



***Suffering Well
in the In-Between***

Essential Questions

- **What does it mean to “Suffer Well”?**
- **How are we as Christian Men to “Suffer Well”?**
- **How do we help others in their times of suffering?**



What does it mean to “Suffer”?

- Suffering (noun):
 - a.the state or experience of one that suffers
 - b.PAIN
- Suffer (verb):
 - To submit to or be forced to endure
 - To feel keenly: labor under
 - Undergo, Experience
 - To put up with especially as inevitable or unavoidable
 - To allow especially by reason of indifference



Scripture Focus: *Psalms 31:6-13*

6 I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols,
but I trust in the Lord.

7 I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love,
because you have seen my affliction;
you have known the distress of my soul,

8 and you have not delivered me into the hand of the
enemy;
you have set my feet in a broad place.

9 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress;
my eye is wasted from grief;
my soul and my body also.

10 For my life is spent with sorrow,
and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my iniquity,
and my bones waste away.

11 Because of all my adversaries I have
become a reproach,
especially to my neighbors,
and an object of dread to my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street flee from me.

12 I have been forgotten like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.

13 For I hear the whispering of many—
terror on every side!—
as they scheme together against me,
as they plot to take my life.

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**This is the goal and
the promise of God.**

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**How does David balance
the reality of suffering
with trust in God?**

**Do you find yourself
struggling in the day-to-
day? How so and why?**

**10 For my life is spent with sorrow,
and my years with sighing;
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Matthew 17:12

12 But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.”

Jesus understood that in order to do His job, he would need to suffer at the hands of others.

Suffering came with the job description.



Mark 9:12

12 And he said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?”

If Jesus, the Son of God, and John the Baptist had to suffer, what does that say about suffering in the life of a believer?



Suffering Is Inevitable

- When we think about our ‘adversaries’ from Psalm 31:11, we realize that part of our suffering comes from the results of spiritual warfare. Satan wants us to be ineffective. To focus on our problems instead of the problem solver.
- In the NT, suffering is often associated with something unpleasant. This goes in line with the definitions from Websters. Suffering is inevitable because we live in a fallen world.



Understanding Suffering Like Christ-

Isaiah 53:1-6

1 Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.



In verse 4, we see that Jesus's suffering shows the consequences that sin brings to fallen humanity, even though He Himself did not sin. While we may suffer *here* during this life, Jesus suffered the most for us.

Verse 4, also highlights our lack of true understanding. Worldly logic says that Jesus was stricken because He did something wrong.

Many of us feel the exact same way: People suffer *because* we did something wrong. But that goes against who God is.



Wait...but don't I get
punished for my sins
if/when I do wrong?

Punishment versus Discipline

Questions to Answer:

- If Jesus died on the cross and paid for your sins (past, present and future) why are you then are you suffering?
- What about people who do bad things and seemingly get out of trouble? Is God now unjust?

If we were still being punished for our sins, then what was the point of Jesus?

Punishment versus Discipline

Question: *If Jesus died on the cross and paid for your sins (past, present and future) then why are you suffering?*

- **Romans 8:1-** *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*
 - God isn’t condemning believers for their sins. If we experience hardship, it’s not **retribution**, but **redirection**.
- **Hebrews 12:6-11-** *“The Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.”*
 - God **corrects His children** like a loving Father, not as a harsh judge.
- **John 3:18-** *“Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already.”*
 - Judgment is **for the unrepentant**; believers face **refinement, not wrath**.
- **Isaiah 53:5-** *“He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him.”*
 - Jesus **already took our punishment** - what we experience now is correction, not condemnation.
- **Hebrews 9:28-** *“So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.”*
 - Jesus took the punishment we deserved. Now, we experience discipline- not as judgment, but as correction from a loving Father.



Why do BAD PEOPLE
always escape
punishment?

