

**Biblical Perspectives on the Maturing Christian's Growth Through
Suffering**

2019 Grace Bible Conference

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Part 1

Before beginning this morning's message, it is important for all of us to understand that the truths that are communicated here for your edification are given for the New Testament believer to live and grow by. A New Testament believer is biblically defined as an individual that has believed the gospel for salvation as set forth in 1Corinthians 15:1-4.

Illumination from the Holy Spirit is necessary in order to be taught or to teach Scripture. This can only be achieved when a believer is spiritual (see 1Cor 3:1-2). Thus, the prerequisite for the believer being capable of learning and living out truth that he is taught is to be spiritual (see Romans 6:1-13; 8:9-14; Gal 5:16-25).

In the world system environment that the believer lives in today he or she is bombarded on all sides by multiple distractions that can tweak and dislodge a spiritual mindset. It is impossible for a Christian to navigate through this life successfully having victory over his or her enemies apart from knowing how to direct one's mind when suffering is encountered. There are approximately 54 verses in the New Testament that deal with the quality of a mind, content of the mind, the focus of the mind, and how the mind is used.

Today we will be emphasizing the content of the mind, its focus during suffering, and how it affects the believer's spiritual maturity and growth.

It is of great importance that the New Testament believer has a correct biblical perspective on his or her spiritual growth and the role suffering contributes to our ongoing maturity. Suffering is not a subject most believers are enthusiastic about or see as a potential growth source. However, this is in complete contrast to what Scripture teaches concerning suffering in the believer's life (see Philip 1:29; 2Tim 3:12; James 1:2-4; 1Pet 1:6-7).

When Christians are confronted with suffering most often the response is: I DON'T DESERVE THIS! WHY ME? WHY ISN'T GOD BLESSING ME? I THOUGHT EVERYTHING WAS GOING TO WORK OUT NOW THAT I'M A CHRISTIAN! Our dislike for hardship, difficulty, or distress has been thoroughly conditioned by the flesh, the world system, and Satan's concepts of happiness as opposed to what the Scripture teaches (see 1Pet 3:14; 4:14). This can result in even a true believer resorting to survival skills, tactics, and thought processes from their sin nature and former manner of life to escape suffering. Survival and reliance on one's self are two of the most primal instincts in humans.

The purpose of this paper is to shed light on what the believer's perspective should be as he or she grows and matures through suffering. God has determined that certain events and

circumstances will come about in our lives as a part of the growth process and being conformed to the image of Christ. God the Father is our resource. He enables us to navigate the challenges of difficult circumstances. How we use our experiential knowledge of the members of the Godhead and scriptural truth is key to sustaining us through trials and suffering.

1Peter 1:1-16 will be our starting point on this journey through the Scriptures.

The Text. 1Peter 1:1-16

The Occasion and Background. The Epistle was written to Jewish and Gentile Christians which were scatter over four provinces due to the persecution of believers. They were known as the Diaspora. The provinces were Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, described as Asia Minor. The readers of this epistle had been evangelized by multiple individuals, the Apostle Paul, Barnabas, as well as Peter. They were mature converts with knowledge and understanding of their salvation, the decree of God, and truth concerning OT scripture.

Peter exhorts the believers to gird up their minds with the truth that they know, be aware, and see things as they are. They are to remember the promises of God regarding their final salvation and the appearing of Christ and hope perfectly until the promise is realized.

The apostle had serious concerns regarding the elders in these provinces. There were temptations that could hinder the spiritual health of these assemblies, arising from the elder's official routine, from motives of greed, and ambition in their oversight of the churches. Peter addresses the presbyters in 1Peter 5:1-4.

