

**Read: 1 Peter 4:12-19**

## Endure the Test(s)

### **1 Peter 4:12-13**

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

“Guess what, class!” The students looked at Mr. Daniels with big, wide eyes. They learned that when Mr. Daniels said those words, it could be either really good news or really bad news. They were all hoping for extra recess time on this day. “Guess what, class! We are going to have a test today—right now!” Ugh! So much for recess!

The students were not very ready for this test, but they were used to it. Mr. Daniels challenged them all the time in school. They played games to review facts about the presidents. They always did one minute math fact sheets. And yes, they unfortunately had quizzes and tests *all the time*.

Many years later when those students were in high school, they thought about their classes with Mr. Daniels. And you know what? They were thankful! They were thankful for all the times Mr. Daniels pushed them to learn more. Yes, they were even thankful for the tests. The students all realized that they were better students and high school was easier because of the way that Mr. Daniels tested them.

Students shouldn't be surprised when they get tested, and neither should Christians. The tests for Christians have nothing to do with math or reading. Sometimes Christians are tested by our friends. When everyone else is doing something wrong and sinful, will we join them, or will we do what is right? Sometimes Christians are tested when life is tough. When bad things happen in the world, will we trust that God will help us? When someone is sick or dying, will we put trust in Jesus our Savior and his promise of heaven?

Peter reminds us today that we shouldn't be surprised by tests in our lives, as if something strange is happening to us. Difficult things will happen in a sinful world! If Jesus suffered in a sinful world, we certainly will too.

However, we can also rejoice when we are tested in this life because we know what will happen after all these tests—we will be in heaven! Some day soon we will be with Jesus in the place where there are no sicknesses or diseases, no tears or sadness, no suffering or dying. Just as

Jesus suffered, died, and rose in glory, so will we suffer in this life, die, and then rise to glory in heaven. It may not be easy to do at first, but rejoice when life is difficult because soon you will rejoice in the peace and glory of heaven!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Think of two bad things that make people suffer in this world.
- Why do we look forward to heaven so much?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- When you pray about your suffering and struggles, explain why Jesus is able to understand you so well.
- How does Jesus help us with our suffering and struggles?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Describe what you think life is like for a person who suffers without the hope of heaven.
- When life is difficult, it can be easy to lose focus on what Jesus promises to us in heaven. Think of one way you can stay more focused on the hope of eternal life.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, sometimes this life is very difficult. Remind me that just as you suffered, so will I suffer. But even more, remind me always that you have given me the gift of heaven where there will never be any suffering or pain. Thank you for this! Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 465:1,4 – Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken**

Jesus, I my cross have taken, All to leave and follow you.  
Destitute, despised, forsaken, You on earth once suffered, too.  
Perish ev'ry fond ambition, All I've ever hoped or known;  
Yet how rich is my condition! God and heav'n are still my own.

Haste, my soul, from grace to glory, Armed by faith and winged by prayer.  
All but heav'n is transitory; God's own hand shall guide you there.  
Soon shall end this earthly story; Swift shall pass the pilgrim days,  
Hope soon change to heav'nly glory, Faith to sight and prayer to praise.