

Lesson 21-23

Christianity Based on Understanding Affliction

I. The victorious Christian life includes _____.

A. There are several words that are associated with the concept of affliction.

1. These words include some of the following:

- Affliction
- Adversity
- Chastening
- Distress
- Opposition
- Persecution
- Pressure
- Purging
- Suffering
- Testing
- Tribulation
- Trials
- Trouble

2. None of these words minister very well to the feeling or _____ side of our lives (Ps. 32:4a).

3. All of these words can be summarized with one phrase, “the _____” (Heb. 12:7).

B. There are different _____ from which trials and tribulations may come.

1. They can come as a _____ from the devil and his agents (Rev. 2:10).

2. They can come from _____ who seek us harm (Acts 20:19).

3. They can come as a result of our own _____ and decisions (Ps. 107:17).

4. They can come as part of _____ for our lives (Pro. 3:11-12).

C. There are several passages of scripture that _____ affliction as a part of our lives as Christians.

1. Hebrews 12:3-11

For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet

resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

2. Hebrews 10:32-36, NLT

Don't ever forget those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering. Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail. When all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew you had better things waiting for you in eternity. Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord, no matter what happens. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.

3. I Peter 4:12-16

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

Problems do not indicate that you are out of the will of God (I Pet. 4:19).

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

4. Psalm 34:19

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

5. I Thessalonians 3:1-3

Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.

6. John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

7. Acts 14:21-22

And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

II. There is a purpose for the dealings of God.

A. We _____ the dealings of God in our life.

1. We need the dealings of God because we have _____ at perfection (Phil. 1:6, Amp.).
2. We need the dealings of God because there are _____ in our life that keep us from perfection (Ps. 19:12b).
3. We need the dealings of God because we often need _____ outside of ourselves to continue to progress toward perfection.

B. God has a purpose in His dealings with us.

1. God wants to change us _____ (II Cor. 3:18).
 - a. We need to go through a metamorphosis much like the caterpillar does so that it can become a beautiful _____.
 - b. We need to go through the same kind of change that took place when a talent of gold was made into a beautiful _____ to bear light (Ex. 25:31-40). It was of beaten work.
2. God wants to _____ from our lives (Is. 1:22, 25; Mal. 3:3).

The smelting process looks a lot like what God does in our lives (Ps. 66:10).

- a. He digs us out of the quarry of this world as _____ (Is. 51:1).
 - b. He puts us into the _____ of affliction and trials (Job 28:1; Is. 48:10).
 - c. He skims off _____ that is revealed by the process.
 - d. He stamps us with His _____ as a logo on a gold bar.
 - e. He sends it to the jeweler to make a beautiful piece of _____ (Pro. 25:4).
3. God wants to cleanse us and wash our _____ (Mal. 3:2; Zech. 3:3-4).
 4. God wants produce greater _____ from our lives (John 15:1-2, 5, 8).

The pruning process involves cutting away _____ areas of our life. He is not just looking for leaves, he is looking for fruit (Mt. 21:19; John 15:16).

5. God wants to prepare a _____ for His service (Jer. 18:1-6; Is. 64:8; II Tim. 2:20-21).

The clay also went through a process before it could be used as a vessel of honor. This process involved sifting, spinning, pressure and fire.

- a. It had to be dug from the earth and _____.
 - b. It had to be moistened and made into _____.
 - c. It had to be put on a _____.
 - d. It had to respond to the _____ of the potter's hands both on the outside and the inside.
 - e. It had to go through _____ to be tempered and hardened.
 - f. If it cracked in the fire it was either thrown out or _____ to start the process over again.
6. God wants to bring _____ to our lives (Ps. 4:1, Amp.).

The Hebrew word in this passage that is translated “enlarged” means “to broaden, to make wide, to make room or to open up.”

7. God wants to _____ to seek Him (Job 36:15; Hos. 5:15; Ps. 119:67).
8. God wants to shape us into _____ that is sharp and that will accurately hit the intended target (Is. 49:1-2).

