

Vital Truths - Expect Health, Wealth & Happiness?

Should Christians expect health, wealth and happiness in this life? Is that what God promises them?

That is the way some professing Christians talk. But it is not true to the Bible or experience.

Certainly, God gives believers a complete salvation from sin and the curse in Jesus Christ, and an eternal inheritance of joy in heaven (1Peter 1:4, Rev.21:3-4). He also promises to keep them by his power, through faith, so that they personally enter into that inheritance (1Peter 1:5, John 10:28). This enables them to live in the joyful expectation of future happiness, even while they groan under the many sorrows of this life (1Peter 1:6).

But God does not promise his children freedom from trouble and suffering – not in this life. Rather, God leads them through the sorrows that are common to all men, plus those that are unique to Christians (see Psalm 73). And he explains very carefully why this is necessary, “… you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold which perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” And again, “No chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:10-11). And again, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” 2 Corinthians 4:17).

For believers, suffering is like a refiner’s fire that God uses to purify their faith and Christian character; and thereby to prepare them for their unique place in heaven. Suffering is adapted to do this in a way nothing else can. Suffering works for believers, not against them. It is a blessing, not a curse.

No, believers must not expect a trouble free life in this world.

Believers must be willing to follow Jesus Christ through suffering into glory (Rom. 8:17-18). They must do this by faith, “knowing that all things” – even the desperately hard and sad things – “work together for good to them that love God and are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). Rev. C. J. Connors