Synopsis of 1Peter 1:1-16

- **The salutation of Apostle Peter to the sojourning strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia vs 1**
- **They were chosen by the foreknowledge of God to be participants in the Diaspora. vs 2a**
- **Set apart to God by the Holy Spirit because of obedience and sprinkling of the Blood of Christ vs 2b**
- **Grace and peace are multiplied**
- **The believers of the diaspora are reminded that God the Father has begotten us unto a living hope, according to His abundant mercy vs 3a**
- **By the resurrection of Jesus Christ out from among dead ones vs 3b**
- **To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fades not away vs 4a**
- **Reserved in heavens for you vs 4b**
- **The ones being guarded by the power of God vs 5**
 - **through faith unto salvation**

- Ready to be revealed in a last time
- Though for a short while you are distressed by trials and temptation vs 6-7
- The evidence of your faith being tried by fire
- More valuable than gold
- might be found unto praise, honor, and glory
- at the appearing of Jesus Christ
- Whom having not seen, you love vs 8
 - Though now you see Him not
 - Yet believing
- Resulting in joy unspeakable and full of glory
- Receiving the end of your faith vs 9
 - The final salvation of your souls
- The OT prophets who prophesied of this grace (salvation)
 - being brought to you. vs 10-12
- Sought out and searched what manner of time the Spirit
 - from Christ pointed to
- Concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow- this includes NT saints
- It was revealed to the prophets that not to themselves they ministered this truth but to you vs 12
 - by the ones having preached the Gospel
 - to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven
 - Things angels bow down and are desirous to know

The exhortation of Apostle to the saints to “Having gird up the loins(σφουσααζ)of your mind(διανοια), be sober,” [Having set in place your experiential knowledge of the truth, be focused and aware of things as they truly are, fully engaged in mental activity that enables you not to be unsettled by circumstances], in view of the afore mentioned reminder of our hope firmly based in God’s promises vs 13

- Hope perfectly, thoroughly on the grace being brought to you at the appearing of Jesus Christ
- The τεκνον obedient born ones are exhorted not to conform to their former lust as they did in their previous ignorance
- But as the One having called you is set apart unto Himself
- You be set apart to Him
- Live it out in your life as one who is set apart to God

This kind of mental activity and behavior is only possible for the spiritual believer. Not coincidentally we are exhorted by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:14 to “Gird up the loins

with truth” as a part of the mental armor necessary to combat satanic attack. This girding up would seem to be a necessary part of the believer’s defense against all three enemies.

Clearly there was satanic involvement happening to the readers of 1 Peter by virtue of the listed satanic work lusts mentioned in the book. Peter warns the saints in 1Pet 5:8-9.

The works of the flesh are evident as another enemy that these saints of the diaspora were encountering. In 1Pet 2:11 they are charged to abstain from fleshly lust that serve like a soldier battling against the soul. Having their conduct unrepachable, though the Gentiles slander them like the accuser.

The world system was a hostile environment for the Christian during that time period. Not unlike our present situation and the plight of many of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world being persecuted for being called by the name and professing faith in our Savior’s death, burial, and resurrection. Never- the- less we as they are admonished to submit ourselves to governmental authorities knowing that they are appointed by God.

Διανοια

A Greek word in 1Pet 1:13, dianoia (dee-ah-noi-ah) translated mind, holds an essential key to how spiritual believers handle suffering and trials. Peter exhorted the saints to gird up the loins [In the Hebrew culture the loins were thought to be the portion of the body where life was generated] of their διανοια. In our next session we will look at how this word is used in Scripture and look at a few lexical citations in order to define this word.

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Part 2

How Dianoia is Used in Scripture.

Jer 31:33-34 LXX- saved mind of Millennial saints

Eph 2:3; 4:18 -Natural mind

Col 1:21- Natural mind

Heb 8:10; 10:16- Saved mind of Millennial saints

1Pet 1:13- saved believer

2Peter 3:1- saved believer- (see Phil 1:10; Heb 5:5-14)

1John 5:20- saved believer

Dianoia Defined. In the context of 1Peter 1:13 dianoia is that part of the believer's quality of new mind where mental activity is focused on the believer's stockroom or vault of experiential knowledge of God the Father, the Son, and scriptural truth illumined and taught by the Holy Spirit. He knows and understands these truths. Focusing on this experiential knowledge enables the Christian to be stabilized spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. He or she is alert, sober, aware of his surroundings, and able to see things as they really are. The result is understanding scripture truth that allows a believer to navigate through circumstances as they arise.

