

# Faith Futures at Record High

The New Birth Part 6  
1 Peter 1:7-9 5-6-2012

Summary: Faith (believing and trusting that which is supported by the best evidence) is priceless because having been proved and purified it brings assurance and the benefits of salvation now and will be praised by God at the Second Coming.

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**1 Peter 1:6 In which you rejoice, a little while, if necessary, you may be grieved in multifaceted trials, 7 in order that the proof of your faith (more precious than gold, the perishing through fire, but proved), it may be found toward praise and glory and honor in the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 who, not having beheld, you love, into which not seeing but believing, you rejoice in joy inexpressible and glorified, 9 receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

## Introduction: Why?

When a little child first learns how to talk, very often the word he falls in love with is, "Why?"

"Why is grass green, Daddy?"

"Because God made it green."

"Why did God make it green, Daddy?"

"Why are we going to the store? Why is that lady going to the store?"

"Why do we have to go home now?"

"Because I said so."

"Why did you say so, Daddy?"

I am not totally sure about this, but it could be that God made our kids like that to teach us what it is like for Him to listen to our prayers. Probably the most worn-out prayer there is, is that one-word

reaction we always have when we suffer, “Why? Why is this happening?” Anybody here asked that question about your suffering in the past year?

If you are wondering why some painful ordeal is happening to you, or happened to you in the past, and you want me to answer the “Why?” question for you, I’m afraid all I can do is give you twenty-three good answers. When I search the Scripture for places that tell us why we have to suffer, so far I have only found twenty-three different reasons.

If you want that list, it is on the Articles page on [TreasuringGod.com](http://TreasuringGod.com) under “Benefits of Suffering.” But it is beyond the scope of this sermon to go through them all now. What I would like to do is just focus on the one that Peter gives us in this passage.

## **7 These [trials] have come so that...**

So he is going to answer the question, “Why?” And the answer has to do with faith. God sends suffering into your life because of the effect suffering has on your faith.

Suffering is the stomping grounds for faith. It is where faith lives. One writer said, “What would a bird be without air? What would a fish be without water? That’s what faith would be without testing.” The trouble is the environment faith was created to exist in. Suffering is where faith does its thing. Why did God give us faith? Are you ready for this? Because we will need it! Which is a little scary if you think about it. If you were on a ride-along with a police officer, and you were about to go into a building with him and he stopped and handed you a bullet proof jacket and said, “Put this on – you’re going to need it” – what would that tell you? It tells you the same thing God is telling you when He says, “Here’s the shield of faith. You’re going to need it.”

But it is not just that you need faith to get through trials. The trials have an effect on the faith. When you use two-part glue, the glue is not sticky at all to begin with. But then you put in a few drops of activator, and it turns it into strong glue. Trials are the activator for faith. Suffering has a particular effect on faith. And if we want to find joy in our suffering, it is crucial that we understand how that works.

## ***The Nature of Faith***

But before we get into that, let me take just a minute to make sure we are clear on what faith is.

### ***Imaginary Friend?***

## **8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, but believe in him, you are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy**

If we cannot see Him, why do we believe? A group known as the Boulder Atheists purchased a billboard that said, “God is an Imaginary Friend.” People who believe in God are like a little kid who does not have anybody to play with so he makes up a pretend friend. Is that what faith is? Imagination? I went to [GodIsImaginary.com](http://GodIsImaginary.com) where they have fifty “proofs” that God does not exist. At the top of the page it said, “There is no scientific evidence that God exists. ... in other words, God is imaginary. It is obvious.” When Peter says, we do not see Him, he is admitting – it is true – there really is no scientific proof that God exists. I have never seen God in a test tube, and yet I believe - is that irrational?

### ***Is Faith Rational?***

Some Christians have said, “Yes – faith in God is not rational.” They say, “It’s true that we can’t really prove the existence of God – that’s why we need faith. We don’t have evidence or proof, so in place of proof, we just believe.” People like that will often point to passages like this one, or Hebrews 11:1, which says, **Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.** And they will say, “See, faith is when you believe without any evidence or proof.”

