

*“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.” 1 Peter 4:1-2 KJV*



Lust is a plush prison! Believers have been freed from its bondage by faith, but many look longingly back to its velvet imprisonment, because of the temporary suffering freedom imposes. *“If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW creature: old things are passed away; behold, ALL THINGS are become new.”* We cease from being a carnal creature of flesh (lust) driven focus the moment we through faith in God’s Holy Word repent of our sin (obey God’s Word) and our soul cries out to Jesus Christ, “Lord, have mercy upon me and save me!” Through faith in Jesus, God’s Word, we appropriate the immortality and righteousness of the eternal Jehovah God which He bestows freely upon all who join with Him through faith and obedience for the salvation of their souls! God’s Word says, *“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”* Most do not love work and even those who enjoy the doing are not exempt from the enduring. Even athletes, while they may enjoy the game, must suffer to play well. There is not one thing that earns sustenance that is not accompanied by suffering. Those who truly love their work can attest to the fact that it took years of practice, trial, and error to perfect their craft into an enjoyable endeavor. I have a friend, Jack, who dearly loves music and is a master of its disciplines. He enjoys his work, because it involves music, but he would be the first to tell you that mastery did not come without suffering, determination, and probably some anguish of spirit. Because of the joy that music gives him, he endured. His love of music kept his abilities focused on the training that now enables him to effortlessly (or so it seems to me) create symphonic melodies upon impulse. Jesus said, *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross (suffering), and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life (own desires) for my sake shall find it.”* If you do not love God enough to sacrifice your lusts for Him, you are not worthy of His love and are still in bondage! *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a LIVING SACRIFICE, Holy (without disobedience), acceptable unto God, which is your REASONABLE service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind (God’s Word in your thoughts), that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* Jesus said, *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”* Love of self is greater than love of family otherwise there would never be any family feuds! Christ is the believer’s example. *“Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the Joy that was set before Him (eternity with His beloved), endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily, that in all things He might have the preeminence.”* It takes little effort to suffer for a loved one. Parents suffer to provide for children, husbands for wives, and vice versa. I have yet for a lady to tell me that they can’t wait to do the laundry, mop the floors, or do the dishes; or have a man tell me he loses sleep over the excitement of the next day’s work schedule. Even Christ prayed, *“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me:”* But He concluded with, *“nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done.”* Even as Christ we should acquiesce to the will of God given in the Word of God!

I need not follow sinful lust,  
If I in Christ will put my trust,  
And though my path be strewed with stones,  
I’ll safely enter Heaven’s Home! -CGP

Jesus endured the Cross for the JOY He knew would come; that is, the restoration of the fellowship He had with man before sin cursed and destroyed that fellowship in Eden! Eden proves man is not the product of his environment! Eden was perfect and flawless! The sin came from man himself! *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* God’s Word says of God, *“Behold, thou desirest Truth in the inward parts (thoughts): and in the hidden part (soul) thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”* Believers are no longer bound to the carnal desires of their flesh as unbelievers are, but are free to obey God through the power of God’s Word by faith. Satan deceives man into thinking (and some of those are believers) that God’s Word is bondage and keeps us from pleasure, but what men call pleasure is simply bondage to their own lust. Because they see prison bars, they assume believers are behind them when, in reality, the prison is their own dungeon! They could do naught else even if they wanted! The flesh is a ravenous monster with a gaping mouth that will devour our souls! *“Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.”* Without the castle of God’s Word freeing our mind and heart we are slaves! Faith frees men from the carnal bondage of lust to walk in *“paths of righteousness,”* immortality, and bliss! At God’s *“right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”* Our destination will make the trials of the journey vaporize upon arrival! *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* God’s Word in our hearts and minds will keep us free of the fatal bondage of sin!

*“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify (kill) the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God (directed by God’s Word in their thoughts), they are the sons of God.”*  
*Romans 8:12-14 KJV*

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