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## WORTH IT IN THE END

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A lot of people seem to have the misconception that living the Christian life is easy. They think that when we do what God wants, everything will just fall into place and we won't have any problems at all. However, the Bible teaches that just the opposite is true: when we live the Christian life as we should, it is hard, and pain and suffering is involved.

In the first sense, it is true that our lives as Christians will be difficult in that **we must be changed by Christ**, and that change can be very painful. In John 15.1-2, Jesus says, *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit."*

These verses tell us that Jesus prunes His branches; He cuts away the parts of us that aren't useful to Him—things like bad habits, bad influences, etc.—so that we can bear more fruit for Him. Just as the metaphor sounds, this can be a painful process.

But secondly, suffering is a part of the Christian life in the sense that when we live as God wants us to, **Satan will pursue us even harder**. Peter tells us that Satan *"...prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5.8), and the more good we do for the Lord, the higher up we move on Satan's target list. The Bible tells us explicitly that when we live the Christian life as we should, we will suffer for it. In 2 Timothy 3.12, Paul says *"...All who desire to live godly in Christ will be persecuted"*, and James 1.3-4 speaks of trials and suffering not as a possibility to be considered, but as a certainty to be prepared for.

So we can see that when we live as we should, we will suffer for it. But the good news is that God gives us a promise: *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great..."* (Matthew 5.10-12).

No matter the amount or the degree of suffering we have to endure during our lives here, it will all be worth it in the end.

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