

If we are genuine believers in Jesus Christ, entrusting our lives to His saving grace, we are to expect that some of the time, we WILL experience opposition to and even persecution because of our faith (John 16:33, 2 Timothy 3:12). This brochure examines what we are to do, according to the Bible, since that Book is our Word from God, to give light and guidance to our path of life.

A Biblical Basis for Living for Christ

(Of course, if you want to study with accuracy, use a good translation of the Bible when you read it – not a paraphrase and not something that is marketed as a “translation” but isn’t based on original languages.)

It is important to read the Scripture in its context of surrounding verses, including the “to whom” a direction is given and in what circumstance/when, so that we can rightly interpret and apply principles to our lives today. For example, at one point, Jesus told his disciples to take nothing (Luke 10:3-5, 22:35). Later, He told them to take a sword (Luke 22:36). Then, He said to put the sword away (John 18:11) and no physical weapon was ever again taken up by a true follower of Christ in the Scripture describing the early Church and its godly example which God gave to us as a pattern. While the nation of Israel was told to fight physical battles against other nations for specific purposes, there are no records of God’s apostles physically combatting their opposition, even when persecuted severely. (That is, not after the apostles’ conversion. Yes, beforehand, Peter cut off a man’s ear with a sword and Paul eagerly participated in the harm of others under religious zeal. But after

their lives were made new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), their attitudes and actions were transformed 180° to reflect God’s grace.) And there are no verses directing Christians to engage in anything other than a spiritual battle with spiritual weapons in clear contrast to physical ones (2 Cor. 10:4). “Fighting the good fight of faith” refers only to a spiritual battle which is not against “flesh and blood” (Eph. 6:11-12). Our weapons are an armor of light, the Word of God, and prayer.

A plain, sensible, straightforward reading of the Bible with depending on the Holy Spirit to teach the heart of the reader is all what God would have expected of people in first century Christianity; thus we have no need to find other meanings based on academic scholarship which sometimes can complicate and distort the truth with human wisdom including post-Biblical church history and pragmatism. Simply read God’s Word and let Him show you how you should live as you understand its pages. This is where we find all the truth we really need and it is the truth that sets us free, even when the world (self-seeking system), the flesh (our selfish desires), and the devil (our accuser and enemy) try to crush that truth within us and within the culture we live in. Keep trusting our Lord, always! He’ll never leave us alone (Hebrew 13:5).

Why do we suffer?

The Bible tells us of a number of reasons that we experience suffering and trouble during our time on this earth.

- Our own foolishness (1 Peter 2:20)

- For taking a stand for righteousness and faith (1 Peter 3:14-15, Eph. 6:12-18, Rev. 12:10, Rom. 8:33-39)
- A specific sin (1 Cor. 11:31, Gal. 6:7)
- Our sinful nature, living in a fallen world (Rom. 5:12, Rom. 8:21-23)
- A higher purpose of God, showing His will, so that He is praised (Acts 7:6-7, 9:16, John 9:3b)
- To train us, strengthen our walk (Heb. 12:6, 10, Rom. 5:3, John 15:2, 8)
- To test our faith for genuineness (Job 23:10)
- To be able to comfort others (2 Cor.1:4)
- To remind us of our Saviour and Lord Jesus, Who He is, of His perspective on suffering, and eternity (Heb. 12:1-3).

How should we respond when we suffer for the sake of truth and righteousness?

There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18 ESV

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 KJV

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor

of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Romans 13:11-14 NKJV

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared... Titus 3:1-4 ESV

A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1 NKJV

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. Be not thou one of them that strike hands... Proverbs 22:24-26a KJV

Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not...Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth 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, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:14, 17-21 KJV

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend

from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. James 3:13-18 NKJV

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; Proverbs 24:17 NKJV

But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Luke 6:35-36 KJV

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:15 ESV

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight...but now My kingdom is not from here." John 18:36 NKJV

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. Colossians 2:8 NKJV

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled. Hebrews 12:14-15 NKJV

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. James 1:26 ESV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation....For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 1 Peter 2:11-16 NKJV

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To be clear, if a direction or command from anyone forbids us to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, we are to obey God instead of man (Acts 5:28-29) and remain ready to do any good (not bad) work (Titus 3:1, Rom. 14:23b, 12:1-2, Heb. 13:18).

The purpose of “where” we live is so that people of any nation might seek the Lord and find hope in Him (Acts 17:26-27).

The context of Romans 13:4 is about a government judicial system that is filled with pagan/non-Christian officers and leaders, yet it is ordained by God to administer a level of control over its people, of whatever amount

that God allows for them to have for His higher purposes. Yes, Christians might serve in a military or in a police force if that is where God clearly calls them to serve and if they can do so without compromising their faith and conscience before Him, or if they are sadly forced. And in doing this, be in a group serving in such a way that more people’s lives are spared. Jesus didn’t direct His followers to live in a population of only themselves but rather, that both “wheat and tares” grow together until the harvest that God Himself brings when He returns to be King and conquers evil at that time (Mark 13:27, Matthew 13:28-30, 36-43, Revelation 19:15, 21). (The *Got Questions* website explains the difference between a “just war” (which is potential to serve in), a “holy war”, and “Christian vigilantes” (both of which are opposite to Biblical Christianity). *Gary Gilley’s* website explains the recent rise of “Christian nationalism”.)

As Christians, we humbly seek to serve the One Who gave Himself for us all our days, whether those be long or short, laden with opportunities of liberty or burdened with great hardship. Let us look to Him, the Author and the Finisher of our faith, Who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising its shame, and is victorious for our peace and rest. Let us run with patience, the race He has marked out for us, laying aside our sin and any self-seeking desires which would entangle us and end up maligning the Word of God and damage a living testimony of our Lord. Let us “consider Him Who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.” (from Hebrews 12, Titus 2, 2 Corinthians 6:3).

Suffering as a Christian

Are you Biblically prepared to be faithful to the Lord?

