

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – April 21, 2024

Theme: Strengthening our Faith. Topic: Strength through trials and persecution.

Main Texts: James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 3:8-22

Key verse: James 1:2-3 – “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.” (NIV)

INTRODUCTION: Today’s study speaks to one of the expected learning outcomes of this quarter’s theme, which is “utilizing the trials and persecutions that we go through to strengthen our faith and recognizing them as opportunities for spiritual growth.” Forget what “feel good” preachers tell their listeners; trials and persecutions are part of the cross that Christians are called to bear. “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” 2 Tim 3. 12. Knowing then that trials and persecutions (which means more intense trials) are part of our Christian calling, we should embrace them and use the opportunity to gain strength and to grow spiritually thereby earning the blessedness that our Lord Jesus Christ promised to those who overcome persecutions Matt 5:10.

1. (a) Can you differentiate between “trials” and “persecutions” with examples? (b) How will you answer someone who teaches that a loving God will not allow his children to suffer in this life? (c) Why should Christians be joyful when they go through trials and persecutions for their faith?

At the onset of any trial or persecution, we should subject ourselves to the mirror of God’s word and will through self-examination, by asking ourselves whether we are being persecuted because of our faith or suffering for our wrongdoing (or mistakes). If it is for wrongdoing, we should repent and forsake the wrongdoing, but if not then we should count it pure joy (James 1:2). We should count trials and persecutions as pure joy because through them, God is strengthening our faith and causing us to grow and to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). We are therefore to face trials and persecution with forbearance, peace, and faith in Christ. Our attitude during persecution must be that of humility and honesty to all men without murmuring but with gentleness and continual well-doing. We must never allow trials and persecutions to make us sin or deny Christ.

2. (a) Read Gal 5:22-23 and share how trials and persecution can help us to manifest some of the Fruit of the Spirit, with practical examples. (b) How should a Christian who was wrongly accused (persecuted for righteousness’s sake) respond to his or her persecutor(s) after he or she has been vindicated by the courts or by God?

Though there are no trials or persecutions that are comfortable to the flesh, yet enduring them faithfully makes us strong in the Lord, brings us closer to God in prayer, refines us as gold is refined through fire, makes us examine and renew our commitment to the Lord, and gives us the joy for serving Him. There are examples of people like us who overcame persecutions and won the approval of God (Heb. 11). We too must realize that if we stand for the Lord and the gospel’s sake and persevere during persecution, many miracles and testimonies such as theirs will be ours as well. Even when we do not get deliverance from our sufferings in this life, we are sure of our reward in eternity (James 1:12; Rev 2:10).

3. (a) How will you advise a Christian who is under persecution for his or her faith with no end in sight? (b) Read Mat 5:10-12. Why must we stand firm in Christ during trials and persecutions?

Prayer: *Dear God, thank you for your grace that is available to all those who go through trials and persecutions for righteousness’ sake. Help me to utilize any trials and persecution that I go through to strengthen my faith and embrace them as opportunities for spiritual growth, in Jesus’ name, amen.*