

Ten Truths Every Christian Needs To Remember When Life Falls Apart

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Is life falling apart? Maybe your spouse is battling cancer. Maybe your son or daughter is in rebellion? Maybe your life is falling apart relationally. You are single and wishing you were happily married. Maybe you are married and wishing you were still single. Are you struggling to make ends meet?

As Christians, what does God want us to know when life falls apart? Do Christians face hard times in a different way from the rest of the world? Today we find those answers.

If you are new, I welcome you. My name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. Two weeks ago we began a series in 1 Peter called Hope in Hard Times. The book of 1 Peter has a lot to say about life when it falls apart.

Our first study in 1 Peter simply examined the background of the book, the history of the apostle Peter and the background of the churches to which Peter wrote the letter. This morning, we will study 1 Peter 1:3-9. In these opening verses, Peter gave us 10 truths every Christian needs to remember when life falls apart. These truths reframe Christian suffering and help us make it through those times when life falls apart.

Let's read the text before we dive in.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and

glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:3–9 (ESV)

Let's dive into this list.

1. Remember God the Father loves me, chose me and won't let go of me.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Peter 1:3 (ESV)

Out of God's incredible kindness and mercy, he caused us to be born again. If you are a Christian, you are not a Christian because you chose God and are holding on to him. Everyone who has a heart that is soft toward what God has done for him through Jesus has that love for Jesus because God the Father chose him and gave that soft heart to him.

Religion is man pursuing God and hoping to catch him. Christianity is God pursuing us, saving us, holding on to us, even when we don't deserve it, and never letting go. In eternity past, God put us together in his mind with Jesus, his son. He planned for us to hear about Jesus. He used the gospel message about Jesus to soften our heart and draw us to himself. When that happened, we were born again.

That phrase *born again* is used by Jesus with Nicodemus in the Gospel of John. *Born again* literally means *born from above*. Peter's point was simply that just as we are not the source of our physical births — we didn't will ourselves into physical existence — we are not the source of our spiritual births. Both physical

life and spiritual life are supernatural gifts from God. John covered this in his Gospel.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:12–13 (ESV)

Peter also said we are born again to a *living hope*. That is a strange phrase. What is living hope? It is Jesus. Just as we are confident Jesus is alive and the object of God the father's affection, we can be confident that we will be alive with Jesus eternally. Just as Jesus is the object of God the Father's affection, since we were chosen by God to be Jesus' adopted brothers and sisters, we will also be the object of God the Father's affections for all eternity.

As Christians, when life is falling apart and we are not handling it well. When we are failing Jesus and we wonder if God will throw us away because we are such miserable fools, we need to remember in the middle of our trials that the only reason we know God is not because we are holding him but because he chose to hold on to us. We have a hope for all of eternity that is not based on us, our failures or our weaknesses but it is based on God the Father and his incredible strength to hold on to us. His incredible mercy promises to never let us go.

When you have cancer and death is approaching and doubt creeps into your mind, you wonder, "Will Jesus will really forgive me? Will Jesus welcome me home?" You need to know that your relationship with God is, and always was, a gift from God. Our resurrection and eternal life is as guaranteed as

Christ's resurrection and eternal life because we are literally connected to Jesus in the eyes of the Father.

When our lives are falling apart, God the Father's love for us and ability to hold on to us in the middle of the storm, is what we need to hear. He promises to bring us safely home. That is a truth we need to remember.

2. Remember the future God has in store for me.

...to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you... 1 Peter 1:4 (ESV)

The best way to endure something is fixing your thoughts on the prize at the end. I am not a runner. I do not like to run. Running is painful. When I go running in the morning, the only way I make it through is I keep thinking about how much better I will feel when it is over! The prize is the feeling of accomplishment and feeling better the rest of the day. When there is a reward it enables us to endure hard times. Peter told us that when the wheels fall off in life, don't just remember that God chose us and loves us and no matter what storms of life hit you he will never let us go but also remember that as Christians there is a great prize at the end of life which awaits us. He called it our inheritance.

