

WORD BASICS

SUFFERING

1. WHO CAUSES SUFFERING?--GOD OR THE DEVIL?

A. THE DEVIL CAUSES MUCH OF MAN'S SUFFERING:

(See Acts 10:38; Mat.15:22; Lk.8:29b; 2Tim.2:26.)

B. BUT IT IS GOD WHO ALLOWS THE DEVIL TO BRING SUFFERING:

Job 1:8-19 [God allowed Satan to bring Job to ruin with fire, raiding bandits & a violent storm]

Job 2:3-7 [God allowed the devil to afflict Job with boils]

(See also 1Cor.5:5; 1Tim.1:20.)

C. GOD IS ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALLOWING SUFFERING:

Exo.4:11 Who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or blind? Have not I?

1Sam.2:6,7 The Lord killeth, maketh alive, maketh poor...rich

Isa.45:7 I make peace, & create evil; I the Lord do all these

Amos 3:6b Be (calamity) in a city, & (hath not) the Lord done it?

(See also Deut.32:39; 2Chr.15:2b,5,6; Job 12:14-25; Psa.66:10-12a; Mic.1:12b.)

2. WHY DOES GOD ALLOW THE RIGHTEOUS TO SUFFER?

A. HE HAS A LOVING REASON FOR EVERYTHING HE DOES:

Rom.8:28 All things work together for good to...the called

Gen.45:4-8 Be not grieved...that ye sold me [as a slave]: for God did send me before you to preserve life

Gen.50:20 Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good

Psa.119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes

Jer.37:15,16; 38:28 [Jeremiah spent a long time in prison, but was safe there when Jerusalem was destroyed--Jer.39:11-14]

Jon.2:1-7a [Jonah suffered in the fish's belly but it saved him from drowning & took him to land--Jon.1:15,17; 2:10.]

B. SUFFERING IS OFTEN GOD'S LOVING CHASTISEMENT:

Pro.3:11,12 Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth

Heb.12:5-12 Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth

Rev.3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke & chasten
(See also Deut.8:5; Job 5:17; 1Cor.11:32.)

C. GOD'S CHASTISEMENTS ARE RIGHTEOUS:

Neh.9:33 Thou art just in all that is brought upon us
Psa.119:75 I know that Thy judgments are right, & that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me
Psa.19:9b The judgments of the Lord are true & righteous
Pro.26:2 The curse causeless shall not come
Jer.17:10 I the Lord search the heart...to give every man...according to the fruit of his doings
(See also Ezk.14:22,23; Heb.12:11.)

D. OUR SUFFERING IS LESS THAN WE DESERVE:

Ezra 9:13 God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve
Psa.78:38,39 Full of compassion...many a time turned He His anger
Psa.103:10-14 He hath not dealt with us after our sins

E. CONTINUE TO TRUST HIM, EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND:

Pro.3:5 Trust in Lord...lean not unto thine own understanding
Isa.55:8,9 Neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord

3. SOME SPECIFIC REASONS THAT GOD ALLOWS SUFFERING:

A. SUFFERING HAS BEEN A FACT OF LIFE SINCE THE FALL OF MAN:

Gen.3:16-19 [Suffering brought into the world by the fall of man]
Job 5:6,7 Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward
(See also Job 14:1; Psa.90:10.)

B. WE OFTEN BRING ON SUFFERING BY SIN & DISOBEDIENCE:

Gen.42:21 We are guilty...therefore is distress come upon us
Job 4:8 They that plow iniquity & sow wickedness reap the same
Psa.31:9,10 I am in trouble...grief...because of mine iniquity
Psa.38:1-8 There is no soundness in my flesh...because of my sin
Psa.107:17 Fools...because of their iniquities, are afflicted
Isa.66:4 [Ignoring God & doing evil brings on mental anguish, fears & delusions]
Jer.5:25 Your sins have withholden good things from you
(See also Jer.30:15; Lam.1:20.)

