

# Biblical Sanctification in a Season of Uncertainty

## Part 2: The Satisfied Soul in the Day of Adversity

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### I. Introduction

- **Key Point: The process of sanctification (becoming more like Jesus) requires that we encounter various trials.**

James 1:2-4 (NASB) - Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Romans 5:3-4 - Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

**“Suffering is both the acid test and the catalyst. It reveals and forms faith. . . Afflictions expose illusory hopes invested in imaginary gods. **Such disillusionment is a good thing, a severe mercy.**” (David Powlison, God’s Grace in Your Sufferings)**

### II. What Uncertainty Reveals About Our Heart Condition

- A. Trials reveal what we really **trust**.

Psalm 125:1 - Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 - “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

**“[Trusting God] is a vigorous act of the soul by which we choose to lay hold on the promises of God and cling to them despite the adversity that at times seeks to overwhelm us. . . **We must learn to trust when we don’t understand.**” (Jerry Bridges, Trusting God)**

- B. Trials reveal where we have placed our **hope**.

Romans 15:4, 13 - For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. . . May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Psalm 42:5-6 - Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

**“Always give hope. . . Never minimize the severity of problems; instead always maximize Christ and His power to solve problems. . . Always approach seemingly hopeless situations with emphatic disagreement. . . **Disagree when the counselee says ‘It’s hopeless.’ Say, ‘It is difficult, but not too difficult for God.’” (Jay Adams, Preaching with Purpose)****

## Jesus Reigns Over All<sup>1</sup>

“He is always. . . over everything supreme, over all galaxies and endless reaches of space, . . . He is sovereign and supreme over all plants and animals, from the peaceful blue whale to the microscopic killer viruses. . . He is supreme over all chemical processes that heal or destroy — cancer, AIDS, malaria, flu — and all the amazing grace of antibiotics and a thousand healing drugs that we do not deserve.

. . . He is supreme over politics and elections and debates on Thursday. He is supreme over media and news and entertainment and sports and leisure. He is supreme over all education in universities no matter what they teach, and he is supreme over all scholarship and science and research. He is supreme over all business and finance and industry and manufacturing and transportation, and he is supreme over the Internet and all informational systems.

As Abraham Kuyper famously said. . . “There is not one square inch on planet earth over which the risen Christ does not say, ‘Mine and I rule it. I am supreme over it.’”

Psalm 63:3-4 - Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

### C. Trials reveal what we truly **love**.

Matthew 6:21 - For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“Our word ‘worship’ is derived from the old English word ‘worthship,’ and that helps us to understand its basic meaning. Worship is acknowledging the unique worth of an object and showing honor and respect to it. So biblical words like honor, respect, awe, adoration, reverence, and glorifying are often near synonyms for the term ‘worship,’ communicating a similar idea. Obviously this practice is not one that is limited to public gatherings.” (Wayne Mack and Dave Swavely, *Life in the Father’s House*)

"Idolatry is letting something or someone take the place of God as your source of joy and ground of confidence. . . The sorrow being spoken [of in Psalm 16] is the sorrow of finding that your gods are false and your trust is misplaced." (Philip De Courcy, Sermon: "Safe and Sound", March 22, 2020)

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 11-17 - And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. . . Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’

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<sup>1</sup> John Piper, “Christ Reigns Over Every Inch” from *Desiring God* ([www.desiringgod.org/interviews/christ-reigns-over-every-inch](http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/christ-reigns-over-every-inch)).

### III. The Pastor's Concern for the Wellness of Souls

#### A. The Necessity of Soul Care

3 John 1:2 - Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your **soul**.

It was said of John Wesley when he would open the small group meetings of his church, he would open with this question: "How is it with your soul?"

- Scripture is clear that man has essentially two parts: **a material part** (body) and **an immaterial part** (soul/spirit).

Luke 1:46-47 – And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Genesis 2:7 – then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

“Man is a material and nonmaterial entity, the two aspects being distinguishable.” (Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology)

Matthew 10:28 – And do not fear those who kill the **body** but cannot kill the **soul**. Rather fear him who can destroy both **soul** and **body** in hell.

“The Bible uses language like heart, soul, spirit, and inner man, which merely points to the existence of the spiritual without making a specific function explicit. We should conclude from all of this variety in language that the Bible is teaching a diversity within an overall unity concerning the human soul. Though the various terms point to many different functions of the soul, . . . we should understand that the Bible will use different language to refer to the same thing, and that different language may highlight a specific function of the soul.” (Heath Lambert, A Theology of Biblical Counseling)

#### B. Biblical Descriptions of the Soul

##### 1. The **Troubled** Soul

Psalm 6:3-4 - My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, O LORD—how long? Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love.

