

# if thou but suffer god to guide thee

**if thou but suffer god to guide thee** is a profound phrase that encapsulates the essence of spiritual surrender and divine guidance. Rooted in Christian theology and poetry, this expression encourages believers to trust wholly in God's wisdom and direction throughout life's trials and decisions. Understanding "if thou but suffer god to guide thee" requires exploring its historical origins, theological significance, and practical application in everyday faith. This article delves into the meaning behind the phrase, its biblical foundations, and how it continues to inspire spiritual growth and resilience in contemporary religious practice. Readers will gain insight into the spiritual discipline of yielding to divine will, as well as the benefits and challenges associated with such a commitment. The following sections provide a comprehensive overview, beginning with the background and moving into thematic analysis and real-world implications.

- Historical and Literary Origins of "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee"
- Theological Significance and Biblical Foundations
- Practical Applications in Spiritual Life
- Challenges and Rewards of Divine Guidance
- Contemporary Relevance and Inspirational Impact

## Historical and Literary Origins of "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee"

The phrase "if thou but suffer god to guide thee" originates from a well-known 17th-century hymn by the English poet and cleric George Herbert. Herbert's work is celebrated for its devotional depth and poetic elegance, often reflecting themes of trust, obedience, and divine providence. This particular line comes from his hymn that emphasizes the believer's surrender to God's will as the path to peace and spiritual fulfillment. The language used is characteristic of early modern English, illustrating the era's theological and poetic style.

### George Herbert and His Hymnody

George Herbert was a prominent metaphysical poet and Anglican priest whose hymns have had a lasting influence on Christian devotional literature. His hymn containing the phrase "if thou but suffer god to guide thee" is a call to spiritual submission, urging followers to relinquish control and accept God's guidance. Herbert's poetry blends personal piety with universal spiritual truths, making his works timeless resources for understanding faith and divine guidance.

## **Context Within 17th-Century Religious Thought**

During the 17th century, religious life in England was marked by intense spiritual reflection and a focus on personal relationship with God. The phrase reflects Puritan and Anglican emphases on obedience and trust in divine providence amid societal and personal upheaval. The hymn's message resonated deeply with believers facing uncertainty, encouraging them to rely on God's wisdom rather than human understanding.

## **Theological Significance and Biblical Foundations**

The phrase "if thou but suffer god to guide thee" embodies a core theological principle: the necessity of trusting God's providence and submitting to His will. This concept is deeply rooted in biblical scripture, where guidance by God is presented as the foundation for righteous living and spiritual peace. Theologically, it underscores the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom, highlighting the believer's role in willingly accepting divine direction.

## **Scriptural References Supporting Divine Guidance**

Numerous biblical passages reflect the theme of allowing God to lead one's life. Proverbs 3:5-6 exhorts believers to "trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Similarly, Psalm 32:8 states, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." These verses

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the meaning of the phrase 'If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee'?**

The phrase means that if you allow God to lead and direct your life, you will find peace and assurance despite difficulties.

### **Who wrote 'If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee'?**

The phrase is from a hymn written by Georg Neumark, a 17th-century German poet and composer.

### **What is the main theme of the hymn 'If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee'?**

The main theme is trusting in God's guidance and providence, emphasizing faith and surrender to God's will.

## **How can 'If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee' be applied in daily life?**

It encourages individuals to trust God's plan, remain patient during hardships, and seek divine guidance in decisions.

## **What biblical principles are reflected in 'If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee'?**

It reflects biblical teachings on faith, trust in God's providence, and the importance of surrendering to God's will, such as Proverbs 3:5-6.

## **Why is 'If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee' still relevant today?**

Because its message of trusting God amid challenges resonates with people facing uncertainty and seeking spiritual comfort.

## **Are there any famous musical settings of 'If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee'?**

Yes, the hymn has been set to various melodies over time, often sung in Christian worship services worldwide.

## **What emotions does 'If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee' evoke in listeners or readers?**

It often evokes feelings of reassurance, peace, hope, and encouragement to trust in God's care.

## **Additional Resources**

### *1. If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee: The Life and Legacy of Henry Scougal*

This book explores the life of Henry Scougal, the author of the original devotional work "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee." It delves into his spiritual journey, theological insights, and the lasting impact his writings have had on Christian devotion. The narrative also examines the historical context of 17th-century Scotland and how Scougal's simple yet profound messages continue to inspire believers today.

### *2. The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence*

A classic spiritual work that echoes the themes of surrender and trust found in "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee." Brother Lawrence's letters and conversations focus on cultivating an ongoing awareness of God's presence in everyday life. This book offers practical advice on developing a deep, continuous relationship with God through simple acts and heartfelt devotion.

### 3. *Trusting God in Troubled Times* by Jerry Bridges

This book addresses the challenge of trusting God's guidance amid difficulties and suffering, much like the message in "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee." Jerry Bridges encourages readers to rely on God's wisdom and sovereignty even when circumstances are unclear or painful. It provides biblical insights and personal stories to help believers deepen their faith and patience.

### 4. *Guided by Grace: Embracing God's Will in Your Life* by Elisabeth Elliot

Elisabeth Elliot offers reflections on surrendering personal plans to God's perfect guidance, a central theme in "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee." Through her own experiences and scriptural teachings, Elliot illustrates how grace empowers believers to follow God's leading faithfully. The book inspires readers to find peace and purpose in trusting God's direction.

### 5. *Humility: The Journey Toward Holiness* by Andrew Murray

Andrew Murray's work on humility complements the surrender advocated in "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee." He explains how a humble heart is essential for allowing God to guide one's life effectively. The book explores humility's role in spiritual growth and the believer's relationship with God.

### 6. *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering* by Timothy Keller

Timothy Keller offers compassionate guidance on maintaining faith and seeking God's direction during times of hardship. Reflecting themes from "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee," the book encourages believers to see suffering as part of God's refining process. Keller combines biblical teaching with practical advice for enduring trials with hope.

### 7. *Surrendered: Embracing God's Will in an Uncertain World* by Tasha Layton

This contemporary devotional explores what it means to surrender control and trust God's plan, echoing the message of Scougal's work. Tasha Layton shares personal stories and scriptural encouragement to help readers navigate uncertainty with faith. The book challenges believers to let go of fear and embrace God's guidance fully.

### 8. *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan

A timeless allegory of the Christian journey, Bunyan's classic illustrates the struggles and victories of following God's guidance through life's challenges. Like "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee," it emphasizes perseverance, faith, and reliance on divine direction. The story serves as both an inspiration and a practical guide for spiritual pilgrims.

### 9. *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts* by Jerry Bridges

Another profound work by Jerry Bridges, this book delves deeper into the practice of trusting God despite suffering and uncertainty. It complements the themes of surrender and divine guidance found in "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee." Bridges offers biblical wisdom to help believers develop steadfast trust and peace in God's plan.

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**if thou but suffer god to guide thee: *Book of Worship for United States Forces*** The Armed Forces Chaplains Board, 2010-06-01 This volumes contains hymns, Orders of Worship, a Lectionary, Prayers, Guitar Chord Fingering Diagrams, and several indices.

**if thou but suffer god to guide thee: Armed Forces Hymnal** United States. Department of Defense. Armed Forces Chaplains Board, 1959

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