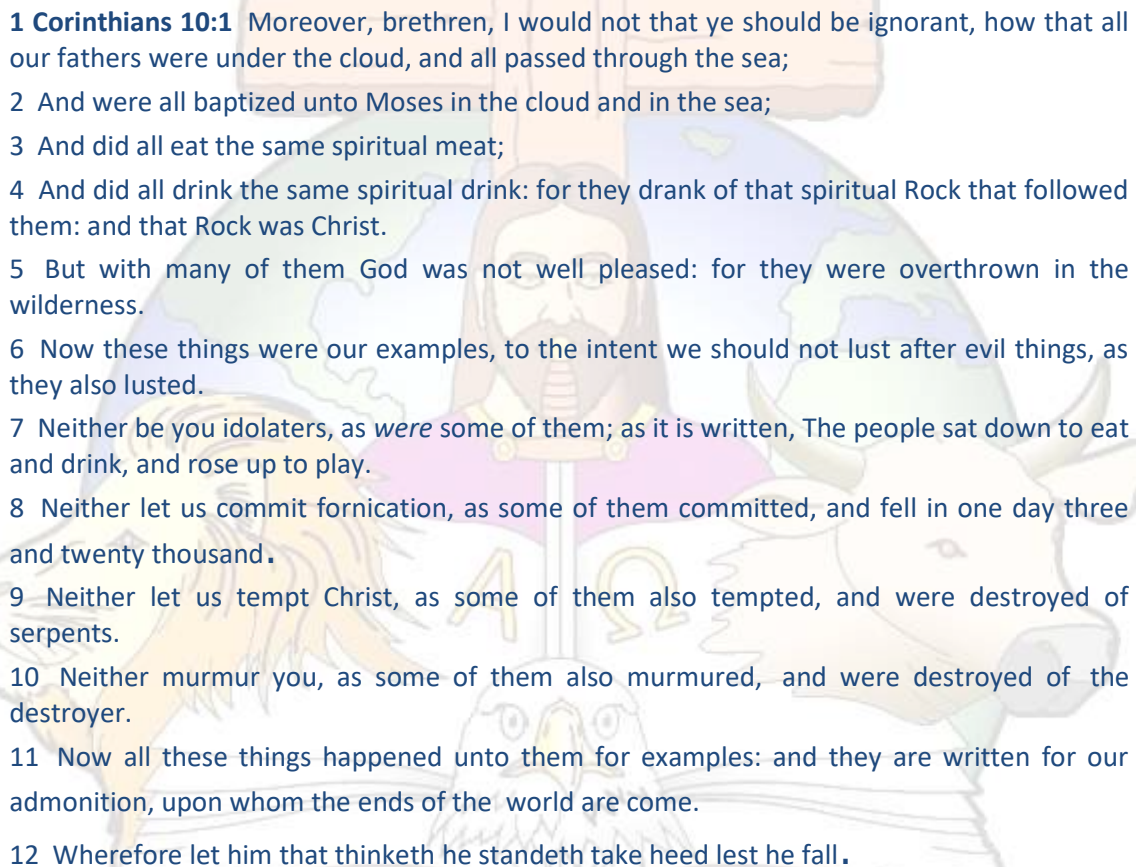


# The Purpose of Trials (The Desert)

By Carlo Ma'ayeh

Let's start reading in the first epistle of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians chapter 10,

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- 1 Corinthians 10:1** Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
- 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
- 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;
- 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.
- 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.
- 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.
- 7 Neither be you idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.
- 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.
- 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.
- 10 Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.
- 11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.
- 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Now please repeat the last part of verse 11 aloud and make it personal to you: These things are written for my admonition.

How many of you are going through trials, afflictions and sufferings and you do not understand why you are going through what you are going through?

Now, let's continue with Deuteronomy chapter 8,

**Deuteronomy 8:2** And thou shall remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness,....

Each one of us can put here the amount of years we have been in our own wilderness. Why? Why the wilderness? Why the trials and sufferings?

We need to understand the patterns of God. He saved Israel from Egypt, is like God saving us from the world from the slavery of sin. And as we read first in Corinthians chapter 10, after saving them He took them through the Red Sea and under the cloud (the cloud that God put over them is described in Exodus 13:21, 22), and the Bible says they were baptised unto Moses (1 Corinthians 10:2). So, the passing through the Red Sea is symbol of the passing through the waters of baptism.