He borrowed that phrase from the Old Testament and the Promised Land. Ancient Israel lived anticipating the Promised Land. That is how they endured the hardships of the wilderness. They kept focused on the prize at the finish line. One day they would not be in the wilderness where God fed them with manna every morning because there was no food to be found. One day they were going to be in an amazing land filled with crops, beauty and pleasantness. In the same

way, when life falls apart and we are wandering in a harsh wilderness season, we're just like ancient Israel. In those times, we need to fix our eyes on the inheritance we look forward to. The inheritance for ancient Israel was Promised Land. For us it is our heavenly home. For ancient Israel, the Promised Land was good but imperfect. Animals attacked. Locusts ate the crops. It lacked rain. It was invaded by armies. There was indescribable bloodshed. The Promised Land they looked forward to was good but very imperfect. The Promised Land we look forward to is in heaven and it is very different.

Peter didn't describe it by telling us what it is like, he told us what it is unlike.

It is not perishable. That means indestructible. One of the most painful things to watch is to see a new sports car that gets dropped off the car carrying truck as they are trying to put it on a dealer's lot. It hurts to watch a \$60,000-\$70,000 car ruined right before anyone has a chance to enjoy it. Even if that same car was purchased, and lasted a decade or two, it would still fall apart.

In a much greater way it hurts to see a young man or woman struggle with a life-debilitating disease. It especially hurts if they die before they reach their potential. Even when someone lives to an old age, nobody lives forever. Our bodies may last 90 years, but they will fall apart. Everything about this world perishes. Our bodies can perish in their prime or in old age but everyone and everything perishes.

Everything about the inheritance God has prepared for us, including our resurrection bodies, is designed to last forever. That is the Promised Land we

look forward to. Imagine a new creation where everything, including us, doesn't get old and worn out.

It is undefiled. Defiled means polluted. It means unstained by sin. This word in the Bible was sometimes used to describe a young woman who was an absolutely pure virgin. There was nothing impure about her. The new creation God prepared for us is like this. It is completely free from sin. It is pristine purity and wholesomeness forever. There is nothing evil or negative about it. No thieves, no earthquakes, no flu, no Ebola, no Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, no cheaters, no unsatisfying work. Imagine life completely free from sin. That is the life we look forward to in the new creation with Jesus in charge of it all.

It is unfading. That means something loses its freshness with time. When I go to the store with my daughter, she is a stickler for checking the date on everything. She checks the expiration date on the milk, the eggs and even the crackers. When we get to the new creation, she will be out of a job. Freshness dating is passé. The vegetables will last on the shelf for months. The milk and eggs could be left in the car for a year and they would still be fresh. Everything is unfading.

God has an inheritance that he will give us with his son that is the new Jerusalem and the new creation and it will never be destroyed. It is imperishable. It is undefiled, which means it will be perfect because it will never be marred by sin. It is unfading so its brilliance doesn't fade with time. Other passages of the Bible teach us that the new creation's brilliance actually gets better over time.

When life is hard and things fall apart, remember what we look forward to. This life is only a brief moment. Eternity with Jesus in the new creation makes every trouble we face today insignificant by comparison.

That is what we look forward to when we close our eyes in this life. That makes the trials of this life more bearable when we are so blessed in the end as a gift from God. It is just like running. If we remember the finish line, we can make it through.

3. Remember God promises to protect my faith in my trials.

...who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:5 (ESV)

God is not only protecting our future but he is protecting us to make sure we get to our future. Peter said we are being guarded by God's power. That is a military metaphor that means surrounded by a garrison of soldiers so no one can touch you.

Here is where it gets interesting. Sometimes we face trials and temptations that are incredibly hard. In my opinion, Christians are not protected from trials. I think the opposite is true. Christians seem to face more trials than the rest of the world. I don't see God protecting us. What is this verse saying?

This is very important. While God does filter the temptations and trials we face, this verse doesn't say God is protecting us from trials — *he is protecting our faith in the trials.*

We will go through very difficult trials in life. There will be times when there is absolutely no earthly reason to keep our faith in Christ because there are no benefits to following him.

