

THE MINISTRY OF SORROW

1. WHY is it better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting?

“It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: *for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.*” **Ecclesiastes 7:2.**

2. What did David ask God to teach him?

“Lord, *make me to know mine end,* and the measure of my days, what it is, *that I may know how frail I am.*” **Psalm 39:4.** See also **Psalm 90:12.**

3. Why is sorrow better than laughter?

“Sorrow is better than laughter: *for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.*” **Ecclesiastes 7:3.**

NOTE — “Many of the loveliest songs of peace and trust and hope which God’s children sing in this world they have been taught in the hushed and darkened chambers of sorrow. . . . Afflictions, sanctified, soften the asperities of life. They tame the wildness of nature. They temper human ambitions. They burn out the dross of selfishness and worldliness. They humble pride. They quell fierce passions. They reveal to men their own hearts, their own weakness, faults, blemishes, and perils. They teach patience and submission. They discipline unruly spirits. They deepen and enrich our experience.” *“Week-Day Religion,”* by J. R. Miller, D. D., pages 92, 93.

4. Are the righteous freed from afflictions in this world?

“*Many are the afflictions of the righteous:* but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” **Psalm 34:19.**

5. Does God delight to afflict any?

“For the Lord will not cast off forever: but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. *for He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.*” **Lamentations 3:31–33.**

6. Does He afflict to leave the one chastened in despair?

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: *for He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole.*” **Job 5:17, 18.**

7. In what language is the same truth again expressed?

“Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for *He hath torn and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up.*” **Hosea 6:1.** See also **Isaiah 61:1-3.**

8. Whom does the Lord chasten?

“For *whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth*, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” **Hebrews 12:6.**

9. Is this, for the time being, a source of pleasure?

“Now *no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous*: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are; exercised thereby.” **Verse 11.**

NOTE — “Many of the sweetest joys of Christian hearts are songs which have been learned in the bitterness of trial.” “Many a cold, icy nature is made warm and tender by the grief that crushes it.” “*Week-Day Religion*,” by J. R. Miller, D. D., pages 91, 93.

10. What, aside from sin, causes more sorrow than all else?

Death, or the loss of loved ones.

11. Does death bring to Christians unassuaged sorrow?

“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, *that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*” **1Thessalonians 4:13.**

NOTE — The loss of loved ones God often uses as a means of conversion, and of severing the ties which bind to earth. Persecution; sickness; the loss of sight, hearing, or limb; the loss of property; or other calamities may likewise be instrumental in drawing us nearer to God. See **Psalm 119:71; Isaiah 26:9.**

12. What do our transient afflictions do for us?

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, *worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*” **2Corinthians 4:17.** See **Romans 8:28.**