Scripture also teaches there is a dianoia characterized by the sin nature. To the unbelieving, it is an instinctive behavior to be self-reliant in managing crisis, hardship, or life in general. As a mature son of Satan energized by their father the non-believer has an arsenal of strategies to reference. This is in opposition to the will of God for the believer (see Eph 2:3; 4:18; Col 1:21).

The Believer's maturity and growth through suffering will be largely dependent on his or her ability to process truth that they know and to understand how to apply the applicable scripture truth to the situation or circumstance. If we are not spiritual, we are not operating out of the right mind. The Apostle Peter repeatedly stresses to the saints not to revert to their former manner of life in which they were alienated from the life of God.

Our maturity and growth in every facet of our lives is predicated on our daily spiritual walk. The things which occupy the believer's mind will affect his readiness to deal with those situations, trials, temptations, distresses, and conflicts that confront him. Our mental occupation will have a noted effect on how we maintain our spiritual walk together with both the positive and the negative aspects of what we face day to day and how we interpret what we experience.

The statements above will only have a successful outcome for the believer who is maturing in the Word of God. One who is acquiring the ability to study and feed himself in the Scriptures will find more stability in his walk. He prayerfully digests the truth that the Spirit of God teaches and uses it in his daily life as the need arises.

His maturity, firm grasp of Scripture, and mindset enable him not to run from problems or unpleasant circumstances. He rests in the hope derived from the promises of God's Word, willingly going through whatever the Father has determined for his life. His faith allows him to trust God to empower him with all that is needed to endure.

Questions. What occupies your mind most often? Do you ever monitor your thoughts? Have you ever considered the affect your thought processes produce in your life's decision and choices?

Διανοια is but one of the mind terms used in Scripture. The NT believer should become familiar with all of them.

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Part 3 & 4

Biblical Truths That Should Gird the Loins of the New Testament Believer's dianoia When Suffering

What God Determined for the N.T. Believer's Life

Ephesians 1:5; 1Peter 1:1-2 – Predestined, decided on beforehand set the προορίζω (set the boundaries of our lives), determined in advance

Philippians 1:6 That the good work that He began in the believer He will perform until the day of Jesus Christ

Philippians 1:29 -It has been given on behalf of Christ to suffer

Phil. 2:13- To desire and to do of God's good pleasure

What God Has Provided to the N.T. Believer

John 3:16 – God gave the best He could ever offer on our behalf, His Son

Colossians 1:12-14

2Peter 1:1-4 – Great and precious promises

God has equipped the believer with everything he needs that pertains to successfully living out God's quality of life characterized by Godliness in his present tense salvation. You are lacking nothing in Christ. You are complete (see Col 2:10). Even through suffering!

How the Believer is to Handle His Adversaries

Philippians 1:28-29

1Peter 2:12

1Peter 3:13-16

1Peter 5:8

James 4:7

What the Mindset of the Believer Should Be Toward Other Saints Who Are Suffering

1Corinthians 12:24-27

2Corinthians 1:3- 7; 1John 3:23

Philippians 2:1-8 Don't be the cause of another saint's suffering by ill words, evil speculation, jealousy, insensitivity to their grief, suffering, or hardship.

2Thessalonians 1:3-5 -The believer should realize that just as the church of Thessalonica endured great oppression and persecution, in Christ, regardless of what we suffer, we too are able, to grow in our faith, love the brethren, and rest in the hope of God's promise, knowing we will be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God.

1Peter 3:8-9

1Peter 5:8-9 – Be perceptive of other brethren undergoing affliction due to satanic attack. Keep them in your prayers. Come along side and encourage them.

Paul's Sufferings.