We were faithful to Christ and maintained our sexual purity now we are a single and lonely while the rest of our fornicating friends are married. What do you do when you don't see an earthly payoff for purity?

How do you keep your faith if you are a Christian in Iraq and ISIS moves into town. Keeping your faith will cost your life or the life of your wife and children. Why not just give up and walk away from Jesus?

Remember where we began. Our faith is a gift from God. God chose us. We didn't choose him. Since God is the source of our faith, in extreme trials, God promises to guard our faith and supernaturally strengthen our faith when there is no earthly benefit that comes with trusting him. God promises to guard our faith and keep it from being destroyed. When we go through hard times and lose our jobs, lose our spouses, lose our health and our life looks like Job, when even our wives tells us to curse God and die, Christians won't walk away from Jesus, because in those tough times God supernaturally protects and strengthens our faith to meet the trial at hand. Remember, our faith was a gift from God in the first place so it needs to be sustained by God no matter what we face.

4. Remember trials are temporary

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials... 1 Peter 1:6 (ESV)

When I am sick with the flu, this is what I tell myself: I will not be hanging my head over the toilet forever. Twenty-four to 48 hours and I will be better. When I remember my sickness is temporary, it helps me get through. All the trials we face are temporary. They may last five minutes, five days or five years.

The trials we face may even last our entire lives, like a debilitating disease. Our trials may even take our lives, but they are all temporary, especially when compared with our inheritance that is imperishable and unfading *and lasts forever*.

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison... 2 Corinthians 4:17 (ESV)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Romans 8:18 (ESV)

All of our suffering, even life-long suffering, is nothing more than a temporary inconvenience when compared to the wonderful eternity that awaits us. We are guaranteed all of this through Jesus as a gift from God.

Live with a biblical view of eternity. For the rest of the world, this life is as close as they will be to heaven. For those who know Jesus, this life is as close as we will ever be to hell. Suffering is always temporary.

5. Remember trials must happen.

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials... 1 Peter 1:6 (ESV)

This is a little tricky. It says various trials will happen in our life only *if necessary*. I began wondering, what makes them necessary? If I could find out what made them necessary, I could avoid that and avoid the trials. In my research, I checked the Greek for the phrase *if necessary*. It literally means *is necessary* or *is inevitable*. Life in a fallen world means we will face trials. There is no way to escape it. Our bodies will ache as they deteriorate because of sin. People will rip us off. There will be war. There will be death. There will be cancer. As Christians, we will be persecuted.

Trials and difficulties are an inevitable part of living in a fallen world. Persecution is also an inevitable part of living in a world that is under the power of Satan, sin and death. Jesus died on a cross. All but one of the apostles were martyred. If we live a godly life in Christ, we will be persecuted. Don't get thrown off your rocker when life falls apart. This world is broken because of sin. Trials will happen. It is a fact of life.

6. Remember trials prove that my faith came from God.

...so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire... 1 Peter 1:7 (ESV)

In the Greek, the phrase *tested genuine* is one word. It means to prove something is what it claims to be. It was often used about metals. One of the ways people ripped others off is they took gold mixed it with other metals and made an alloy that looked like gold but wasn't pure gold. Many times, before gold was purchased, it needed to be tested to be genuine. It was put in a kiln and heated. If it was an alloy, the other metals rose to the surface and were scraped off. If impurities were added to it, they were burned off. The gold that was tested by fire and came out of the furnace weighing the same as it went into the furnace was proven genuine.

God brings trials in our lives that act like the fire of a furnace. When we go through hard times, and we find ourselves relying on Christ all the time and actually growing closer to him, not falling away from him, our faith is proven to be genuine. How we handle the furnace of trials is evidence that our faith is the genuine article. It is the real deal. We are not following God because of the benefits package. We are following God because he chose us, he changed out

hearts and we love him because of it. Trials prove to us and others that our faith is genuine because it is supernaturally sustained by God. Jesus tells us about this in the parable of the soils.