When people say that, they could not be more wrong. Faith is not something we have instead of *evidence*. Faith is something we have instead of *sight*. Faith is when you believe something you cannot see because there is some other good reason to believe it. Faith is not believing apart from evidence. Superstition is believing apart from evidence. Faith is just the opposite – faith is believing *on the basis of evidence*.

What the people at GodisImaginary.com do not understand is that there are other kinds of evidence besides scientific evidence. It is true that there is no scientific proof that God exists. But there is no scientific proof that science exists either. Have any of you ever looked at a drop of science under a microscope? There is no scientific proof that logic exists. Or that love exists, or that evil exists. Science cannot even prove that thoughts exist. Why? Because science is not useful for examining non-material things. Obviously thoughts exist, but science just is not the right tool for proving that.

There are lots of other kinds of evidence besides scientific evidence. In fact, the great majority of things you believe, you believe based on other kinds of evidence that are not scientific. Most of what you believe, you believe on the basis of reliable testimony, not scientific observation. And that is true even of scientists. Most of what scientists believe, they believe not because they observed it in a lab, but because they took some trustworthy person's word for it. Very few scientists have ever actually measured the speed of light themselves. They just trust reliable testimony from other scientists. Those people at the imaginary friend website – when they get home from work at night, and they say to their wife, "How was your day? And she says, "Not bad. I bumped in to an old friend. We chatted for a few minutes – it was nice to see her again." - do you think he responds by saying, "I'll believe you talked to this alleged 'friend' when I see a video of the whole thing!"? No – he accepts it as reality based on the fact that he trusts that his wife is giving reliable testimony. I do not have any scientific proof that George Washington ever existed. But it would be irrational to doubt it because of the *historical* proof. So I have faith that he did exist because that is what the best evidence points to.

In fact, seeing is not even the best kind of evidence. When I look around, the earth looks flat, the sun looks like it moves across the sky, and no matter how hard I strain my eyes, Pluto is nowhere to be seen. But in spite of what I see and do not see, I believe Pluto exists and that the Sun does not revolve around the earth and the earth is round, not flat. Why? Because I have evidence from reliable testimony that is much stronger evidence even than what I see and don't see with my own eyes.

### ***Faith is Believing and Trusting***

So faith is believing what the best evidence points to. Now, what is faith in Jesus Christ? There are two parts – believing Him and trusting Him. You believe information, you trust a person. If I am following a guide through the jungle, and he tells me the destination is to the north, if I accept that piece of information as being true – that is the believing part. If we come to a fork and it seems to me the best way to go is left, and he says the best way is right, if I trust him more than I trust my own judgment, I will go right. That is the trusting part. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is when you believe what He says is true, and you trust that His way is best even when it does not seem best. And we believe Him and trust Him even without seeing Him because the best evidence points to the fact that He is far more trustworthy than we are. And so for me to trust my own judgment more than His would be irrational.

## **Proven Faith**

"OK, I understand. Faith is believing and trusting Jesus Christ – I get that. My problem is, how do I know if I have it? I *think* I have faith, but lots of people think they believe, but in reality their faith isn't real. How do I know for sure that my faith is genuine?"

That is where suffering comes in.

## **7 These (trials) have so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine**

When you suffer hardship and come out the other end still a Christian, you have much more evidence that your faith is genuine.

### ***Suffering Exposes Faith***

Trials test faith and expose how genuine and pure it is. You can have two people who, from all appearances, both seem to have exactly the same kind of faith sitting side by side in church. One of them has real faith and the other one thinks his faith is real, but it isn't. But no one can see that – not even the one with phony faith can see it – until some suffering comes into their lives. And then it becomes obvious, because suffering always causes true faith to run toward God, and phony faith to pull away from God. Any time suffering makes a person angry at God, or makes them want to drop out of church, or stop reading their Bible and praying – that is evidence that either their faith was not real, or some element of their faith was not real.

### ***Not Seeing Him Exposes Faith***

So suffering exposes what is real and what is not. And you know what else does that? Not seeing. Not seeing exposes faith or lack of faith. They guy who says to his wife, "I have to see the video before I'll believe you," shows that he does not trust her. Where sight is required, there is no trust. So you discover if trust exists or not when no visual evidence is available. The guy might *claim* to trust her all day long, and we do not know if that claim is true or not. But as soon as a situation comes along where there is no visual proof and he has to rely completely on her word – that is when you find out if he trusts her.