Punishment versus Discipline

Question: *What about people who do bad things and seemingly get out of trouble? Is God now unjust?*

- **God is Patient, Not Unjust**

- **Romans 2:4-6-** *“Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. He will repay each one according to his works.”*
 - **God’s patience doesn’t mean He’s unjust.** People who “get away” with wrongdoing aren’t actually escaping- **they are storing up wrath.** They are on borrowed time, and God’s justice will come **in His timing, not ours.**
- **2 Peter 3:9-10-** *“The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief...”*
 - **God delays judgment out of mercy,** giving people time to repent. But **His justice will come suddenly, and no one will escape.**



Understanding Suffering Like Christ-

Isaiah 53:7-12

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?

9 And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see[i] and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

If Jesus, in His divine understanding, embraced suffering, then we must learn to view suffering through His lens rather than our flesh.

How does knowing that Christ willingly suffered change the way we see our own suffering?



How Do I "Suffer Well"?

- **We Must Develop our Spiritual Endurance!**

- **Hebrews 12:1**

- "...Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

- This verse makes a ton of different points to consider when we are trying to develop endurance:

- First, "*Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us...*" We have to remember that we are not alone in this journey. Many others have had to deal with the same issues. Satan's strategy is to make us believe that we are all alone in the fight.

(See 1 Peter 5:8 and Ecclesiastes 4:12)

- Second, "*For the joy that lay before him, he endured...*" We have to remind ourselves of the eternal glory that awaits us at the end of our race.



How Do I “Suffer Well”?



- **Hebrews 12:3-4**

- *"For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, so that you won't grow weary and give up. In struggling against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."*
 - We see in these verses, that God understands that we have the capacity to be bend to the point of giving up. However, because of the Holy Spirit, even if we bend, we will not break.
- The verse also points out that we *"have not yet resisted to the point of shedding [our] blood."* Meaning, we have not and will not suffer to the same degree of Jesus. Though Jesus was 100% divine, he was also 100% man. We can't negate His humanity when we think about what he endured on the cross. The writer of Hebrews essentially says, "If Jesus could endure, then so can you [with the Holy Spirit]."

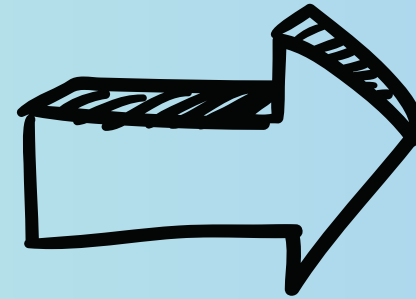
- **2 Corinthians 4:8-10**

- *"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies."* His Spirit, strength and power works within us to endure much like the *"large cloud of witnesses"* pointed out in **Hebrews 11**.
- We have to rely on God fully with our whole heart rather than half of it (eg. Thinking we can do it ourselves). Remember, He is the perfecter of our faith. We just have to be open.

How Do I "Suffer Well"?

- **HEBREWS 12:7-8 AND 10-13**

- "Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline- which all receive- then you are illegitimate children and not sons...."
- "For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but he does it for our benefit, so that we can share His holiness. No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed instead."



DEEP DIVE INTO THE TEXT

- First, since suffering is a part of how God discipline's us, we have to remember that it is for love that God allows us to suffer. By turning to Him, we learn to stop relying on ourselves and grow more dependent on Him instead!
- Second, suffering isn't enjoyable! God knows this. But He recognizes that **suffering is necessary for growing us to become like His Son**. Remember, earlier that we will share in our master's joy after a period of endurance! Not only that, but we will be healed when everything is said and done.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DON'T LET LIMBS PROPERLY HEAL?



"Suffering Well in the In-Between": Applying Practically

- **Daily Bible Reading:** To remind myself of who God is. His love, His mercy, and His ultimate mission. Bible Reading and study are different and while studying is important, you may not be to a point where you're studying in the midst of your storm. Instead, look to scripture for peace and remembrance.



