

"The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Psalm 11:5-6 KJV



Have you closed ranks with “*the wicked*” or do you “work out” with your Trainer on a regular basis? Wickedness is sin. Anything that is sinful is wicked. “*God is angry with the wicked every day!*” Believers are sinful every time they disobey, but are, however, not “*the wicked*” – those that reject God’s Word. If you socialize with the world in your home, or even at social functions, you have disobeyed God’s Word! “*Abstain from ALL APPEARANCE of evil.*” It takes discipline! There is no excuse for disobedience. “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork.*” There is no excuse. A sweet little grandmother who rejects the Truth for whatever reason is considered “*the wicked*” by God! “Harsh!” you say? Not any harsher than the way men treated God’s “*only begotten Son*” at Golgotha! Tortured and slain that they might escape eternal death and damnation! Anyone who rejects that Perfect Gift is not only wicked, but a fool! “*The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth!*” The faithful are put through tests and trials so they may prove God and strengthen their love and faith. God asked Abraham to offer his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to test Abraham. As Abraham raised the knife to strike, God stopped him. You may say, “God knew already what Abraham would do.” Yes, but Abraham didn’t know. Trials are not to vex, but to strengthen. God needs us to trust His power and love so we may go forward stronger. You don’t build muscle with one work out. When you work a muscle hard, it is partially damaged. You rest a day so the muscle has a chance to repair, and then do it again. Muscles repair by creating more muscle. Thus the expression, “No pain, no gain.” God’s trials successfully complete before another begins. God is our “personal trainer” for faith. No one is “Mr. Universe” or marathon winners without enduring self-denial and misery! No pain, no gain! Never quit, never weaken!

Our God is pleased with faith alone,
We cannot bring Him of our own,
He seeks to strengthen us with tests,
So we may be His very best! ~CGP

Body builders are at their weakest when they appear in competition. They literally starve themselves to achieve the muscle definition needed to win, but if they never discipline themselves, there is no muscle to define. Disciples follow the master’s discipline. God says, “*My strength is made perfect in weakness. Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate (disciplined) in all things.*” Your faith shines brightest when you are your weakest! Are you “*abstaining from ALL appearance of evil,*” or “*doing what seemeth right?*” Believers strive for heavenly rewards, not earthly. Will you hear Jesus say, “*Well done!*” or “*Depart from Me, I never knew you!*” Just before his beheading, the Apostle Paul confidently wrote:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: And not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7-8 KJV