So to test and expose our faith God has not only sent suffering, but He has also placed us in a situation where all the most important things we rely on are invisible. All the most important things in our lives, we have never seen. You cannot see Him, and if you believe anyway, then rejoice, because...

## **8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now but believe in him, you are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy**

You know your faith is real because it is unfazed by suffering and it is unfazed by not seeing. Jesus once said,

### **John 20:29 blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**

The word **blessed** means you have reason to celebrate. The people who believe without having seen really have a reason to be happy, because they are better off than people like Peter – who did see Jesus.

Now I know there are some Christians who just do not buy that. Even though Jesus said it, they still think that it must be better to see Jesus than to not see Him. So they seek after visions, and when someone tells a story about going to heaven and seeing Jesus and coming back, everybody wants to buy his book. They get all excited about people who claim to have seen Jesus, because their motto is, "Blessed are those who *have* seen." But Jesus said, "No, blessed are those who have not seen."

Think about it. The Disciples saw Jesus for three years, and where did that get them? At the end of that time they were still the "O ye of little faith" club. Jesus was forever rebuking them for their lack of faith. When your connection to Jesus is based on sight, then what happens in those times when you cannot see Him? All your confidence and peace and joy are out the window. But if it all comes from faith, then there is no circumstance where you are separated from access to Him. You do not have to be in a revival meeting or in a trance having a vision. You can be at work writing an email. Or in your basement doing laundry.

## ***God Loves Faith on Display***

So trials expose true faith. And exposing genuine faith is something God loves to do. Faith in the heart of someone else is invisible to the rest of us, and God loves making it visible. Jesus did that all the time. We have a whole fifteen-part sermon series on FFYS titled “Jesus Tests and Builds Faith,”<sup>1</sup> and it is just a whole bunch of times where there is an entire section of Scripture devoted to describing an event where Jesus stopped to expose the genuineness of someone’s faith. Jesus could see into people hearts. And very often He would be walking along, see someone with strong faith, and go out of His way to throw some major obstacle in front of that person just to show off how solid the person’s faith was. True faith is a beautiful thing, and God wants it on display. And when He puts your faith on display through trials, He is doing you a huge favor, because it gives you assurance of your salvation.

## ***Assurance***

That is crucial, because you cannot enjoy your future inheritance now if you are not even sure you are saved. And one of the evidences that can give you confidence that your salvation is real is when you remain a follower of Jesus even when God gives you suffering; when suffering drives you toward Him instead of away from Him. That is not natural. It does not happen with phony faith. When God takes things away from you and allows severe pain in your life, and you continue to love Him even after that, that proves you trust Him. And that means you are saved, because anyone who trusts Him is saved.

## **Pure Faith**

So suffering is crucial because it proves faith. And not only does it *prove* your faith, it also *improves* your faith. Look at the little comment he makes about the gold in verse 7.

### ***If It Is Worth It for Gold, It Is Worth It for Faith***

**7 These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine**

Why does he throw in that part about the gold being refined by fire? He is saying, “If it’s worth it to put gold through the fire to test it, then it’s certainly worth it to do the same to faith because faith is worth so much more.” Gold is temporary and perishable and restricted just to this life, and yet it is still worth going to the trouble to refine it in the fire – how much more so with faith, which is worth far more than gold?

Just like gold, our faith is tested not by litmus paper or a chemical test or putting it under a microscope – but by putting it in fire. And also like gold, faith is not only tested by fire, but it is also purified. That very process of testing has a purifying effect.

### ***Typical Impurities***

Here is how that works: Some painful ordeal comes into your life, and in general it causes you to run toward God instead of away from Him. That shows that generally speaking your faith is real. It is not fool’s gold – it is the real thing. However even real gold can have some impurities in it, right? It can have some dross mixed in – bits of iron or aluminum or some oxidation or other impurities that are not true gold. So they put the gold in fire, it melts to liquid, those bits that are not real gold float on the top, and they skim it off. Then when it cools and hardens, you have purer, more valuable gold. And suffering is the fire that does that same thing to faith. Remember I said if your suffering causes you to

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<sup>1</sup> [http://foodforyoursoul.net/ffys\\_v2/?page\\_id=37&series=7](http://foodforyoursoul.net/ffys_v2/?page_id=37&series=7)

become angry with God or withdraw it means either your faith is phony altogether, or maybe just one particular aspect of your faith is phony? It could be that you have true faith with some impurities mixed in, and the trial is designed to burn off those impurities. Like what?