2Corinthians 11:21-28

2Corinthians 12:7-10

Philippians 1:12-14

What Christ Did on Our Behalf Leaving Us an Example

****1Corinthians 15:1-4**

Matthew 13:55-57

John 15:15-25

****Philippians 2:5-8**

****1Peter 2:21-24**

1Peter 3:18

1Peter 4:1

****Hebrews 5:7-9**

What the N.T. Believer's Attitude Should Be

John 15:15-25

Romans 8:18

Philippians 1:29 - It is a grace gift not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for His name sake. A non-negotiable package

Philippians 2:12-18

Titus 2:11-13; Hebrews 12:1-7 – Child training and discipline are characterized by suffering in most instances. There is a positive aspect in both. There is suffering experienced by the believer that is doing the will of God faithfully but toward the end of him further learning to say no to ungodliness and worldly lust. This will result in the believer having a healthy mind and the ability to exercise self-control in this present evil age. For the believer that is avidly practicing his sin bent, the suffering encountered while receiving a beating is painful, but this discipline will produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Don't regard discipline as something of minimal value or take it lightly!

2Timothy 3:12 - Desiring to live Godly is just as consequential as living it. Persecution will follow. Gird up!

1Peter 3:14-17

1Peter 4:1

1Peter 4:12-16

What the Believer Should Do

Philippians 1:8-12 - The NT believer is to be maturing in the thought processes that cause our character to manifest the wisdom of God, making decisions that reflect the character of Christ in discernment and choices concerning ourselves and on the behalf of other believers. Phil 1:10; Heb 5:5-14; 2Pet 3:1-4

1Peter 1:13-16

1Peter 2:19-23

1Peter 3:13-17

1Peter 4:12-16, 19

Conclusion. According to Scripture the believer's maturity and growth through suffering is closely associated with how he uses his mind. On any given day, in any given moment of time, hundreds of thoughts are racing through our minds in a nano second. How minded are you of what your thoughts are? What comes to mind at the first indication of difficulty or possible suffering? When we are spiritual what mind are we functioning out of? Let's

look at 1Corinthians 2:16. When we are spiritual It is an aspect of a quality of the mind of Christ.

Words Relative to Suffering

Affliction, Tribulation, Oppression

θλίψεως noun genitive feminine singular from θλίψις

Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*

[Fri] θλίψις, εως, ἡ literally *pressure, pressing together*; figuratively in the NT, of suffering brought on by outward circumstances *affliction, oppression, trouble* (RO 5.3); especially to be regarded as participation in the sufferings of Christ (CO 1.24); of sufferings of the end-time *tribulation, trouble, distress* (MK 13.19); called ἡ μεγάλη θ. *the great tribulation, the time of great trouble* (MT 24.21; RV 7.14)

θλίψις N-NF-S θλίψις

θλίψεως N-GF-S θλίψις

Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon (GIN)*

[GING] θλίψις

θλίψις, εως, ἡ *oppression, affliction, tribulation* Mt 24:9, 21; Ac 11:19; Ro 12:12; 2 Cor 4:17; Col 1:24; 2 Th 1:6; Rv 2:9, 22; 7:14. *Difficult circumstances* 2 Cor 8:13; Js 1:27. *Trouble* 2 Cor 2:4; Phil 1:17. [pg 90]

Danker, *Greek NT Lexicon (DAN)*

[DANK] θλίψις

θλίψις, εως, ἡ [θλίβω; ‘pressing, pressure’] in NT metaph. sense ‘distress that is the result of outward circumstances’, *distress, suffering* Mt 24:9 (suffering caused by brutal physical abuse), 21; Ac 11:19; Ro 12:12; 2 Cor 4:17; Col 1:24; 2 Th 1:6; Hb 10:33; Rv 2:9, 22; 7:14. W. focus on inward anguish, trouble, distress 2 Cor 2:4; Phil 1:17.

