

Trials After Embracing Christ

Part 1: Foundations

By Marc MacArthur

The journey of faith is often portrayed as a smooth path paved with blessings. However, many believers encounter unexpected challenges after accepting Christ. This can be confusing and discouraging. The truth is, this is not a sign of weakness or even a lack of faith, they are the consequence of entering a spiritual '*battlefield*' we weren't aware of before.

This series, "*Forged by Faith: Trials After Embracing Christ*," will dive into the nature of this *warfare* and how we can overcome it through our faith in Jesus Christ. We will explore various forces that oppose us all, covering the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Before accepting Christ, life might have seemed easier, devoid of the spiritual turmoil and conflict. The Bible describes this state in Ephesians 2:2, stating:

Ephesians 2:2¹

[2] Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Essentially, we were unknowingly being influenced by the devil, who operated in the shadows, subtly leading us astray and manipulating our desires. He steered us away from God's abundant grace. However, the moment we surrender our lives to Christ, a profound shift occurs. The adversary, recognizing the threat posed by our newfound faith in Christ, intensifies his efforts to derail our journey.

1 Peter 5:8

[8] Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

As the apostle Peter warns in 1 Peter 5:8, the devil, now a "*roaring lion*," actively seeks "*whom he may devour*." Being no longer content to let us aimlessly wander, he launches relentless assaults, seeking to undermine our faith, sowing seeds of doubt in our hearts, and trying to hinder our love for Christ.

The trials and tribulations we face as Christians are not mere coincidences or random occurrences though. They are strategic *attacks* orchestrated by the enemy.

Ephesians 6:12

¹ All Bible Verses are KJV unless otherwise noted.

[12] For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

This shows us that every setback, every temptation, and every hardship we encounter in our Christian life is but an aspect of the spiritual conflict raging around us. Yet, amidst these challenges and trials, there is hope. For we are not left to fend for ourselves in this spiritual *warfare*. Through Christ, we have been equipped with the mighty *armor of God*, which enables us to stand up firmly against the schemes of the devil.

Ephesians 6:13

[13] Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

As we hold to God's promises and remain firm in our prayer, we can overcome every obstacle and emerge the *victors* in the journey of our faith. The hardships we face as Christians can serve to refine and strengthen our faith, eventually bringing us closer to God.

James 1:2-4

[2] My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

[3] Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

[4] But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

In the *battlefield* of our adversity, our faith is tested, purified, and made resilient, enabling us to be able to walk boldly on the path that Christ has set us on. The Christian life is not exempt from trials and tribulations, embracing Christ invites greater challenges as we grapple with an adversary who seeks to undermine our faith.

1 John 4:4

[4] Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

In the midst of the spiritual *battle* however we can find our strength, our hope, in Christ, knowing that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. Let us stand firm in our faith.

Romans 8:37

[37] Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

To be continued in Part 2: The World a Subtle Threat to Our Faith