### ***Trusting in Your Job***

Well, maybe you trust God in general as a Christian, but when it comes to your finances, you are really trusting in your job. That is just a little section of lead inside the gold nugget of your faith. And you cannot see it from the outside until the fiery trial of getting fired comes along. Your boss says, "I'm sorry, but today is your last day." Suddenly you are all upset, you are scared, worried, anxious, afraid – why? Did something happen to God? If you were trusting in God, and nothing has happened to God, then nothing is really different in your situation – so there is no reason for anxiety. But in that one area you discover that your faith was in your paycheck instead of God, and the only way you know that is because it is exposed by the fire of this trial. Now that it is exposed, you can deal with that, correct the problem, place your trust in God for provision, and now your faith is much purer and more valuable.

### ***Complaining***

What other impurities do we have in our faith? How about complaining? We have a pocket of unbelief in the area of the goodness and power of God. We do not really trust Him that He knows what He is doing in the way He runs this universe. We think we trust Him but this little pocket of unbelief is like a pocket of lead hidden deep inside the gold nugget of faith, and we do not even know it is there. But then the little irritations of life hit us and we grumble and complain and moan and groan and become irritable – what is that? That is the dross of our unbelief in that area floating to the top.

### ***Believing Sin Will Bring Greater Joy Than God's Way***

Another example of this is temptation. God says, "Walking with Me will bring you greater joy than the pleasure of that sin," and I say, "I believe you God!" but then the temptation comes up and I cave in. What does that tell me? It shows me that I do not really believe His way is better in that area. Another little pocket of unbelief, exposed by the fire of the temptation.

### ***Other Examples***

What other kinds of dross do we have? Inclinations to doubt, gullibility to be deceived with certain false doctrines, overly-negative, pessimistic attitudes. Every sin we commit – every wrong action or attitude or desire or affection - is due to some pocket of unbelief inside the beautiful, priceless gold nugget of our faith. And God sends the fire of pain because He loves your faith, and He *really* loves it when it is purified. And He really, really loves it when the beauty of it and the purity of it are put on display.

## **Priceless Faith**

That is why Peter starts out the verse by talking about the value of faith.

### **7 These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold...**

Gold represents the best of what this world offers. If you have enough gold, you can buy whatever stuff in this world you want. And faith is worth more than that. So before talking about the effect suffering has on faith, Peter wants us to understand the value of our faith. Why? Because if we don't, then everything else Peter is going to say is just going to ring hollow.



### ***You have to know the value in order to rejoice***

I have had people who are in the midst of suffering tell me, “I know the Bible says I should consider it pure joy when I suffer because suffering produces perseverance. I know suffering produces stronger faith. I don’t want any more faith! I just want relief from this suffering.”

The promise of tested, proven, purified faith will not bring you joy unless you understand the value of it. And so Peter says, “It’s worth more than the greatest treasure in this world.” It is worth more than gold and everything you can buy with gold. If you had to choose between gaining greater faith or keeping your house – you are way ahead if you give up the house. If you had to choose between keeping your faith intact or finished your college education, give up the education. If it is a choice between greater faith and anything in this world – you fill absolutely anything in that blank, and faith is worth more.

A Rolex – Cosmograph Daytona - \$120,000



2012 Bentley EXP 9 - \$588,000



Sheik Mohammad bin Rashid’s 525 foot. yacht – \$350 million



Faith – Priceless



### ***Productive Faith: Salvation***

“Why is it worth so much?”

Look down at verse 9.

**8 ...you are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

Faith is priceless because it enables us to experience aspects of our future salvation right now. Salvation is deliverance from sin and all the effects and consequences of sin, and that will not happen

in a complete way until after Jesus returns. For now, sin and the effects of sin are still a major problem – even for believers. But Peter points to that future deliverance and says, “You’re actually already experiencing that here and now.” Not in an absolute way, but even the partial bit of it that we are experiencing now is so wonderful that it fills us with inexpressible and glorious joy.

### ***What Aspects Are Now?***

So what are those parts? What aspects of our final salvation are we receiving sneak previews of already in this life? What does it mean to experience eternal life already here and now in a dying body?

It is samples of the kind of life we will experience in heaven in partial form. It is every good thing you desire. Would you like to have greater integrity and honesty? Greater purity? Greater love? More patience? More self-control? More joy? More peace? Greater strength? Those are all aspects of our salvation that we can experience, in part, here and now.

“How do I get them?”

Through faith. It all comes through faith and faith alone. No other way. It all comes from trusting Him more than you trust yourself whenever you come to a fork in the road.

### ***Loving Him***

That trust brings us joy because it is a trust that rises out of love. It is not just that we are looking forward to benefits. We are looking forward to being with a person we love. Our joy in this life is like the joy a bride has the day before her wedding. The day before her wedding she is not excited mainly because the next day she will have financial security or someone to mow the yard. Those things are just parts of a much bigger reality. She is excited because tomorrow she is going to be made one with the man she loves. It is our love for Jesus Christ that sweetens our anticipation.

The way the structure of this sentence is laid out, the word “love” is parallel with the word “rejoice.” They are almost used as synonyms. In the NIV it kind of sounds like love and faith are parallel. But literally it reads like this:

**8 who, not having beheld,                      you love,  
    who not seeing, but believing in,      you rejoice**

So **you love** goes with **you rejoice**. To love Jesus Christ is to be happy. When we lack joy, you can always trace that back to some kind of problem with loving God, because love brings joy. If you love ice cream, then when you get ice cream, you are happy. If you love the beach, then when you go there, you are happy. And if you love being around God, and God is around, then you are happy. Even though we do not see Him with our eyes, we do have access to His presence here and now, and so to the degree we experience His presence, we rejoice. And His presence is experienced in this life only through faith.

So you can see how incredibly valuable and precious true, genuine faith is. It is priceless. So any day when your faith is strengthened or increased or improved in any way is a happy day.

### ***Praised Faith***

And there is another reason it is a happy day. We rejoice in suffering because suffering proves and purifies our faith, and proven, purified faith is priceless. And it is priceless for two reasons. One is because it brings us assurance of our salvation and the benefits of salvation here and now. But there is one more reason we rejoice when our faith is proven and purified. And I have to say this one kind of threw me for a loop. I did not expect it at all. Look at the end of verse 7.

**7 These have come so that your faith...may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.**



All my life I have assumed that meant that as a result of the faith of the saints, Jesus would receive greater glory when He returned. All our godliness will someday bring honor to God.

**1 Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.**

So our faith does bring glory and honor to God, even from unbelievers, at the Second Coming. But that is not what Peter is saying here. It does not say that God will receive all this praise and honor. Because of the grammatical structure of the verse, most scholars take this to mean our faith results in *us* receiving praise, glory and honor at the Second Coming. Praise, glory, and honor from whom? From God!

### ***The Greater Praising the Lesser***

Now that sounds backwards, doesn't it? Why would God praise men? Can you think of a reason why the greater would praise the lesser? Kevin Carr is planning a graduation celebration for Sarah. He wants to honor her for her achievement – why? Because she is greater than him? No – it is because he is greater than her. He is the father, she is the daughter, and because of his higher position his praise means something to her. Little Caleb Brunstetter learned how to walk a couple weeks ago. I watched the video they put on Facebook. Caleb would toddle across the living room and Mike would shower him with praise. Is that because Mike was trying to acknowledge Caleb's superiority to him? No, it is because of Mike's superior status above Caleb that his praise means something to Caleb.

When my kids were growing up, if I saw them trying to gain praise and honor from their friends at school, I would correct them. I would say, "That's prideful and selfish. Don't seek to be praised and honored by them – just seek to serve them." But I never once spanked any of my kids for seeking my approval. "You cleaned your room just to please me? That's selfish – SMACK!" – never happened. It is appropriate to desire and delight in and seek praise from your father. The very fact that his praise means something to you actually honors Him.