Each arrow is constructed individually with a certain type of use in mind.

- a. An arrow is made from a branch that has been _____.
- b. The branch is _____ of its bark to become a shaft.
- c. The shaft is whittled, _____ and polished.
- d. A _____ or an arrow head is put on the arrow.
- e. The arrow is kept in _____ until the perfect occasion for this particular arrow arises.

III. The key to understanding affliction is gaining a proper perspective.

“When I am getting the worst of it, God is making the most of it to see that I get the best of it.” --Dr. C.S. Lovett

God’s purpose in every trial is to do us good in the end (Deut. 8:15-16).

- A. Our afflictions can work _____ us (II Cor. 4:16-18).

Afflictions can test various things in our lives:

1. They can test the strength of our _____ (Mt. 7:24-27).
2. They can test the genuineness of our _____ (I Pet. 1:6-7).
3. They can test our motivation and our _____ (I Cor. 3:12-15).
4. They can test our _____ (Pro. 17:17).
5. They can produce Christian _____ in us (Rom. 5:3-5).

- B. Our afflictions are part of the “all things” that work together _____ (Rom. 8:28).

- C. Our afflictions are part of our complete _____ Christ (Rom. 8:17; Phil 3:10; Col. 1:24).

- D. Our afflictions can destroy _____ and produce patience and humility (Deut. 8:1-5; II Cor. 12:7-10; Jam. 1:2).
- E. Our afflictions can position us to be _____ in our ministry to others (II Cor. 1:3-7; Heb. 4:15).
- F. Our afflictions can lead to a display of God's _____ (John 9:1-2; 11:3-4; Rom. 8:18).
- G. Our afflictions can become a _____ of the power and faithfulness of God (Ps. 34:19; II Cor. 4:7-12).
- H. Our afflictions can be _____ of God's ways (Ps. 119:71; Is. 30:20-21).
- I. Our afflictions can do for us what adverse winds do for _____.

Note: The following points are extracted from *Understanding the Winds of Adversity*, Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, Supplementary Alumni Book, Volume 7, 1981.

1. Turbulent winds cause the eagle to fly _____.
2. Turbulent winds give the eagle a _____.
3. Turbulent winds lift the eagle above _____.
4. Turbulent winds allow the eagle to use _____.
5. Turbulent winds allow the eagle to stay up _____.
6. Turbulent winds help the eagle to fly _____.

IV. Not all affliction is designed by God.

- A. Some of the affliction that we experience is the fruit of our _____ (Ps. 107:17, 19; I Cor. 11:31-32).

The following are some of the things that will produce long lasting problems:

1. Repaying evil for good (Pro. 17:13).
2. A lack of true repentance (Pro. 28:13).

3. A lack of respect for parents and other authorities (Pro. 20:20).
 4. Being greedy for gain (Pro. 15:27).
 5. Robbing the needy (Pro. 22:22-23; 14:21; 17:5; 21:13; 28:27).
 6. A lack of personal discipline and receiving instruction (Pro. 5:21-23).
 7. A lack of complete commitment to Jesus Christ (Pro. 13:21; Ps. 32:10; Is. 47:10-15).
 8. Being careless with your lips (Pro. 21:23).
 9. Associating with fools (Pro.13:20).
 10. Being lazy (Pro. 6:11; 19:15; 20:4, 13; 28:19).
- B. The only way to escape long lasting problems is to repent, change and begin sowing for a _____ (Rev. 3:19; Pro. 28:13).

V. There is a proper way to respond to the dealings of God.

- A. We are to _____ (Mt. 10:22; II Tim. 4:5; Jam. 5:7-11).
1. This means that we _____.
 2. This means that we do not _____ from.
 3. This means that we let patience have its _____.
- B. We are to count it all _____ (Jam. 1:2).
- C. We are to remain _____ (Rev. 2:8-10).
- D. We are to _____ (I Th. 5:16-18).