

Weekly Devotions: THE REFINING FIRE OF TRIALS 10

Do You Love & Trust God 'Because of' or 'In Spite of'?

Trials are times of testing which reveal what type of faith we have and the depth of our love for God. Many of us come to faith because God had done something for us or there is something about the church we like. However, 'because of' faith does not last; when things don't go well in our lives or when the good feelings fizzle out, those whose faith is 'because of' will turn away from God. Our faith must mature from 'because of' faith to 'in spite of' faith, which is an act of the will, a determination to trust and love God in spite of hardships. Like Jesus who gave His life for us in spite of our sins, we also should love Him and remain faithful in spite of unanswered prayers or difficulties.

There are many lessons we can learn from the story of Job about 'in spite of' faith. Job, a righteous and God-fearing man, was stripped off everything; wealth, descendants, health, and even friends. Job suffered not one but a series of horrific losses and endured senseless pain and trauma. Despite his trials, Job remained faithful to God. He lamented about his pain but he did not turn away from God. At the end, God did not tell Job the purpose of his suffering, only reminded him that He is sovereign and in control. (38:2-4; 12; 22-23; 39-41). God also did not charge Job with any sin that had led to his sufferings. He vindicated Job and blessed his remaining life with twice as much as he had before.

Someone said, "True faith is not about getting the tension removed, but to remain in the tension with the ability to express conviction and trust in God despite the circumstances." What type of faith will please God more? The person who praises Him because life is good or the one who praises Him in spite of his sufferings?

Read Job 1: 7-22

In Job 1, Satan insinuated that Job's love for God is because of His blessings on his life; without them, Job would turn away from God. Satan accused Job of having conditional faith or 'because of' faith. But God believed in Job and had confidence in Job's devotion and commitment.

Questions to Ponder

1. What did Satan accuse Job of (9-12)? If the devil were to accuse you the way he accused Job, would his accusations be valid?
2. What did Job lose in this first round of attack and how did Job respond (20-22)? If you were Job, how would you respond? Is there one thing / person that you love more than God, the loss of which may cause you to lose your faith? How resilient is your faith in God and how can it be robust, 'in spite of' faith?