格，但我們卻不想要那過程——苦難」² 因為我們是人，我們不能要這不要那。

(九) **苦難是預定或指定的。**

彼得前書 1:6 因此，你們是大有喜樂。但如今在百般的試煉中暫時憂愁，

彼得前書 4:12 親愛的弟兄啊，有火煉的試驗臨到你們，不要以為奇怪（似乎是遭遇非常的事），

(十) **苦難是無可避免的。**我們一定要面對的問題不是「如果」我們生命中要經歷試煉，而是我們怎樣去面對它們。

帖撒羅尼迦前書 3:3 免得有人被諸般患難搖動，因為你們自己知道，我們受患難原是命定的。

彼得前書 4:19 所以，那照 神旨意受苦的人要一心為善，將自己靈魂交與那信實的造化之主。

(十一) **苦難是一種掙扎。**這一直都會是一場爭戰，之所以為什麼叫做「試煉」和「試驗」。就算當我們明白苦難的用意和原則，以及知悉 神在對處理苦難的話語當中應許的愛和關顧，面對試煉亦不是容易事，因為苦難傷害我們。試煉只是給我們對其過程合作的量度（雅各書 1:4），它們容讓那過程作工和讓我們體驗到在試煉當中內心的平安和喜樂。

若要以內心的平安和寧靜來處理苦難，我們必須仰望 神在苦難中的用意和原因。這需要對 神永恒的真理有信心。

試比較詩人在詩篇 119 篇所表明在痛苦裡的祝福：

(7) Suffering Provides Opportunity. Suffering provides opportunity for God's glory, our transformation, testimony, and ministry, etc. (See reasons for suffering given below.)

(8) Suffering Requires Our Cooperation. Suffering requires the right response if it is to be successful in accomplishing God's purposes. We all want the product, character; but we don't want the process, suffering. ² Because of our make up as human beings, we can't have one without the other.

(9) Suffering is Predetermined or Appointed.

1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

(10) Suffering is Inevitable. The question we must each face is not, if we are going to have trials in life, but how will we respond to them?

1 Thessalonians 3:3 so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.

1 Peter 4:19 Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

(11) Suffering is a Struggle. It's going to be a battle all the way. That's why they are called trials and testings. Even when we understand the purposes and principles of suffering, and we know the promises of God's love and concern given in the Word of God for handling suffering, dealing with the trials of life is never easy because suffering hurts. Trials simply give us the capacity to cooperate with the process (James 1:4). They allow the process to work and allow us to experience inner peace and joy in the midst of the trials.

In order to handle suffering with inner joy and tranquility, we must be able to look ahead to God's purposes and reasons for suffering. This requires faith in the eternal verities of God.

Compare the blessings of affliction as seen in the testimony of the Psalmist in Psalm 119: