

1 Peter 1:7

Women's Bible Study

Peter, self-described as an apostle of Jesus Christ, addressed this letter to those who were chosen by God. Peter reminds these Christians they have been saved for a reason – to live in obedience to Christ. They are referred to as aliens, not belonging to this world, but rather having their sights on their eternal home in heaven. Christ's redemptive work in their lives afforded an abundance of peace even in the midst of a harsh and chaotic world.

The Apostle offered hope to these dispersed Christians in 1 Peter 1:2b, "May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure". He then proceeded to list the reasons why they could have grace and peace even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

- Because they have a living hope (v.3)
- Because they have an inheritance in heaven (v.4)
- Because they are protected by God's power (v.5)
- Because they can rejoice in trials as they focus on the truths he has previously shared.

Peter goes on to explain the reason and benefits of trials. Understanding the purpose of trials causes believers to have joy, not because of hardships, but because of their lasting result. Therefore, joy is experienced through trials because ...

Trials prove our faith (v.7)

1Peter 1:7 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;

The blessings of being born again, of our hope because of Jesus' death and resurrection, the certainty of our heavenly home, and the protection of God's power to sustain us for salvation, are reasons we can be joyful. Even in the midst of trials and sorrow, nothing is able to touch our glorious future. There is more – trials prove our faith and the proof of our faith is valuable. In fact, the proof of our faith is desirable, something we should want. We do not glory in the difficulty but rejoice in the result.

♥ **Is your faith real?**

You may think this question has an obvious answer. Yet consider these thoughts.

- In order to be real, there must be actual facts that verify the existence of your faith. Words are simply not enough.
- Having real faith means you are worthy of bearing the name of Christian – a believer in and follower of Jesus Christ.
- Being real, means you do not take your relationship with Christ lightly – it is of utmost importance, permeating all aspects of your life.

1 Peter 1:7

Women's Bible Study

- Real faith is capable of being treated as fact. In other words, what supports your claim of faith in Christ in your own life? Consider your words, thoughts, actions, purpose.
- Genuine faith will produce a character of faith with your desires and motivation focused on pleasing God.
- Real faith is literal and will be reflected in the character of one who follows Christ

A faith that is not real will be lacking in its genuineness. It will not correspond to truths in God's word. There is a difference between simply acknowledging facts versus trusting in them to be true. The first is intellectual assent, the second is heart embraced. Let us look a bit closer at these two possibilities.

Intellectual assent uses the rational mind to decide if something might work or might be true. It involves fact gathering and a conclusion based upon those facts. There is no heart response or life-changing revelation. Intellectual assent is merely the acknowledgement of information to be true. Only knowing who God is will not save you. Man can think so highly of his intellect and reasoning that it becomes difficult to recognize his need of a Savior.

Fully embracing something with your heart involves knowledge with trust. It means understanding the facts and adopting them as your own. It is humbly accepting that you need something and are unable to provide the answer. It is realizing that however intelligent you may be, it is impossible to fully understand God's ways. We need to minor in self and major in Christ.

True faith is placing your complete trust in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, claiming His sacrifice as your key to heaven. The word faith <pistis> is explained as the moral conviction and reliance upon Christ for salvation. It is the assurance that what God says is true. Therefore, sincere faith involves a confidence in the truth of God's word. This is only possible through God's grace working in the lives of His children.

The proof of our faith is more precious than gold. The KJV says it is *much* more precious than gold. *Adam Clarke's Commentary* gives us a clearer understanding of the properties of gold. "Gold is defined by chemists to be the most perfect, the most ductile, the most tenacious, and the most unchangeable of all metals... When exposed to the action of the fire it becomes red hot before it melts, but in melting suffers no alteration; but if a strong heat be applied while in fusion, it becomes of a beautiful green color. The continual action of any furnace, howsoever long applied, has no effect on any of its properties... Gold is so very tenacious that a piece of it drawn into wire, one-tenth of an inch in diameter, will sustain a weight of 500lbs. without breaking".

James 1:2-4 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, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

When we seek to glean a small understanding of gold being refined by fire in order to purify it, we can begin to understand the necessity of trials in our lives. In addition, when we understand the reason for trials, our response is thankfulness and peace for the work God is performing in strengthening our faith. Revisit the beginning of this section of scripture. **1 Peter 1:2b May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.** God's work in your heart, the reflection of His love in your life, a heart

1 Peter 1:7

Women's Bible Study

of gratitude in understanding the gift of your salvation, and the quietness in your heart that stems from a secure future no matter the turmoil around you, are the hallmarks of a soul that fully relies upon God. This is the precious proof of your faith. Your faith will be tested in one form or another.

♥ **Will it be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ?**

Job 23:10 "But He knows the way I take; [When] He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Proverbs 17:3 The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests hearts.

2Thessalonians 1:11-12 To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

♥ **Check the genuineness of your faith. Is it mixed with imposters of pride, selfishness, or worldliness? Is it something kept for 'emergencies'? Is your faith used only as a security blanket?**

♥ **What is your reaction to trials? Do you persevere in serving God? Do you complain? Do you think "poor me", desiring others' attention and pity?**

♥ **Does your faith sustain your joy in all circumstances?**

Read *Matthew Poole's Commentary* of 1 Peter 1:7, "He compares the faith of the saints with gold, and argues from the less to the greater ... If men do so far esteem their gold, that they will make the excellency and preciousness of it appear by trying it in the fire, which purgeth away the dross, and discovers the goodness of the metal; no wonder if God will have the faith of the saints (more precious to him than gold is to men) tried by afflictions, that the excellency of it may more fully be discovered".

1Peter 1:13 Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober [in spirit,] fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1Peter 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

We cannot miss the encouraging words of Jesus' return. The desire is that our faith, having been tested for its genuineness, will *result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ*.

Matthew 25:31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

1 Peter 1:7

Women's Bible Study

Acts 1:11 and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Heat is applied to gold to rid it of its impurities. Only what is valuable is left after being in the furnace. Yet even pure gold will eventually be worn away. I have a few gold rings, a few more than 100 years old, that belonged to past relatives. You can easily tell which ones were worn constantly because the gold bands have become very thin as they have eroded with time. In contrast, as genuine faith is worn and tested by trials, it only becomes stronger.

1Corinthians 15:57-58 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not [in] vain in the Lord.

2Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

"His intention in all is most kind and gracious, namely, that the little trial of your faith, which is far more precious and valuable than that of gold which perishes, and wears out in time, though it be tried with fire, and purified to the highest degree; may be found to praise, and honour, and glory, in the great day of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the divine Author and Finisher of our faith, who having himself endured yet sorer trials, will rejoice to applaud and reward the fidelity of his servants in his cause." *Philip Doddridge N.T.*