

## The Blessings of the Furnace (1 Peter 4:12-19)

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### Forged in the Furnace (1 Peter) pt. 9

#### THE BIG IDEA

Although afflictions are painful, God is able to bring blessings out of our afflictions. These blessings include close communion with Jesus, joyfully experiencing God's presence, honorably carrying Christ's name, assurance that God will sort everything out, and motivation to keep doing good.

#### OPENING

- Describe a painful experience that ultimately resulted in blessing in your life.

#### DIGGING DEEPER

- According to v. 12, why shouldn't Christians be surprised when they go through fiery ordeals?
- Bible scholar John Elliott says, "The term *pyrōsis* ("fiery ordeal") is related linguistically to *pyr*, "fire," and has a range of meanings in the Bible and extrabiblical literature, the most relevant of which is the "fiery process" by which metal ore is separated from dross, freed of its impurities and refined."<sup>1</sup> How does this image help you understand the role of afflictions in the Christian life?
- In v. 15, Peter warns about suffering as a "meddler." This word is a combination of two Greek words: "oversee" and "belonging to another." The meddler is a person who seeks to oversee what does not belong to them. John Elliott points to the Roman author Plutarch's writings to describe what meddlers were known for: "The busybody or meddlesome person, he [Plutarch] observes, pries into the private and domestic affairs of others. He desires to learn the troubles of others (Polyg. 1; Mor. 515E); he shows no respect for domestic privacy but pries into secrets and blabs them to outsiders (Polyg. 2–4; Mor. 515D–517C)."<sup>2</sup> Why do you think Peter includes meddling with murder, theft, and criminal activity? How are Christians guilty of this today?

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<sup>1</sup>John Elliott, *1 Peter*, Anchor Bible Commentary (Yale University Press, 2001), p. 771.

<sup>2</sup>Elliott, *1 Peter*, p. 783.

- What does v. 19 say that Christians should do when they are suffering? Why is this so difficult? What temptations hinder us from doing this?

## PUTTING IT TO WORK

- Spend time in prayer this week, inviting God to help you discern which of your problems are self-inflicted and which are not. What do you learn from this exercise?
- Spend time this week praying this prayer written by Thomas Merton:

*My Lord God,  
I have no idea where I am going.  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
nor do I really know myself,  
and the fact that I think I am following your will  
does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe that the desire to please you  
does in fact please you.  
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.  
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.  
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,  
though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore will I trust you always though  
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.  
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,  
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.<sup>3</sup>*

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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<sup>3</sup>Cited in <https://reflections.yale.edu/article/seize-day-vocation-calling-work/merton-prayer>