1 Samuel 1:15 - But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD.

##### 2. The **Distressed** Soul

Genesis 42:21 - Then they said to one another, “In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.”

Psalm 31:7 - I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul,

3. The **Embittered** Soul

Job 7:11- "Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Isaiah 38:15 - What shall I say? For he has spoken to me, and he himself has done it. I walk slowly all my years because of the bitterness of my soul.

4. The **Downcast** Soul

Lamentations 3:1-3, 19-20 - I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; surely against me he turns his hand again and again the whole day long . . . Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.

Psalm 42:6, 11 - My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar . . . Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

5. The **Redeemed** Soul

1 Kings 1:29 - And the king swore, saying, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity,

Job 33:28 - He has redeemed my soul from going down into the pit, and my life shall look upon the light.'

Psalm 71:23 - My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to you; my soul also, which you have redeemed.

6. The **Rested** Soul

Psalm 116:7 - Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

"there is a wealth in it which the diligent digger and miner shall alone discover. Its shallows are cool and refreshing for the lambs, but in its depths are pearls for which we hope to dive." (C.H. Spurgeon)

Jeremiah 31:25 - For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish."

Psalm 138:3 - On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased.

Psalm 23:1-3 - The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.

"Are any of us low in grace? Do we feel that our spirituality is at its lowest ebb? He who turns the ebb into the flood can soon restore our soul. . . When the soul grows sorrowful he revives it; when it is sinful he sanctifies it; when it is weak he strengthens it. Pray to him, then, for the blessing --"Restore thou me, thou Shepherd of my soul!" (C.H. Spurgeon)

Matthew 11:29 - Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

## 7. The **Quiet** Soul

Psalm 131:2 - But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.

"The metaphor suggests a child who no longer cries out in hunger for the mother's breast, but who seeks out the mother for her warm embrace and nurturing care." (Nancy L. deClaisee-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, Beth LaNeel Tanner, The Book of Psalms)

"When a hungry child is placed on his mother's lap, he is agitated. He roots around, squirming anxiously. If he doesn't get immediate attention and satisfaction, he frets and fusses. He is frustrated and peevish because he wants something. His emotions range over the whole spectrum of noisy, negative emotion. . . But then have you ever seen that same child . . .when he is successfully weaned? . . . Now when that child is placed in his mother's lap, he sits quietly, giving his attention in a different direction. The child rests upon his mother, at peace. . . Envision your own soul as a small child sitting on your lap." (David Powlison, "Peace, be still": Learning Psalm 131 by Heart")

Psalm 131:1 - O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.

## 8. The **Satisfied** Soul

Psalm 63:5-7 - My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.

Psalm 63:1 - A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul (Horatio Spafford)

Be still my soul the Lord is on thy side  
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain  
Leave to thy God to order and provide  
In every change He faithful will remain  
Be still my soul thy best, thy heavenly friend  
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end

Be still my soul the hour is hastening on  
When we shall be forever with the Lord  
When disappointment grief and fear are gone  
Sorrow forgot love's purest joys restored  
Be still my soul when change and tears are past  
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last (Katarina von Schlegel)

Psalm 42:1-2 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

#### IV. Application and Exhortation: Feed Your Soul

Deuteronomy 11:18 - "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

2 Chronicles 34:31 - And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul. . .

Psalms 19:7 - The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. . .

Psalms 119:71 - It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.

"[Trials or testing] is the touchstone. It teaches you not only to know and understand but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting God's word is: it is wisdom supreme. . . For as soon as God's Word becomes known through you, the devil will afflict you, will make a real [theologian] of you." (Martin Luther)

"I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord. . . but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished.

I began, therefore, to meditate on the New Testament from the beginning early in the morning. The first thing I did, . . . was to begin to meditate on the word of God, searching as it were into every verse to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the word; . . . but for the sake of obtaining food for my soul. . .

The result of this is that there is always a good deal of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession mingled with my meditation and that my inner man almost invariably is almost sensibly nourished and strengthened and that by breakfast time, with rare exceptions, I am in a peaceful if not a happy state of heart.

By the blessing of God I ascribe to this mode the help and strength which I have had to pass in peace through deeper trials in various ways than I have ever had before; and after having now above forty years tried this way, I can most fully, in the fear of God, commend it. How different when the soul is refreshed and made happy early in the morning, from what it is when, without spiritual preparation, the service, the trials, and the temptations of the day come upon one!"

"My heart was nigh to be broken on account of the depth of my affection."

"I fell on my knees and thanked God for her release, and for having taken her to Himself, and asked the Lord to help and support us."

"The last portion of scripture which I read to my precious wife was this: "The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

"my heart was at rest. I was satisfied with God. And all this springs . . . from taking God at his word, believing what he says." (George Mueller)

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 - Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.