

LESSONS IN HARD TIMES

I Peter 4:12-19

EXPECT TRIALS

I Peter 4:12 In spite of Peter's warning, believers are often surprised when hard times come. Nero was one of history's most wicked people and was persecuting the church at the time of Peter's writing.

I Peter 4:4 Often times we are surprised by the source of our trials as were some of the believers at the time Peter was writing to them. Friends and relatives are often times the first wave of criticism.

John 15:18-19 Jesus had told the believers that friends, neighbors and other unbelievers would persecute and hate them because of their unbelief and hatred of Christ.

Mark 13:9; Matt. 23:31; Acts 20:28-31 Jesus and Paul had warned that trials would not only come from the world around us but would also come from those people who we look upon as religious.

REJOICE IN TRIALS

I Peter 4:13-14; James 1:2-4 Enduring trials is one thing, but to joy in them is something else. Only God can give us the peace and spiritual joy in the midst of a trial. We do not joy in the suffering itself, but we can have joy in that God knows what is happening and ultimately He will do whatever is best.

Acts 5:40-41 As the disciples preached and taught people the gospel of Christ they suffered trials and persecution but counted it an honor to suffer for Jesus Christ's sake.

I Peter 4:13; I John 2:28 We can only guess what it will be like to see Jesus coming in the clouds for His bride but we can believe His word when he says that if we rejoice in our trials for the gospel's sake we will be able to be glad and not ashamed when we see Him face to face.

I Peter 4:14; Acts 6:15 When believers are persecuted and suffer for Christ and understand that God is allowing it for His glory then some attribute of God's character will be seen in them by others.

Romans 8:29; Hebrews 5:8 One of the most important reasons for trials and persecution because of our testimony in Christ is that we are being conformed and sanctified into a better servant for God.

EXAMINATION IN TRIALS

I Peter 4:15 The next few verses suggest three questions we need to consider when we are facing trials. If I have brought about these trials because of some hidden sin in my life I should not sulk and snifle about it but get it confessed and repent of it.

I Peter 4:16 If I am suffering for a good testimony regarding standing for Christ and without having unconfessed sin in my life, then I should seek to honor God and make Him look good in my suffering.

I Peter 4:17-18; Ezekiel 9:4-6; I Corinthians 11:31-32 Have I examined my life of sin and carnality realizing that God must judge the entire world and every person someday? God has warned us that judgment is coming and we can save ourselves much heartache by repentance and self judgment.

TRUST GOD IN TRIALS

I Peter 4:19; I Thessalonians 5:24; Philippians 1:6 The bible is clear that God is faithful to do all that He says He will do. We can '*commit*' our lives, our trials to Him because we know He loves us.

Romans 8:28-29; 8:36; II Corinthians 1:8-10 God is faithful in that He does everything for our good and for His glory. He will put us in situations that are beyond our own abilities to control so that we must lean and trust on His grace, mercy, love and kindness.