And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. Luke 8:13 (ESV)

Trials proves to us, and to everyone else around us, that God is the source of the faith in our lives, because in a times of testing, we don't fall away.

7. Remember God uses trials to purify my faith.

...so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire... 1 Peter 1:7 (ESV)

Just as heat purifies gold, trials purify our faith. Before our trials, we often find ourselves distracted from God. We don't have time to read our Bibles. We don't have time to pray. We are busy most weekends and skip church. We are very interested in the things of this world rather than the things of God. God, in his love for us, brings trials into our lives. It doesn't take long for all the foo foo in our lives to burn up when faced with a trial. We start focusing on God and calling out to him with laser-like precision. We make time for his Word. We make time for church and to be with God's people. Just as fire purifies gold, hard times purify our faith.

The most spiritually mature people have gone through very hard trials. Most people who have gone through hard times will tell you they would never want to go through them again but they wouldn't trade away the spiritual maturity God brought to their lives through them.

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin... 1 Peter 4:1 (ESV)

8. Remember faith proven by trials is the most precious possession in the world.

...so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire... 1 Peter 1:7 (ESV)

Who would like to own the most precious possession in the world? Today that might be owning Microsoft, like Bill Gates, or owning Apple Computer, like Tim Cook. In the ancient world, gold was the most precious possession. Peter reframed this. If you have a faith that has gone through trials, been tested by trials and grown stronger through trials, you know you have real God-given faith. You know without a shadow of a doubt that you are chosen by God and will be with Jesus for all eternity. You will be the object of God's affection for all of eternity in the new creation. You have the most precious possession in the world.

You may be dirt poor, but you are filthy rich. You would rather have faith proven by trials than be Bill Gates. That faith is the most precious possession in the world.

9. Remember that faith tested by trials will be richly rewarded at Christ's return.

...so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:7 (ESV)

God promises to reward us for how we endure our trials at the return of Christ. This is helpful for when we are enduring trials. We will be rewarded in eternity for how we endure our earthly adversities.

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)

Our God is a rewarding God. He loves to reward us. When we endure trials of our faith in this life, we will be rewarded by Jesus for it in the next life. That is great motivation to please Christ in a trial.

This really reframes our picture of suffering, especially suffering as a Christian. I love the way Peter talks about suffering for his faith.

Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. Acts 5:41 (ESV)

What a privilege to suffer for Jesus. The more I faithfully suffer for Jesus, the more richly I will be rewarded by Jesus in the next life for suffering faithfully in this one.

10. Remember that in trials, God gives us joy that can only come from him.

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory... 1 Peter 1:8 (ESV)

When we are facing trials, our earthly joy can be sucked dry. Sometimes there are no earthly joys to look forward to. Our bodies will only become sicker as we prepare to die, not healthier. There is nothing to look forward to. In those moments, where do we find joy when all hope is gone?

God gives us joy that comes from him. There is an inexpressible joy that God gives us in our trials that comes only from knowing him, the source of all joy.

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11 (ESV)

Peter couldn't explain it. I can't explain it. The Bible tells us it exists. God gives us joy that comes directly from him in our trials when there is no source of joy in this world.

In addition, we know about our glorious future. When all the joys and pleasures of this life dry up in death, joy and pleasures beyond our imagination await those who love Jesus because they are loved by Jesus.

It is not because of our goodness or our behavior but all because of God's immense kindness through Jesus that we have any of this.

This is why we love God above all earthly things. This is why we adore Jesus. This is why we gather on Sundays to worship from the bottom of our hearts. God is good. He completely transforms our trials. When life is falling apart, for those who love Jesus, these 10 truths completely change the way we suffer.

My prayer for you this morning is that these 10 truths give you hope in hard times. Trials for a Christian are different than trials for the rest of the world. Let these verses help you to think about your trials biblically, not from a worldly point of view.

Conclusion

Over lunch, I want you to talk about these 10 truths with your friends or family. Choose one that is the most important to you. Tell your friends and family why it is significant for your life. At the end of lunch, take a few moments to thank God for these truths that completely change the way we face life when our world falls apart.



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