Grief

λύπας, noun accusative feminine plural from λύπη

Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*

[Fri] λύπη, ης, ἡ (1) physically *pain, suffering, distress* (JN 16.21); (2) mentally or spiritually *sorrow, grief, sadness, anxiety* (JN 16.6); (3) adverbially ἐκ λύπης *with a grieved spirit, reluctantly, grudgingly* (2C 9.7)
λύπη N-NF-S λύπη

Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon (GIN)*

[GING] λύπη
λύπη, ης, ἡ *grief, sorrow, pain, affliction* Lk 22:45; J 16:6, 20–22; Ro 9:2; 2 Cor 2:1, 3, 7; 7:10; 9:7; Phil 2:27; Hb 12:11; 1 Pt 2:19.* [pg 120]

Danker, *Greek NT Lexicon (DAN)*

[DANK] λύπη
λύπη, ης, ἡ [Skt. assoc.] ‘inner distress’ – a. w. focus on mental or spiritual aspect *grief, sorrow* Lk 22:45; J 16:6, 20, 22; Ro 9:2; 2 Cor 2:1, 3, 7; 7:10; 9:7; Phil 2:27; Hb 12:11. – b. w. focus on associated physical aspect, *pain in birthing* J 16:21; *in persecution* 1 Pt 2:19.

Suffering

πάσχων verb participle present active nominative masculine singular from πάσχω

Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*

[Fri] πάσχω 2aor. ἔπαθον; pf. πέπονθα; (1) basically, of what happens to a person *experience, undergo* something; (2) in a good sense *experience* (possibly GA 3.4); (3) predominately in a bad sense *suffer, undergo, endure* (MT 16.21; probably GA 3.4); euphemistically *die, suffer death* (LU 22.15)
πάσχω VIPA--1S πάσχω
πάσχων VPPANM-S πάσχω

Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon (GIN)*

[GING] πάσχω
πάσχω—1. *have an experience* Gal 3:4; cf. Mt 17:15.—2. *suffer, endure*—a. *suffer, sometimes suffer death* Mt 17:12; Lk 22:15; 24:46; Ac 1:3; 17:3; 1 Cor 12:26; Phil 1:29; 2 Th 1:5; Hb 2:18; 9:26; 1 Pt 2:19–21, 23; 3:14, 17; 4:19. *Undergo punishment* 1 Pt 4:15.—b.

endure, undergo Mt 27:19; Mk 8:31; 9:12; Lk 9:22; 17:25; Ac 9:16; 28:5; 2 Cor 1:6; 1 Th 2:14; 2 Ti 1:12; Hb 5:8; Rv 2:10. [See *patho-*, *-pathia*, etc., s.v. *πάθος*.] [pg 153]

Danker, *Greek NT Lexicon (DAN)*

[DANK] *πάσχω*

πάσχω [IE, cp. *πένθος*] – this verb relates to experience of someth. in a pos. or neg. or neutral sense, as indicated by immediate or remote context – 1. *experience someth.* Gal 3:4, prob. positive in view of the variety of blessings depicted in the context. In Ac 28:5 *π.* itself is neutral and the acc. *οὐδὲν κακόν* points to what was not experienced. In Mt 17:15 prob. neutral, unless *κακῶς* strengthens *π.* in the sense of – 2. in NT most oft. in the negative sense of painful experience – a. w. focus on experience of pain or death suffer Mt 16:21; 17:12; Lk 13:2; 22:15; Ac 1:3; 1 Cor 12:26; Phil 1:29; 2 Th 1:5; Hb 2:18; 9:26; 1 Pt 2:19 and oft. in 1 Pt – of suffering associated with legal penalty 4:15. – b. of subjection to a variety of difficult circumstances endure, undergo Mt 27:19; Mk 5:26; 9:12; Lk 9:22; Ac 9:16; 2 Cor 1:6; 1 Th 2:14; 2 Ti 1:12; Hb 5:8; Rv 2:10.

Trouble

κακοπαθῶ verb indicative present active 1st person singular from *κακοπαθέω*

Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*

[Fri] *κακοπαθέω* 1aογ. *ἐκακοπάθησα*; (1) passive *suffer trouble, misfortunes or afflictions* (2T 2.9); (2) active, as meeting hardships courageously *bear affliction, endure hardships* (2T 4.5)

κακοπαθῶ VIPA--1S *κακοπαθέω*

Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon (GIN)*

[GING] *κακοπαθέω*

κακοπαθέω *suffer misfortune* 2 Ti 2:9; Js 5:13. *Bear hardship patiently* 2 Ti 4:5.* [pg 99]

Danker, *Greek NT Lexicon (DAN)*

[DANK] *κακοπαθέω*

κακοπαθέω [*κακός, πάθος*] – 1. *suffer hardship* 2 Ti 2:9; Js 5:13. – 2. *persevere* 2 Ti 4:5.

