

The Beautiful Reason God Is Letting You Endure This Trial

It's the journey of most believers: you give your life to Jesus, get saved and enter a time of grace: Life is sweet, old sins fade away, all things are becoming new.

But then it happens. You hit a wall. It could be from something you did or through no fault of your own, but the crisis comes either way.

Things are no longer sweet. Life is hard, and all you want to do is go back to when it was easy.

Here's the temptation: the flesh wants to go back, but God wants to take us forward, through the wilderness and into Christian maturity.

Pruning doesn't happen because we've done something wrong, but because we're doing something right—seeking Jesus (John 15:2). God's plan for the testing is to use it to draw us closer to Him, to increase our dependence on Christ.

Without the wilderness and trials, it can be tempting to think we can do it all in our own strength. Many believers, during their initial season of grace, think this is how their Christian walk will be forever—easy, fruitful and blessed.

But God works in seasons, and He allows the pruning to bring maturity so that we can bear even more fruit.

It's so important to realize this, so that we respond rightly when the trials come. Instead of getting mad at God or thinking we've done something wrong, we can set our sights on His redeeming love—which is stronger than death (Song 8:6).

The same love that saved us will also carry us through this difficulty. What we don't see yet is how much growth and

maturity we'll have after we go through the testing.

God's ways are not our ways, but higher (Is. 55:9). We think we'd grow the most when ministry is easy and life is good, but this is not God's pattern. Every leader in the Bible experienced times of trial, and most were persecuted or mocked for their faith.

The road to Christian maturity isn't easy, but it's worth it. Learning to love God in our weakness—and to accept His love even when we feel undeserving—will unlock things in our hearts that few things can.

Mike Bickle, director of the International House of Prayer, talks about the journey of Christian maturity in his 12-part series, *Studies in the Song of Solomon*.

This powerful teaching has helped set many people free from striving, condemnation and shame and into receiving the all-powerful love of God. A key part of this journey, however, is going through seasons of adversity and growth in our Christian walk.

"We must not settle only for the early stages of experiencing God's love where Jesus reveals Himself to us as Savior (who freely forgives us), as Provider (who blesses our circumstances), and the Lord of Hosts or captain of the armies of heaven (who uses us in ministry in His war against darkness)," Mike says in session 12. "He also wants us to know Him as the Bridegroom King who loves us with all His heart and mind."

Leaning into God's love is the only way to make it through the testings and challenges of life. Our strength will fail at times, but His love is constant and unchanging.

You can watch Mike's teaching [here](#) to gain greater insight into how God matures His saints.

We leave you with some Scriptures for encouragement, and a question for reflection:

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not give up” (Gal. 6:9).

“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now, if for a little while, you have had to suffer various trials, in order that the genuineness of your faith, which is more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tried by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom, having not seen, you love; and in whom, though you do not see Him now, you believe and you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving as the result of your faith the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:6-9).

“The Lord, He goes before you. He will be with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you. Do not fear, nor be dismayed” (Deut. 31:8).

“Praying earnestly that ... [God will release His Spirit and grace to] perfect what is lacking in your faith . . . And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all men ... To this end may He establish your hearts to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (1 Thess. 3:10-13; bracketed words added).

Question: What’s something you’ve learned from a time of testing or trial? {eoA}

A Detroit native who was raised in Vermont and Connecticut, **Adam Wittenberg** worked as a newspaper journalist until 2012, when he moved to Kansas City to complete the Intro to IHOPKC internship. Afterwards, he earned a four-year certificate in House of Prayer Leadership from IHOPU and is now on full-time

staff in the Marketing department at IHOPKC. Adam is also active in evangelism and has a vision to reach people everywhere with the good news of Jesus Christ.