

are part of God's family. And not only that, there's an inheritance waiting for you that won't ever spoil, perish, or fade!"

Peter has reminded us of the past: we've been forgiven by God's mercy. And we have this inheritance that's coming—that's the future. Most of us would agree, "That's pretty wonderful." But what's happening in between, in the here and now?

Peter's answer begins with verse 5:

. . . who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief and all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for

you are receiving the goal of your faith,
the salvation of your souls. (vv. 5–9)

What is Peter telling us about the “now,”
and what does it mean for our marriages?

He’s telling us that “now” is about some-
thing much deeper than getting up in the
morning with a smile, or romantic weekends,
or fulfilling intimacy.

Peter is teaching us that God is willing to
compromise these seemingly essential aspects
of marriage in order to produce something
greater, fuller, and deeper in our lives: genuine
faith.

This is what God is after in the midst of
those painful experiences that cause us to won-
der if he really loves us and hears our prayers;
the times when we find ourselves envying
other believers and even those who don’t yet
know the Lord.

Such troubling experiences are sent our
way because God is not done with us yet.

In the midst of trial, he is giving us the goal
of our faith: the salvation of our souls. And
what we need to learn to say in response is not
“God, why me?” but “God, thank You. Give
me more. I want everything that You know I

need. I realize now that the struggle of this moment is not a mistake after all. It's an act of Your perfect, redemptive love."

This sort of response does not come naturally to us; it runs counter to what lies deep in our hearts as sinners. What *we* wish is not only that life would be easy, but that it would be a resort.

The greatest marketing concept in Western culture right now is the all-inclusive resort. You pay your money and get whatever you want, whenever you want it. Someone explained one of these deals to me by saying they include "twelve stated meals a day." He said, "The last meal is at midnight, but at 2:00 A.M. you can order pizza in your room if you want." Sounds like fun to me. No one can say no to you! At any moment, you can decide to do whatever you want.

If God wanted life to be a resort, this is what it would be like. But we need to look at our lives in the here and now with different eyes, and see that God has placed each one of us in the resort of *his* choosing!

The blessings that God gives you in your family, in the husband and wife relationship, in your physical life, are meant to point to a