Distress

ἀνάγκη noun dative feminine singular common from *ἀνάγκη*

Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*

[Fri] ἀνάγκη, ης, ἡ (1) *necessity, compulsion, force*; (a) from a feeling of inward necessity *constraint, compelling obligation* (1C 9.16); (b) as brought about by circumstances *what is inevitable* (MT 18.7); (c) as arising from the divine order of things *necessity* (RO 13.5); (2) as difficult circumstances that come on one with compelling force *distress, trouble, tribulation* (LU 21.23); (3) impersonally ἄ. ε;νστίν) *it is necessary* (HE 9.16)

ἀνάγκη N-NF-S ἀνάγκη

ἀνάγκη N-DF-S ἀνάγκη

Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon (GIN)*

[GING] ἀνάγκη

ἀνάγκη, ης, ἡ—1. *necessity* Hb 7:12; *compulsion, pressure* 2 Cor 9:7. ἄ. ἔχω *I must* Lk 14:18. ἄ. with ἐστίν understood = *it is necessary, one must* Hb 9:16, 23.—2. *distress, calamity* Lk 21:23; 1 Cor 7:26. [pg 11]

Danker, *Greek NT Lexicon (DAN)*

[DANK] ἀνάγκη

ἀνάγκη, ης, ἡ [IE; the primary idea in Hellenic thought: inevitability as an inherent component of human experience and indicating that over which one has no control] – 1. ‘constraining/compelling force’, necessity, constraint: w. ἐξ *under pressure* 2 Cor 9:7 (cp. a child’s ‘Do I have to do it?’); also w. ἐξ of ‘compelling’ logic = *necessarily* Hb 7:12; w. κατά Phlm 14. – ἄ. w. ἐστίν understood = *it is necessary*, in Engl. frequently expressed by the auxiliary *must* Mt 18:7 (w. ἐστίν as v.l.); Ro 13:5; Hb 9:16, 23. ἄ. ἔχω w. inf. *consider it necessary, am obliged, one must* Lk 14:18; Jd 3. The component of force leads naturally to – 2. *distress, calamity* Lk 21:23; 1 Cor 7:26; 2 Cor 6:4.

Persecution

διωγμός, noun nominative masculine singular from διωγμός

Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*

[Fri] διωγμός, οῦ, ὁ literally *pursuit, chase*; figuratively *persecution* (MT 13.21)

διωγμός N-NM-S διωγμός

Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon (GIN)*

[GING] διωγμός

διωγμός, οὔ, ὁ *persecution* (for religious reasons only) Mk 4:27; Ac 8:1; 13:50; Ro 8:35; 2 Ti 3:11 [pg 50]

Danker, *Greek NT Lexicon (DAN)*

[DANK] διωγμός

διωγμός, οὔ, ὁ [διώκω] ‘a program of systematic harassment’, esp. because of differing belief or expression persecution Mt 13:21; Mk 10:30; Ac 8:1; Ro 8:35; 2 Cor 12:10; 2 Th 1:4.

Perils, Danger

κινδύνοις noun dative masculine plural common from κίνδυνος

Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*

[Fri] κίνδυνος, ου, ὁ as a condition of threatening circumstances *danger, risk, peril*

κίνδυνος N-NM-S κίνδυνος

κινδύνοις N-DM-P κίνδυνος

Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon (GIN)*

[GING] κίνδυνος

κίνδυνος, ου, ὁ *danger, risk* Ro 8:35; 2 Cor 11:26.* [pg 109]

Danker, *Greek NT Lexicon (DAN)*

[DANK] κίνδυνος

κίνδυνος, ου, ὁ [etym. unclear] *danger, hazard* Ro 8:35; 2 Cor 11:26.