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*"The Churches of God Outreach Ministries provides leadership, information, and biblical teaching in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20"*

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# When A Christian Suffers

by James McBride

Will becoming a Christian bring an end to your illness, your adversities?

*Not likely.* All past sin can, in Christ, be freely forgiven. But lose a limb in a drunken fracas and getting into a right relationship with God won't restore it. Nor will it restore to life a neglected or murdered child. We live with the consequence of our past separation from God, our past sins - our transgression of the perfect laws of life.

But that new relationship as a child of God adds a new dimension to life. Faith. Trust, that is, in an ever-concerned for our welfare. In Christ present loving Father who is totally we have the certainty that no matter what befalls us. If we persist in His benign ways to the end of our life God's original creation purpose will be fulfilled in us. We will be resurrected from death to an endless life in an endlessly perfect body.

Now, however, we suffer the consequences of six thousand years of disobedience, coupled with the effects of our own misdeeds and those of the other six billion citizens of our world.

In addition, disciples of Christ will often find themselves derided, even persecuted, for their belief. We will, too, inwardly groan because of the suffering generated by the godless choices of those around us. If it were not for the absolute fact of our glorious future resurrection, wrote the apostle Paul, Christians would be 'of all men most pitiable' (I Corinthians 15:19)!

## **Divine Purpose**

Jesus, too, warned us that commitment to him would not be roses all the way. "*Enter by the narrow gate*", he urged. "*For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*" (Matthew 7:13-14). No - resurrection to an endless life does not come cheap. In preparing us for rulership at the side of Jesus Christ in His Kingdom, God personally tutors each member of the human family who comes to Him by way of His Son, Jesus Christ.

## **Support System**

Our heavenly Father has a 'support plan' tailored to the needs of each of His children. It's a plan that ensures - if we stand fast - our resurrection from among the dead at the return of Christ to live eternally.

Wrote Paul "*No temptation [trial] has overtaken you except such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation also make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it*" (I Corinthians 10:13).

When we experience adversity of any kind - family problems, financial reverse, unemployment, illness for example - our trust in Him, our faith, undergirds us. We know He's there for us - *always*. Even when He seems to have 'gone away'!

*Published by:*  
The Churches of God Outreach Ministries  
PO Box 54621  
Tulsa, OK 74155-0621  
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