So, when we are saved, believing in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we get baptised. God saves us from our sins, He delivers us from the world, from the power of darkness and He translates us into the kingdom of His beloved Son and in whom we have the redemption by His blood, the forgiveness of our sins (Colossians 1:13). And then we have to go through the waters of baptism. We buried the old man; we are being buried with Christ and get resurrected with Him (in a figurative form as explained in Romans 6:4).

The Bible tells us that the Israelites were under the cloud which is symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus also was baptised in the water, He was baptised in the Holy Spirit and He was led by the Holy Spirit to the wilderness. We also get saved, we get baptised in water, we get baptised in the Holy Spirit and He leads us into the wilderness (trials, afflictions, sufferings). So, why will the Lord save us and take us into the wilderness? Because He loves us.

*God's Pattern*

<i>Israel</i>	<i>Saved from Egypt</i>	<i>Crossing the Red Sea</i>	<i>Under the cloud</i>	<i>The wilderness</i>
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<i>Jesus</i>	<i>without sin</i>	<i>Baptised in the River Jordan</i>	<i>Baptised in the Holy Spirit</i>	<i>The wilderness</i>
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<i>The believer</i>	<i>Saved from sin, from the world</i>	<i>Baptised in water</i>	<i>Baptised in the Holy Spirit</i>	<i>The wilderness</i>
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When we accepted the sacrifice of Jesus in the cross and received Him as our Lord and Saviour, our spirit that was dead in sins (Ephesians 2:1, 5: Colossians 2:13) separated from God, gets saved, our spirit is born again. We become alive spiritually in Christ.

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**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,

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But, did you know that our soul in that moment is not saved yet? Let's look at what the apostle Peter says so that we can understand it better.

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**1 Peter 1:3** Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

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My spirit was born again, it is saved; my soul is being saved, it is a process, it is being transformed. The Bible says that as we behold His glory with open faces we are being transformed into Christ's image.

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**2 Corinthians 3:18** But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

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In the epistle of the apostle Paul to the Romans it says that the will of the Father is to conform us to the image of His beloved Son.

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**Romans 8:29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

The Father saves us and He wants to transform us to change us back to His image, to conform us to the image of Jesus. When God created Adam and Eve, He knelt down. Why? To form them from the dust of the earth. Everything else, He spoke it into being: light, animals, plants, etc; only you and me in Adam, He formed with His hands with great love and care. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, the Bible says in Psalm 139 verse 14, so don't let the world convince you otherwise. The balances of the world are deceitful balances; their way to measure things is twisted. Every one of us is so precious; every one of you is fearfully and wonderfully made.

When God formed Adam He stood further down toward his nostrils and blew in him the breath of life and Adam became a living soul. Now Adam was spirit, soul and body; tri-being. His spirit and Eve's were one with the Spirit of the Father and that is why the glory of God and His light covered them, they were naked and they didn't know it because the light and glory of God covered them. And their souls were receiving everything they needed, the life eternal, all the character and nature of God, to express God in whom they were now. And they had their physical bodies to interact with the physical creation.

And for God to be love has to give us a choice, otherwise if we have no choices to make, how can we choose to love Him or not? And Jesus says if you love me you obey me, you keep my commandments, my words. So, I show God my love for Him by obeying Him.

But Adam and Eve decided to listen to the serpent, Satan, and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which God had warned Adam not to eat because they would surely die (Genesis chapter 3). And the serpent came and said to them you will not surely die. Satan is a liar and the father of it. And when they ate, they sinned against God and died spiritually instantly, the Spirit of God separated from their spirits. Their spirits died because they separated from the source of life. And their souls that were expressing God suddenly changed and instead of expressing God started to express themselves: self-centred. They discovered themselves naked, no more the glory and light of God covered them, so **they tried to cover themselves** with fig leaves, they made aprons for themselves.

