

What About ... Trials Do They Strengthen Our Faith?

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Many (I'd guess most) Christians believe trials strengthen their faith. Anyway, there are many sermons, books, testimonies, and experiences which claim so. But is that idea biblical?

Actually:

There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that trials strengthen our faith

And it's important because it gets people looking to the wrong source for strengthening their faith. Let's take a look at some examples. Just what can *trials* do and not do?

Jesus told Peter:

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers (Luke 22:31-32).

So if Peter's faith didn't fail, he would be better able to **strengthen his brothers**. But we read nothing about the trial strengthening his faith (same with 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Peter wrote this:

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:6-7).

So testing a believer's faith may **result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ**. But the text says nothing about it resulting in more faith here on earth.

James said we should:

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (James 1:2-4).

So James says we should rejoice at trials because **they produce endurance** and the completion of maturity. James says nothing about the trials producing more faith or improving our faith.

We can see that:

- Trials can improve our capacity for ministry (Luke

22:32), but do not improve our faith.

- Trials can result in greater rewards in heaven (1 Peter 1:6-7), but do not improve our faith.
- Trials can produce endurance (James 1:2-4), but not more or better faith.

Trials **prove** our faith but do **not improve** our faith. Trials are like tests in school. They test our knowledge, but their purpose is not to give us more knowledge. As a result of being tested, we may be qualified for a better job or position, but the test was never about giving us more or better knowledge. In the same way, tests of our faith are not about giving us more faith. Faithful people have trials and come out stronger and more mature. Weak-faith people have trials and doubt their faith. Atheists have trials and say: "See. If there was a God, He would have not allowed this."

There is only one thing that creates and improves faith — **revelation!** The patriarchs, prophets, and apostles were willing to die for their faith because they had direct revelation from God. We don't have that, but we do have a record of that. That record is the Bible. If you want to strengthen your faith, read and study the Word of God. In Romans 10:17, Paul said exactly what creates faith ...

Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ

