

Things That Will Get Better and Better for Growing Christians

2 Cor. 7:4-7

Introduction:

- A. Christians are indeed “troubled on every side” - from “without” and “within”.
 - 1. As we struggle with these troubles, we often get things out of focus.
 - a. Dwell on darkness until we see no light.
 - b. Dwell on limitations until we see no potential.
 - c. Dwell on obstacles until we see no opportunities.
 - d. Dwell on weaknesses until we see no strengths.
 - e. Dwell on failures until we see no successes.
 - f. Dwell on statistics until we see no spiritual growth.
 - g. Dwell on conflicts until we see no peace.
 - 2. As we deal with these troubles, remember that things are already better.
 - a. Were not a people, now the people of God. (1 Pet. 2:9-10)
 - b. Were without mercy, now have mercy. (1 Pet. 2:10).
 - c. Were sold under sin, now redeemed. (1 Pet. 1:18,19).
 - d. Were polluted with sin, now purified. (1 Pet. 1:22)
 - e. Were dead in sin, now born again. (1 Pet. 1:23-25).
- B. Christians can be confident that things will get better -- and better.
 - 1. As our faith increases we will see improvement “within”.
 - 2. As we work and God’s providence works we will see improvement “without.”

Discussion:

- II. Our Ability to Discern Between Good and Evil. (Heb. 5:12-14).**
 - A. It takes time and exercise to develop this skill. (v. 12).
 - 1. A skill based on the “word of righteousness” (v. 13)
 - 2. A skill that improves with study, time, and practice.
 - B. How often have we been frustrated by having misjudged a matter!
- III. Our Ability to Resist Temptation and Withstand Trials. (Jas. 1:2-12).**
 - A. As we weather one storm, the next becomes easier.
 - B. Our faith is strengthen each time it is tested (1 Pet. 1:7).
 - 1. We come to realize from experience the truth of 1 Cor. 10:13.
 - 2. We come to understand what true deliverance means. (cf. 2 Pet. 2:9; Heb. 11:35)
- IV. Our Ability to Forgive. (Luke 17:3-5)**
 - A. Most of us want to forgive, but find it very hard at times.
 - B. No wonder the apostles said, “Increase our faith” after being told to forgive seven times in a day!
- V. Our Ability to Expose Those Who Oppose the Faith. (Acts 9:22).**
 - A. Many become discouraged because cannot refute error as well as others.
 - B. Need to understand that this too, is a growing process - will get better.
- VI. Our Ability to Cope with Declining Physical Strength. (2 Cor. 4:16-5:8)**
 - A. Age, disease, persecution and other stresses take a toll on our bodies.
 - B. By daily spiritual renewing we put things into a better perspective.
- VII. Our Ability to Face the Prospect of Death. (Phil. 1:21-26).**
 - A. As faith grows, our hope of resurrection and heaven becomes more firm.
 - B. As faith grows, we see death less of a threat and more of an opportunity.

Conclusion:

We will always have problems, but if we continue to faithfully serve the Lord, things will continue to get better and reach that “better country”.

Things That Will Get Better and Better for Growing Christians
2 Cor. 7:4-7

Can be confident - things get better & better ☺ As faith increases - improve within ☺ As work & God's providence works improvement without

Ability to Discern Good & Evil (Hb 5:12-14)

Takes time & exercise (v. 12) ☺ Bases on "word of righteousness" (v. 13) ☺ Improve with study, time, practice ☺ **How often frustrated misjudged!**

Ability Resist Temp. & Withstand Trials (Js 1:2-12)

Weather storm, next easier ☺ Faith strengthened each time tested (1 Pt. 1:7) ☺ Realize truth of 1 Cor 10:13 ☺ Understand true deliverance (cf. 2 Pet. 2:9; Hb 11:35).

Ability to Forgive (Lk 17:3-5).

Most want to forgive, but hard ☺ "Increase our faith" after told to forgive 7 times in a day.

Ability Expose Those Who Oppose Faith (Ax 9:22).

Many discourage cannot refute ☺ Understand growing process.

Ability to Cope Declining Physical Strength (2 Co 4-16-5:8)

Age, disease, persecution, takes toll on body ☺ Daily spiritual renewing puts into perspective.

Ability to Face Prospects of Death (Ph. 1:21-26).

As faith grow - hope of res. & heaven firm ☺ See death less threat - more opportunity.

Always problem - faithfully serve - grow gets better & better.

- A. Christians indeed “troubled on every side” - from “without” and “within”.
1. As we struggle with these troubles, we often get things out of focus.
 - a. Dwell on **darkness** until we see no **light**.
 - b. **Limitations** until we see no **potential**.
 - c. **Obstacles** until we see no **opportunities**.
 - d. **Weaknesses** until we see no **strengths**.
 - e. **Failures** until we see no **successes**.
 - f. **Statistics** until we see no **spiritual** growth.
 - g. **Conflicts** until we see no **peace**.
 2. As we deal with these troubles, remember that things are already better.
 - a. Were not a people, now the people of God. (1 Pet. 2:9-10)
 - b. Were without mercy, now have mercy. (1 Pet. 2:10).
 - c. Were sold under sin, now redeemed. (1 Pet. 1:18,19).
 - d. Were polluted with sin, now purified. (1 Pet. 1:22)
 - e. Were dead in sin, now born again. (1 Pet. 1:23-25).