But God killed an animal – the first sacrifice on earth – and clothed them with the skin of it, to cover them, there had to be blood shed for their redemption. But the blood of animals cannot redeem the blood of humans, it is not equal, but that was symbolic of the true Lamb of God, Jesus, who one day will come and take our humanity. And the only one that is not from Adam, the only one whose blood is pure was Jesus. Because the Bible says that all the descendants of Adam were born in sin. Adam sinned and his blood became contaminated, that is why one human being from Adam cannot redeem another human being from Adam. We need a human being with pure blood to redeem the contaminated blood, which is why Jesus the perfect Lamb of God had to be sacrificed to obtain eternal redemption for us.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lost the image of God, because in the beginning God created them in His image and likeness but when they sinned against God they separated themselves from God and they lost His image. After that, they expressed their self image and that is why in the Bible in the book of Genesis chapter 5, verse 3 says that Adam begat a son in his own likeness and after his own image. In the book of Isaiah chapter 52, verse 14 says that Jesus' visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, was disfigured. Jesus took our form, he took our image and in His suffering on the cross, He marred it.

So, now we do not need our self image anymore, this can produce pride and arrogance, we need to lose our own image and say: Yes Father, I want to change back to your image from glory to glory; I want to be transformed now. My very being, my soul has to be saved, has to be transformed. But God cannot do it in spite of me; He does it in cooperation with me as I choose to believe, trust and obey.

That is why Jesus says to those who want to be His disciples,

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**Luke 9:23** And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

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What does it mean to deny myself? That means to lose my life. And in another chapter of the same gospel says that I have to hate my life.

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**Luke 14:26** If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

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And the word “life” in this verse of the gospel of Luke in the Greek language is ψυχή, *psuchē*, which is the soul. That means that I have to lose my soul life, I have to hate it, because if I love my soul life, my self-image, I will try to preserve it and end up losing it forever. But when I choose to hate my soul life, my self-image, I choose to lose it for His sake, when I choose to deny myself, to die to myself and I chose to obey God, He starts the transformation in me.

The more I die to myself and obey Him, the more transformation occurs and I am being changed. And the Bible says I am being change to His image from glory to glory by the power of the Holy Spirit. Is this clear?

Another process that God uses to apply the cross to us is through the wilderness – trials and sufferings. So, let’s go to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 8 again and see in verse 2, what is the number one purpose of the wilderness?

**Deuteronomy 8:2** And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

The main purpose of the wilderness is to humble us, because we read in the epistle of James and Peter that God resists the proud and gives grace to the person that is humble.

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**James 4:6** But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you...

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

**1 Peter 5:5** Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

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One of the main characteristics of a human being is his pride, self dignity, and honor. People can be very prideful in different ways and forms. That is why when someone does something against us we get offended. Anyone was never offended? I dare to say impossible. What was offended in us? The pride in us was offended.

God will allow offenses, He will allow the trials. Every time we go through sufferings and trials, whether we see it or not, we are being humbled. Now if you look back at the trials of your life, did you ever come out of the trial the same way you entered? No. Before the trial we were haughty and prideful but something happens during the trials that after it we come out very humbled. Something happened in us, God fulfil His purpose, and He humbled us.

So, I can resist the trial and remain prideful, and God will humble me and resist me. Why does God want to humble me? Because He loves me, He loves you. He wants to be gracious to you, but how can He do it if you are so proud and full of yourself? In His love He humbles you and once you are humbled under His mighty hand He can pour His blessings upon you because He gives grace to the humble as we read in the first epistle of the apostle Peter chapter 5 verses 5 and 6.

I learnt that when I go through painful trials and I do not understand why, I made my choice to speak with my mouth and say: Lord, I humble myself under your mighty hand. And I encourage you to do the same thing.

Now we continue with our scripture in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 8,

**Deuteronomy 8:2** And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and to prove* thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

Another purpose of the wilderness mentioned here is: to prove us, to know what is in our hearts. He knows what is in our hearts but we do not know. We think that we are ok and that we are pure gold that we shine. And we compare ourselves with others and say: I am not as bad as them. But did you know that the gold can have impurities inside? And only extreme and high temperature fire can melt gold.

So, when we are going through the fire of trials – as the apostle Peter wrote about in 1 Peter 1:7 – which we should not be surprised of because God is purifying us like the fire purifies the gold, the devil means to destroy us but God means it for good because He wants to exalt us in His due time. But we have to humble ourselves under His mighty hand. He proves us as gold.

To how many of us during the trials the devil puts in our minds accusations against God? And some get offended with God and instead spending more time with God start going back to the things of the world and have their own idols: more TV, more internet, more games, more distractions; and the devil is more than happy to provide them with all that they need. And they spend more time with these things than with the Lord.

