

THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH
1 PETER 1:6-9

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

Introduction:

1. This first letter of the Apostle Peter is written to those pilgrims who were scattered abroad.
2. The word “pilgrims”, literally means, “a by-resident, a sojourner among a people not one’s own.
3. There has been much differences of opinion as to the persons referred to in this letter, but a careful study will show that it is written to those who had been Jews, who were now converted to Jesus, and who were known among their countrymen as “the scattered abroad,” or the “dispersion;” that is, those who were strangers or sojourners away from their native land.
3. But it was later understood by all those who were Christians during the time of this writing, both Jew and Gentile, in the fact that there were great persecutions directed toward those early Christians.
4. Various trials and persecutions will eventually come to those who are truly committed to Jesus. **2 Timothy 3:10-12** *But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*
5. When trials come, you will know who the true Christians are, because they have a genuine faith that cannot be shaken.

I. THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH IS PROVEN THROUGH VARIOUS TRIALS.

v. 6 *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials...*

- A. Everyone, lost and saved alike, will eventually face trials in their life. But not everyone will react to them in the same manner.
- B. Some folks will lose all hope when these trials come.
- C. For the Christian who stands strong in the face of trials and persecutions, they see the strength that God gives them to endure, and their faith and joy grows exceedingly stronger. cf. The Apostle Paul. **2 Corinthians 11:24-30*****
- D. Here is his belief concerning trials. **2 Corinthians 7:4** *Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.*

II. THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN MATERIAL THINGS. **v. 7a** *...that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes...*

- A. Far too many people believe that wealth is the answer to all their problems.

B. Consider the life of Jack Whittaker who died recently: Whittaker became an instant celebrity at 55 when he claimed what was then the largest U.S. lottery jackpot won by a single ticket. He opted for the lump-sum payout of \$113.4 million after taxes, and flew off to New York with his family in a private jet to appear on network TV morning shows. But he quickly fell victim to scandals, lawsuits and personal setbacks as he endured constant requests for money, leaving him unable to trust others. Several times, he was quoted as saying he wished he had torn up the ticket. His wife left him. A friend of his drug-addicted granddaughter was found dead at his home in 2004. Three months later, his 17-year-old granddaughter was gone, too. His daughter, Ginger Whittaker Bragg, died in 2009 at age 42 after struggling for years with cancer. And in 2016, he lost a Virginia home to a fire. He struggled with drinking and gambling. His home and car were repeatedly burglarized. At a strip club, thieves broke into his Lincoln Navigator and stole a briefcase stuffed with \$245,000 and three \$100,000 cashiers' checks. Whittaker was charged twice with driving while under the influence and sued repeatedly, once by three female casino employees who accused him of assault. In a 2007 interview with The Associated Press, Whittaker knew his legacy was already written. "I'm only going to be remembered as the lunatic who won the lottery," Whittaker said. "I'm not proud of that. I wanted to be remembered as someone who helped a lot of people."

C. Jack Whittaker should have read **1 Timothy 6:17**. *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*

D. Jesus told us what is not so important in life. **Luke 12:15** *And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."*

III. THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH WILL BE SHOWN IN HOW YOU RECEIVE JESUS WHEN HE RETURNS. **v. 7b** *...though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ...*

A. Genuine faith will be shown in your praise, honor, and glory when Jesus returns.

B. These three words are added together to show the believer's faith in the promises of our Savior when He comes to reward those who have been faithful to Him.

Hebrews 10:32-36***

C. When Jesus returns will He find you faithful?

D. In His letter to the church at Smyrna, Jesus encouraged them in **v. 10**, *"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."*

IV. THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH IS SHOWN IN YOUR LOVE FOR JESUS. **v. 8** *...whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory...*

A. I really don't need to dwell on this point for very long.

B. It goes without saying that if there is no love for Jesus, there is no genuineness of faith.

C. Our love for Him is not based upon what we see, but upon what we haven't seen.

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

D. As John writes, "We love Him because He first loved us" even though we have yet to see Him.

V. THE GENUINNESS OF YOUR FAITH WILL CULMINATE IN YOUR SALVATION.

v. 9 *...receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

A. Our faith will end when we are called by Jesus to rise and meet Him in the air.

B. There will no longer be a need for faith because we will see Him face to face.

1 John 3:1-2 *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

Conclusion:

1. Do you possess this genuine faith?
2. If you do, prove it.
3. Remember, those who are justified live by faith, not by sight.