



# PAYING A HEAVY PRICE

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.

2 Corinthians 4:17

**E**VEN OLD HANDS WHO SHOULD KNOW BETTER are singing the praises of our mild winter weather. “How do ya like this weather we’ve been havin’!” They rhetorically exclaim. “Isn’t this beautiful weather?” They swoon with delight, their eyes sparkling with unfrozen rapture.

Let us set aside the fact that this writer actually (some might say, strangely) *enjoys* the cold weather and the more typical winter vistas of beautiful white snow. Let us set aside considerations of preference, taste, aesthetics, and convenience as we focus on more pragmatic matters.

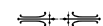
Anyone who has dwelt more than five years in a land where there are four seasons per year should know that there are more practical ramifications to the winter cold and precipitation. For one, the deciduous trees that share this land with us depend on the annual frozen temperatures to go dormant. They need to do this; it is part of their life-cycle. Fruit trees require the time of dormancy so they can then bud and blossom anew in the spring, thus producing their fruit from new growth. When temperatures become untimely warm during the winter they trick the trees into early bud, and if this goes on for too long, the trees will never flower, pollinate, or bear fruit in the spring.

For another, winter snow, and resulting snow melt, bring needed moisture to the soil and rivers. Farmers and gardeners alike benefit from the deep moisture that permeates the soil during and immediately after winter. During a normal winter that moisture is locked up, frozen, for several feet beneath the surface. As it thaws and wicks upward it waters and nourishes the tender young shoots of spring. Without it, farmers may have to switch to drought-resistant seed, and

gardeners will (if spring rains also go missing) spend much of the growing season watering by hand.

And one more just for good measure: a too-warm winter is inexorably followed by a heavier than normal infestation of flies, mosquitoes, and ticks.

Sure, winter can be harsh, uncomfortable, inconvenient. But we may pay a heavy price for the momentary comfort of one that is too mild.



The disciple of Christ is enveloped in a society that believes the only discomfort worth having is the self-inflicted kind of the exercise regimen. But like so many other philosophies of this world, it is a short-sighted lie.

**Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.**

*1 Peter 4:12-13*

Society's lie is that our lives should consist of unending bliss—that anything unpleasant should be avoided at all cost. This lie has even

seeped into the Church, presenting a false gospel of wealth, abundance, and uninterrupted ease. The lie is thus defined: The promise of spring bounty without having to suffer through winter.

The truth is, however, that by God's design we must put up with discomfort in our life. We must pass through periods of trial, testing, pain and sorrow. Some tasks will be easy, but many will be hard. Some people will love us, but many will hate us. And some truths will be won with ease, but many will come only after hard work and hard times.

But God says that the bounty that results will be well worth it.

**In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

*1 Peter 1:6-7*