

How Should We Christians Respond When Under Fire?

A Study Outline

- I. **We can be certain that, when chosen of our Father to be His servant, we will have trials and sufferings, many of which we never dreamed would come upon us.**
- A. Romans 8:16-17. *“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”*
 - B. Acts 14:22. *“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”*
 - C. Matthew 10:34-39. Jesus Christ came not to send peace to the earth, but a sword and much conflict.
 - C. II Timothy 2:11-12. *“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:”*
 - E. II Timothy 3:10-12. *“But you have fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”*
 - F. Psalm 34:17-20. *“The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones: not one of them is broken.”*
- II. **We really ought to welcome these trials, even though they cause plenty of discomfort, because they are for our own good!**
- A. James 1:2-4. *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”*
 - B. Matthew 5:10-12. *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”*
 - C. II Timothy 2:12-13. *“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abides faithful: he cannot deny himself.”*
 - D. II Corinthians 8:1-2. *“Moreover, brethren, we must inform you of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.”*
 - E. I Peter 1:6-7. *“Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious*

than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”

F. Trials and sufferings are for a purpose: to build the character in you the Father wants!

Yet, He will not place on you more trials and sufferings than you can bear. I Corinthians 10:13. *“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

III. We must look to Jesus Christ and see how He bore up under extreme suffering to see how we must also bear up (I John 2:6; I Peter 2:21). Look especially at the last hours of His physical life here on earth.

A. His mental suffering.

1. Luke 22:39-46. Note the great agony He experienced during the minutes before Judas betrayed Him, and how great beads of sweat, perhaps even mingled with blood, dripped from Him.
2. Still, He kept His composure, and was given an angel to comfort Him.
3. He did not even lose sight of the needs of His adversaries at this time, as shown by His healing of Malchus’ ear, which Peter had cut off. Luke 22:49-51.

B. His physical suffering.

1. Matthew 26:65-68. His adversaries spit in His face and hit Him. See also Isaiah 50:6 and Lamentations 3:30.
2. Matthew 27:24-31. He was scourged, and a crown of thorns was placed on His head.
3. John 10:17-30. A death by crucifixion is one of the most painful ways to die.

IV. Jesus Christ showed us that, when under fire by this world’s evil (see I Peter 5:8), we must do the following:

A. Take your trials patiently, realizing that they are for a great purpose: to build Godly character in you.

1. James 1:2-4. *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience; But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”*
2. I Peter 1:7. *“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”*
3. I Peter 2:19-24. *“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were you called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed.”*

B. When under fire we should strive to do good, if possible, to the party that is persecuting us.

1. Romans 12:17-21. *“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him;*

if he thirsts, give him drink; for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on this head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

2. Leviticus 19:18. *“You shall no avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord.”*
3. Proverbs 20:22. *“Say not you, I will recompense evil, but wait on the Lord, and he shall save you.”*
4. Proverbs 24:29. *“Say not, I will do so to him as he has done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.”*
5. Proverbs 25:21-22. *“If your enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For you shall heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.”*
6. I Thessalonians 5:15-22. *“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.”*
7. Matthew 5: 43-48. The Beatitudes speak eloquently on how we ought to respond to trials and tests.
8. I Corinthians 6:1-8. We ought to “eat crow” rather than involve lawyers from the world.
9. I Peter 3:8-9. *“Finally, be you all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing.”*
10. II Kings 6:8-23. Rather than destroy the Syrian army, Elijah ordered that the army be fed!

V. As the servants of Jesus Christ we ought to take our sufferings patiently while under fire, pray for deliverance, and let our heavenly Father fight our battles for us. He will not fail us!

A. Notice how Jesus, even under extreme pressure and pain during the crucifixion, responded to those around Him with love and compassion. He was in total control of His spirit.

1. Luke 23:26-34, 39-43.
2. Luke 23:46. *“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into your hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”*
3. John 10:25-27. He even thought of the care needed for His mother after His death while He hung on the stake.

B. We likewise must have control over our spirits, even in times of great distress, for we know that God always cares for us and will deliver us out of all evil.

1. Proverbs 16:32. *“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city.”*
2. Psalms 34:17-19. *“The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all.”*
3. I Peter 5:6-7. *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you.”*