Psalms 119:1-2 says, *"How happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk according to the Lord's instruction! Happy are those who keep His decrees and seek Him with all their heart."*

Psalms 119:25-32 says, *"My life is down in the dust; give me life through your word. I told you about my life, and you answered me; teach me your statutes. Help me understand the meaning of your precepts so that I can meditate on your wonders. I am weary from grief; strengthen me through your word. Keep me from the way of deceit and graciously give your instruction. I have chosen the way of truth; I have set your ordinances before me. I cling to your decrees; Lord, do not put me to shame. I pursue the way of your commands, for you broaden my understanding*."*

Closer Examination: "Psalm 119:32"

Psalm 119:32 *"I pursue the way of your commands, for you broaden my understanding*."*



"Understanding" - lit *"you enlarge my heart."* **Remember, that we have a heart problem:**

- **Jeremiah 17:9** - *"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick; who can understand it?"*
- **Ezekiel 36:26-27** - *"And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."*

"Suffering Well in the In-Between": Applying Practically

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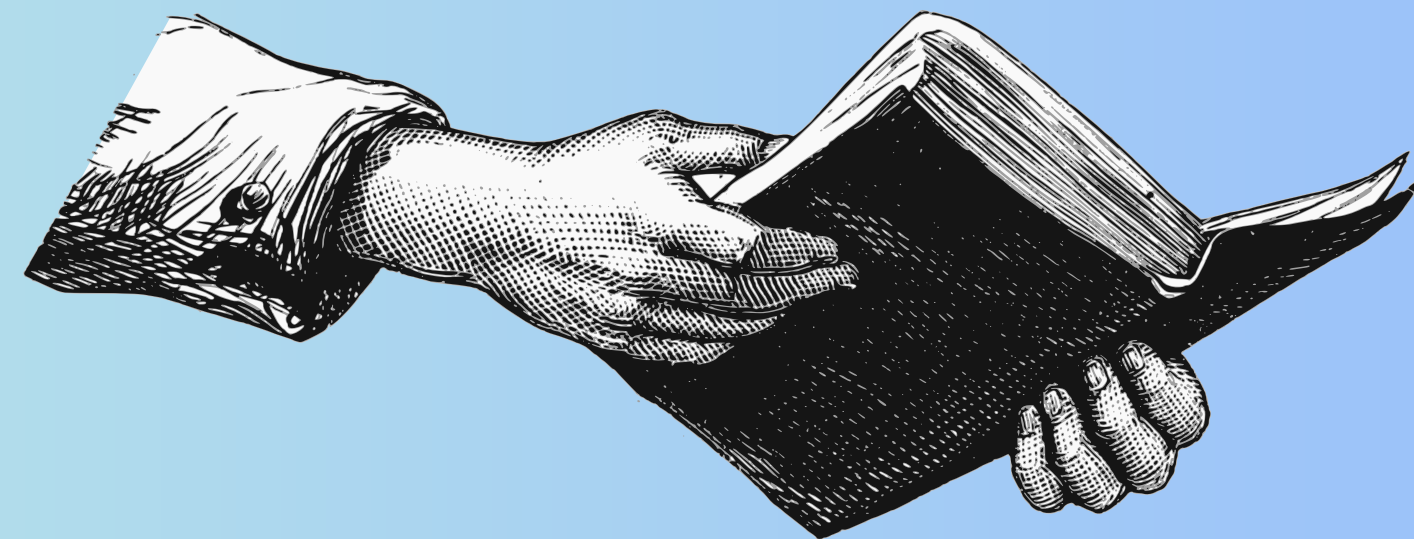
- **James 1:21**– *"Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."*
 - This can be difficult because:
 - Satan will try and snatch away anything of God that is planted in us:
"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what is sown along the path." – **Matthew 13:19**
 - Our own sinful nature makes our default setting rebellion: *"For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me."* – **Romans 7:15-20**

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- Reading the Word daily allows us to live out Romans 12:2, *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*
- Daily Reading, Memorizing, Meditation and Applying His Word keeps us from sinning against God: *"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* – Psalm 119:11.
 - **This is crucial!** By avoiding suffering at all costs is, in itself, an act of rebellion. It is a refusal to trust God's plan and His refining process in our lives.