Many of you got offended with God and lost your first love. And the apostle Paul warns us in the first epistle to the Corinthians to not lust as the people of Israel lust.

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**1 Corinthians 10:6** Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

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How many times you go through different faces of life and the games, internet or TV became your idols? What is an idol? It is whatever you love more than God, whatever you spend more time than with God, these things became your idols, because you are bowing down to them, listening to them, receiving from them. And you open the door for the serpents – demonic spirits – to enter your life to afflict you, to torment you and the trials get worse and worse. And some people left the Lord and went to the world; they did not understand the purpose of the dessert, of the trials. So, what was deep in their hearts came up to the surface.

Another thing people fall into during the trials is murmuring, they start complaining and the Bible says not to complain and murmur as the Israelites did in the wilderness and they were destroyed by the destroyer. Jesus says He came to give us life and life more abundant, the devil – the thief – he comes to steal, kill and destroy. So, when we start murmuring we open the door to the destroyer to come in and he starts to kill and destroy in our lives; so we lose.

**Deuteronomy 8:3** And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but **by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD** doth man live.

It says in Deuteronomy chapter 8 that God wants to see if we will keep His commandments or not during the trials.

Many choose to sin and make excuses for not obeying God. Anybody sinned and made excuses for their sins? Anybody made excuses to justify their attitudes and bad reactions? May be you were offended. And the Lord would say: This is the purpose of the fire of trial, because you said that you love me, you honour me with your lips, you worship me but your heart is far from me. I want to show you the truth of who you are apart from me, to show you what is in your heart.

The purpose of the fire is not to destroy you or to kill you but to show you what is in your heart and you can choose to excuse and justify yourself or to humble yourself. You can say to Him: Father I do not understand, but I choose to thank you for the fire and for all the things that are coming out of my heart, now I can see them. I do not make excuses, I do not justify myself, I have nothing to plead but the blood of Jesus.

Only the blood of Jesus justifies me, if I seek justification in other things I lose. Only the blood of Jesus can justify me if I humble myself.

And if I confess my sins, as the Bible says in the first epistle of John chapter 1 verse 9,

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**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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Not only he forgives us our sins when we confess them, but also cleanses us from all unrighteousness. So, all those impurities that came up to the surface during the trials, when I humble myself and confess them, He removes them from me. Purification takes place, and I am being changed, I am being transformed to His image from glory to glory.

So, I need the Word of God, there is power in the Word of God. Jesus says in the gospel of John chapter 15 that we must abide in Him. Jesus has saved us and put us in Him and now He gives us the responsibility to choose to abide in Him, because I am free to choose to jump out of Him, I can choose sometimes to abide in the world and the things from the world. I can choose to abide in things that separate me and distract me from Him. If I allow anything or anyone to separate me from Him from abiding in His presence, I am in danger.



**John 15:4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

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I can try to walk with God and obey Him but if I am not abiding in Him I can do nothing, I have no power. And Jesus said to the Jews who believed in Him: If you continue in my Word.... It is conditional "IF".

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**John 8:31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

**John 15:7** If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

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I read the Word of God, and I tried in my power to obey it and I kept failing. Anybody suffered like that, trying to obey and keep failing? We failed because we were trying in our power to obey, being religious. And if we could make it we got proud and wanted people to look at us and our achievements.

But when we know that in ourselves we are powerless, and that is why Christ died for us, not to leave us powerless but to give us His divine power. He fulfilled every righteousness for us and we can receive that as a gift from God. Did you know that righteousness is a gift of God? But if you try to prove your self-righteousness you miss it.

If I ask, Are you a sinner? What would your answer be? If you think you are still a sinner, you do not believe what the Bible says. Let's read in the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

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**2 Corinthians 5:21** For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

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God the Father made Jesus, the Son, to be made sin for us. That we continue to be sinners? If you are convinced that you are a sinner it is normal for you to produce sin; for a sinner that is ok. But when your mind is renewed according to the Scripture that says I was a sinner and God made Him who knew not sin, sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Do you believe it? If you believe it in your heart, even though you do not understand it in your mind, confess it with your mouth.

Say: the Father made Jesus Christ who knew not sin to be made sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Who makes me righteous? God does. So, if God makes me righteous, who can call me a sinner anymore?

