

## A Word To Encourage:

Life happens whether we want to pay attention or participate in it or not. **We often attach terms of “bad” or “good” to the happenings or events in life.** We took the kids to the park today. Some people might think of this in “bad” terms. I had to sit there in the sun while the kids ran around like animals. I had other plans. They were wild and wouldn’t listen to me. They got hurt and I had to listen to their crying and whining.

Some see this in “good” terms. I can’t believe it! The weather finally broke and we could go outside. I had such fun watching them play and run. You should hear their voices shouting as loud as they can. We wondered if the clouds could hear them. I was able to sooth the sobs of one as he had fallen and scraped his knee. He looked up, gratefully, into my eyes, smiled and said, “I all better now.”

I Peter 1: 6-7: *“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”*

**Suffering of all kinds gives us an opportunity to prove our faith to be genuine!** Is your faith the real deal? Someone said that “talk is cheap.” Anyone can say something is true, but it is their actions that prove their words. Consider the words of James in chapter 2:17-19; *“In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by actions is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder.”* It is our actions that prove our faith to be genuine. This is just as true when it comes to the way in which we deal with suffering. **When our faith is proven genuine through suffering, three things result. Jesus is praised, glorified and honored.**

Praise is a word that describes a narration or tale of action. Notice the praise of Zechariah toward God concerning the birth of his son, who we know as John the Baptist (Luke 1:67ff). Also notice the praise that David sings in Psalms 9. These praises narrate what God has done. For example: When we praise someone for a job well done, we recount the event and the actions taken by the one praised. When we praise God, we recount the actions of God. **When our faith is proven genuine through suffering, we praise God in recounting how it is the God has brought us through that suffering.**

Honor is the revealing of value. Why do we not give up our faith during suffering? Why is it that we continue to persevere in spite of the suffering? It is because there is great value to keep on keeping on. We choose not to lose the promises of God that come after the suffering. The promises of God are considered of great value. It was through the suffering of Jesus Christ that God brought about that which will save us. It is through Christ’s victory over His own suffering that we can be victorious as well. **We bring honor (show the value of) Christ, as our faith is proven genuine through suffering.**

Jesus is glorified when our faith is proven genuine through suffering. **The glory of anything is its nature and character.** Is your nature and character that of Jesus Christ? **When our faith in Christ is genuine, our nature and character develop to be the same as Jesus.** His nature is spiritual. His character is love.

Is your faith genuine? The answer is revealed by the results of how you get through many different kinds of temptations, trials and suffering. Consider the following as you pass through the fire:

1. Will Jesus be praised as a result?
2. Will Jesus be honored as a result?
3. Will Jesus be glorified as a result?