

# 1 Peter 4:17-19

## **“Successful Suffering” Demands Believers Look at Our Problems Now With Both the Present and the Future in Mind**

### **Successful Suffering**

takes place when believers in the LORD keep on trusting/obeying the LORD even when there doesn't seem to be any earthly reason to keep on trusting/obeying the LORD

### **TOUGH TRUTH 1 v17-18**

For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved what will become of the godless and the sinner?

*It is time for judgment to begin with the Household of God*

judgment here is not eternal condemnation (Romans 8:1; 5:1) but a purging of our purpose and priorities by means of suffering/difficult circumstances

### **The Believer's Identification with Christ**

In the NOW

Brings Good Suffering (1:6-9) and Does Not Eliminate Bad or Inevitable Suffering

In ETERNITY

Will Bring Direct Fellowship with Christ and an End of All Suffering (Revelation 21:3-8)

*if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved*

is not saying that salvation (forgiveness of sins/eternity in Heaven) is difficult to obtain because it is based on human merit/good works...but rather that the process of “present tense salvation” (being saved from the power and presence of sin...i.e. the faithful Christian life on earth) is difficult because in addition to bad suffering and inevitable suffering, we also will have to deal with good suffering (Matthew 5:10-12)

*what will become of the godless and the sinner?*

IOWs: if God allows Christians to have it HARD now (and oftentimes in fact not only do believers suffer but unbelievers prosper on Earth)...what will eternity be like for those who refuse God's grace in Christ (Psalm 73:18-20 and 27; John 3:14-18; 36)?

## **TOUGH TRUTH 2 v19**

Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God should entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

Believers who suffer now according to the (providential-Romans 8:28) will of God are to entrust (lean back into the pool of God's love/grace) their souls (psuche = their lives/life experience Prov 13:1; 16:17; Lk 6:9) to a faithful Creator (2:23) in doing what is right (when all of the relevant factors are added up-when to the not yet is added to the now).

This Reminds Us of: Romans 8:18 "for I consider that our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us." and 2 Corinthians 5:6-9 "Therefore, being always of good courage, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him."

## **Take This To Heart**

**"Successful Suffering" Demands Believers Look at Our Problems Now With Both the Present (The Now) and the Future (the Not Yet) in Mind**

If we see only the now/our present pain (physical reality only)...  
...we can become pessimistic/hyper-sensitive

If we see only the not yet/our future glory (spiritual reality in its everlasting fullness)...  
...we can become polyannas/insensitive

We need to have spiritual binocular vision seeing everything around us...  
...through the lens of both the now/time and the not yet/eternity.