And the devil would like to fool you and to tell you that you are still a sinner, and that is normal to sin. But once you are aware that you are the righteousness of God in Christ...He made you His righteousness, you did not make yourself righteous, it is a gift from God. The Bible says it is the gift of righteousness. It is a gift I receive when I choose to believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead; God removed my black robes of sin (figuratively speaking). When I thought I was a sinner it was normal to have black robes, I kept repenting trying to wash my black robes. And I tried to wash my robes again and again, and I was suffering and crying to God to help me. God told me I had to believe in Him and what He said in His Word that Jesus, who knew not sin, took the black robes upon himself and nailed them on the cross and buried them and made me a new creation now and gave me white robes of righteousness.

If you believe it say: I am made the righteousness of God in Christ.

Does it mean I cannot stumble and fall? No, I can stumble from time to time. But the Bible says that if I stumble, I can confess my sins right away to Him. If I stumble and my robe gets dirty, I get up and confess it and the blood of Jesus cleanses me from it, because I repent. That does not make me a sinner anymore because this is not something I practice or do willingly. There is a difference between practicing sin and stumbling and falling. And walking in this life sometimes people throw dirt at you and make your robe dirty. But now, I do not try to make myself righteous, I am righteous in Christ and have the responsibility to maintain my robe white, pure and shining. Glory to God for the blood of Jesus that makes me white.

This does not mean that bad thoughts cannot come to your mind. I cannot stop the birds from flying over my head, but I can stop them from having a nest on my head. So, when the foal birds fly over my head and drop pooh-pooh at me, and the devil try to condemn me for the thoughts that came to my mind, if I hate them I know they don't come from me, it came from the devil, but he was trying to convince me that they came from me. But if I love those thoughts, I have to repent. I hate any evil imaginations, bad thoughts, bad dreams, anything that comes to my mind that is against God's righteousness, I renounce them and reject them; I cast down the imaginations and every high thing that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God and I bring every thought captive to the obedience of God.

I continue in the Word every day; the Word of God has the power to wash me, to cleanse me, to purify me; there is divine power in it. I continue in the Word every day not as a religious duty but because I need to feed in Him, because I do not live by bread alone but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God. I allow my mind to be renewed and this way transformation happens.

Whatever things of the world you were lusting after you can now renounce because otherwise it will chock the Word of God and make you unfruitful. Whatever idols, games you are playing with and spending more time than you should, repent right now and renounce it, believe me it is not worthy because it is pulling you away from God. Let Him be your life, abide in Him and let His Word abide in you to make you fruitful.

There is a danger if I do not abide in Him as we read in the following verse:

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**John 15:6** If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

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So, do not believe the lies that say once you are saved, you are forever saved. The Bible exhorts us:

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**Philippians 2:12** Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

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But how can He work in you both to will and to do if you are not abiding in Him? Tell Him: Lord, I lost my first love. Lord Jesus, kiss me. Have you ever pray this prayer?

We read in the Book of Song of Songs what the bride says of the bridegroom and applies spiritually to Christ and the Church:

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**Song of Songs 1:2** Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love *is* better than wine.

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We can ask Him to kiss us to be on fire for Him, in love with Him, to tell Him that we love Him because He first loved us. And ask Him to give us love to love Him with, the kind of love that comes from Him alone and we cannot produce in ourselves.

Let us tell Him to kiss us, to draw us to Him, to speak to us as the bride tells the bridegroom in the Book of Song of Songs.

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**Song of Songs 1:4** Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

**Song of Songs 1:7** Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest *thy flock* to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

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So, please spend time with the Lord every day and do not allow anything or anyone to separate you from Him, it is not worthy. Come back to the first love. If you love Him, you keep His commandments.

Please Lord, make us doers of the Word and not only hearers deceiving ourselves. Father do not allow anyone of us to be deceive, stir us up by the power of your Holy Spirit to be doers of the Word. We trust you for your divine power because we can do all things through Christ who strengths us and enable us. Not by might not by power but by the Spirit of the Lord.

Every good work the Lord started in us He is faithful to complete. Great is His faithfulness, He is good and His mercy endures forever. We give Him all the glory and honor and praise and thanksgivings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You can also watch this teaching on our website: [www.vesselsofhonorforJesus.org](http://www.vesselsofhonorforJesus.org)

- The Purpose of Trials.

