

DEVICE 9: Satan tells us that the cost of following Christ (affliction) is too great, and that we were better off when we didn't follow Christ.

Remedy 1 – Afflictions purify the believer's heart. They preserve us from sin (³¹ "For has anyone said to God, 'I have borne punishment; I will not offend any more; **Job 34:31** (ESV); ³² teach me what I do not see; if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more"? **Job 34:32** (ESV); ⁵ I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further." **Job 40:5** (ESV)).

Remedy 2 – Afflictions hurt the body but not the soul (¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. **2 Corinthians 4:16–18** (ESV)).

Remedy 3 – These sufferings are very short compared to eternity (¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **Romans 8:18** (ESV)).

Remedy 4 – sometimes God afflicts us Himself, so that He can increase our experience of His love (¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. **Revelation 3:19** (ESV)).

Remedy 5 – Our duty is to always remember the end result of our affliction, but the rest we don't have to understand (² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **James 1:2–4** (ESV); ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **1 Peter 1:6–7** (ESV)).

Remedy 6 – We begin our Christian life as impure souls, but affliction makes us like pure gold (¹⁰ Behold, he finds occasions against me, he counts me as his enemy, **Job 33:10** (ESV)).

Remedy 7 – The truth is the greatest eternal affliction is reserved for the wicked (⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **Matthew 13:41–42** (ESV)).

Questions

- 1. The Christian life is difficult, but what is the alternative?*
- 2. What good can come from suffering? (see Remedy 1)*
- 3. What part does God's love play in our suffering? (see Remedy 4)*