The Lord forbids us from seeking honor and glory from men. But not from Him. Didn't Jesus honor men for their faith whenever He saw great faith? In His earthly life, Jesus gave honor to those who had faith. And is the Jesus we worship that same Jesus who walked this earth 2000 years ago? Yes. And has He changed, or does He still give praise and honor to those who believe? If you want the answer to that just read Revelation 2-3. Jesus praises and honors the people in the various churches for their faith – and for all the things that come from their faith (like perseverance, discernment, endurance, hatred of false doctrine, suffering for Christ, love, service, hard work, and spiritual progress). In chapter 5 Peter is going to tell us about a crown of glory that the Lord will give faithful shepherds of His flock.

This is God saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant." That is God praising you and giving you honor and glory. That is what will happen on Judgment Day.

**1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.**

And it is OK for you to desire that and seek after it. In fact, if you don't seek it, that proves you do not have true faith.

**John 5:44 How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?**

God offers the possibility of receiving praise and honor from Him, and He expects us to be motivated by that.

**John 12:26 My Father will honor the one who serves me.**

**Romans 2:29 Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.**

**1 Samuel 2:30 now the Lord declares: ... Those who honor me I will honor**

If you are not seeking words of praise from God, that proves you do not believe. So Scripture repeatedly exhorts us to seek after this.

**Romans 2:7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.**

Very often people will resist this doctrine. They say, “No – it’s never a good thing to seek any kind of reward for yourself from God. Certainly not the reward of praise and honor for yourself.” And you point out to those people all the many passages of Scripture that promises us rewards, including the reward of honor from God, and they respond by saying, “God is just stating that as a fact, but reward shouldn’t be our motive.”

Since when does God give us promises that He does not want us to be motivated by? Why would God say, “If you do this, then I will reward you with all these wonderful things, but whatever you do don’t let that have any impact on your heart! Don’t let that promise have an impact on your motives. Don’t you dare be energized by My promises of goodness.” Why on earth would we assume that?

If you come up with your ideas about humility using human wisdom, and those ideas conflict with Scripture – that is not real humility. Real humility says, “God’s Word is more reliable than my own ideas.” If you think, “No, it’s NEVER good to seek honor for yourself – not even from God!” and God’s Word says the opposite, then true humility will accept God’s Word.

What if Kevin walked by Sarah’s bedroom one day and overheard her talking to a friend on the phone and she says, “Yeah, my dad is planning some lame-o thing for me, what a joke. He’s all, ‘I’m proud of you, Sarah!’ – like that means anything to me.”? Would that honor him? No, it would dishonor him. When the prospect of hearing “Well done, good and faithful servant,” has no tug on our hearts, that is a mark of unbelief, not faith, because it shows we do not trust God to be good. It means we are unimpressed with His generosity and creativity and expressions of love.

Someday we will stand before Jesus and He is going to say to use what He said to each church in Rev. – “I know your deeds...” And the words that follow will be praise for anything the Holy Spirit did in us. And at that point there is a possibility that He will point to several areas in your life and say, “Well done.” A lot of things motivate me in this life – I want that to be the biggest. I don’t want to dishonor Him by shrugging off the potential of receiving commendation and praise from Him as no big deal. I want to honor Him by making that reward greater in my affections than any other motivation I have.

The next time your computer crashes or you stub your toe on something one of your kids left laying out, or the next time you suffer some huge, massive loss – whichever end of the spectrum your suffering comes, realize that it is fire designed to expose what is real in your faith and to consume the dross of what is not real. And the result of that will be something that is worth more than sheik Mohammad’s yacht. –priceless, purified, proven faith. And the result of that faith will be assurance of salvation, foretastes of the benefits of salvation now, and honor from God at the Second Coming. That is how we rejoice in our suffering.

**Benediction: Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, thinking little of its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

## **1:25 Questions**

1. Can you find any decision-making in your life that might indicate that you are valuing some earthly thing higher than faith?
2. What do your emotional responses to suffering tell you about how much you value tested faith?
3. What could you do to remind yourself at the moment of testing about the connection between suffering and precious, proven, purified, and praised faith?