

1 PETER 1:6-7 REJOICE?

⁶ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.* ⁷ *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.*

We are to rejoice even in the face of suffering and grief, but that does not mean we are to rejoice in suffering and grief. We are not called to be masochists, but sons and heirs. The reason for our rejoicing is the living hope afforded us by God's power through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The trials are experienced so that our joy will increase because the Good News becomes increasingly better with each trial.

On the locker room wall in high school the coaches had posted a banner reading, *No Pain – No Gain*. The pain of physical training is not masochism because it is pain suffered not for itself, but for a positive goal – to be in the best physical condition for optimal athletic performance. While athletic training conditions the body, worldly trials are to be used to strengthen our faith. The tougher things become the more dependent we have to be on God and the easier it is for us to recognize his redemptive power. Our response to God's power sustaining us in this life is to rejoice greatly.

On the opposite wall of the locker room there was a poster which said, *When the going gets tough, the tough get going*. That is ever so true for the man of faith.

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that you deliver me from the time of trial and protect me from temptation. But most of all, Lord, I desire to grow in my faith in you, by whatever manner you have ordained for man. If it is only through trials that you can break through my defenses and make your promises more real to me, then I submit to your refining. Amen.