"Suffering Well in the In-Between": Applying Practically

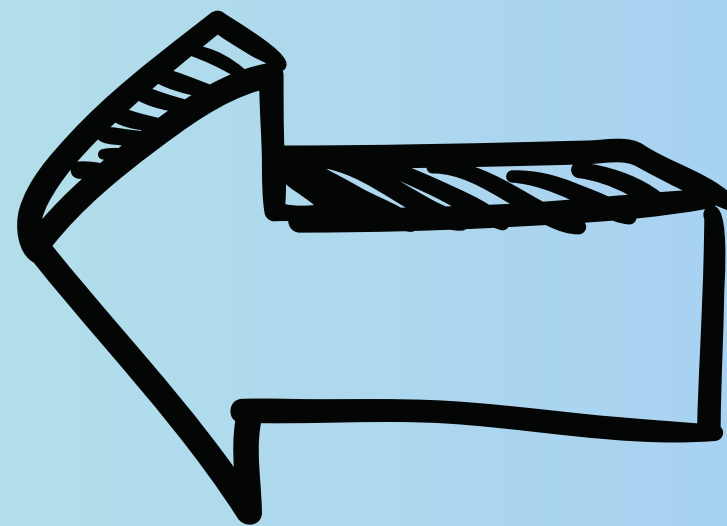
- **Turning to my Community:**

Having a strong Christian community is incredibly important.

- **1 Corinthians 12:26** says, *"If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad."*

- When we surround ourselves with Biblically, Like-minded individuals, our lives improve significantly!

WHO MAKES UP
YOUR CORE
GROUP?



The Three Biblically-Centric Types of Relationships you should cultivate



Mentor



Peer



Protégé

“Suffering Well in the In-Between”: Applying Practically

- **Develop a Healthy Prayer Life:** Don't neglect the power of prayer. It is how we speak to the Father and *listen* to Him.



- **James 1:19-20** says, “Let every person **be quick to hear**, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
 - God knows the desires of our heart. After we have cried out to Him, listen to what He has to say.
 - Also, instead of asking Him to take away the suffering, ask for help **enduring** the pain. Knowing the trials that lay ahead of Him, Jesus prayed and urged the disciples to pray that they may resist temptation (for us, it could be the temptation to avoid the pain in favor of something easier).

“Suffering Well in the In-Between”: Applying Practically



- **Matthew 26:37-39** says, *"And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.' And going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as you will.'"*
 - Even Jesus felt intense sorrow at the suffering He was about to face. So much so that he even began to sweat blood! We must never be ashamed to feel the anguish. Jesus didn't and He is our standard.
- **Matthew 26:41** says, *"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*
 - Jesus recognizes two things here:
 - **Point #1**- He calls upon His community for prayer. Though they let Him down (as it was written), He still calls upon them for prayer as He prays for HIMSELF!
 - **Point #2**- Though in their hearts, the disciples WANT to be obedient, their sinful nature (their flesh) is weak. While we may see this as an excuse to simply give up, we must remember **Romans 8:8-9**: *"Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him."*
- Because we belong to God, the Holy Spirit within us enables us to be obedient to Him. So, walk in the manner in which you were called: you are a legitimate son of God! You are not powerless, but are filled with His power. Just let Him work.

Conclusion

We belong to God. As such, the Holy Spirit within us enables us to be obedient to Him.

So, walk in the manner in which you were called: you are a legitimate Child of God! You are not powerless, but are filled with His power. Just let Him work and call upon the Lord when you find yourself weak and in need.

“Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me. That is why, for the sake of Christ, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong...” – 2 Corinthians 12:8-10