C. BECAUSE WE'RE DISBELIEVING OR DISOBEYING GOD'S WORD:

Deut.11:28 A curse, if ye will not obey the commandments
Psa.78:32,33 They believed not...their years He consumed in trouble
Psa.89:30-32 If (they) forsake My law...visit transgression with rod
(See also Psa.107:11,12)

4. SUFFERING BECAUSE OF OBEDIENCE & RIGHTEOUSNESS:

A. SUFFERINGS & PRIVATIONS WHILE SERVING GOD:

Acts 20:19 Serving the Lord with many tears & temptations
1Cor.4:11 We hunger, thirst, are naked, buffeted
2Cor.1:8 [Paul's] trouble...pressed out of measure, above strength, despaired even of life
2Cor.11:23-30 [Paul's many sufferings & troubles]
Phi.2:27a,30 Sick nigh unto death, to supply your lack of service
(See also 2Cor.6:4-10)

B. SUFFERING CAUSED BY PERSECUTION:

Phi.1:29 For unto you it is given...not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake
2Tim.3:12 All that live godly in Jesus shall suffer persecution
2Tim.1:8 Be not ashamed, but partaker of afflictions of gospel
Heb.11:25 Choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God
Heb.11:35b-38 [Saints tortured, cruelly mocked, scourged, imprisoned, slain, destitute, afflicted, tormented]
(See Rom.8:35-37; 1Pet.2:19-21; 3:16,17; Rev.2:10.)

5. THE BENEFITS & GOOD FRUITS OF SUFFERING:

A. SUFFERING CAUSES YOU TO SEEK HIS WORD:

Deut.8:2,3 That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by (the) Word
Psa.94:12 Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, & teachest him out of Thy law
Psa.119:71 I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes

B. SUFFERING REFINES & PURIFIES YOU:

Job 23:10 When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold
Psa.66:10 Thou, O God, hast proved us...tried us, as silver
Isa.48:10 I have refined thee...in the furnace of affliction
Zech.13:9 And I will...refine them as silver is refined

Heb.12:9-11 Chastened...that we be partakers of His holiness
(See also Pro.17:3; Isa.1:25.)

C. IT TEACHES YOU OBEDIENCE:

Psa.119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy Word
Heb.5:8 Yet learned He obedience by things which He suffered
(See also 2Cor.7:10a,11)

D. IT CAUSES YOU TO BRING FORTH MORE FRUIT:

Jn.15:2 He (prunes) it, that it may bring forth more fruit

E. IT HUMBLER YOU:

Deut.8:2,16 The Lord led thee in the wilderness, to humble thee
2Chr.33:12 When he was in affliction, he humbled himself greatly Lam.3:1,17-20 Remembering
mine affliction...my soul...is humbled

F. IT TEACHES YOU PATIENCE:

Rom.5:3b Tribulation worketh (teaches us) patience

G. IT MAKES YOU WISER:

Eccl.7:2,3 Sorrow is better...the living will lay it to heart

H. IT GIVES YOU COMPASSION & MERCY ON OTHERS:

2Cor.1:4 That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort
wherewith we are comforted
Heb.2:17 [As with Jesus, it teaches you to be merciful]
Heb.2:18 He Himself hath suffered...He is able to succour them
Heb.4:15 Be touched with the feeling of [others'] infirmities

I. IT DRAWS YOU CLOSE TO & MAKES YOU APPRECIATE LOVED ONES:

2Cor.7:4-7 We were troubled on every side...nevertheless, God... comforted us by the coming of
Titus

6. REWARDS IN HEAVEN FOR EARTHLY SUFFERING:

Lk.16:19-25 [Lazarus the beggar rewarded & comforted]
Rom.8:18 Sufferings of present time not worthy to be compared
2Cor.1:7 As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation
2Cor.4:17 Our light affliction...worketh for us a far more exceeding & eternal weight of glory

2Tim.2:12a If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him
Rev.21:4 Shall be no more death...sorrow...crying...pain

7. REMEMBER, JESUS ALSO SUFFERED:

Heb.4:15 [He] was in all points tempted (tested) like as we are
Heb.12:3 Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners ...lest ye be wearied & faint in your minds

A. THE REASONS THAT JESUS SUFFERED:

Isa.53:3 He hath borne our griefs, & carried our sorrows
Isa.53:4,5 He was wounded for our transgressions...& with His stripes we are healed (See also 1Pet.2:24)
Heb.2:9,10 Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings
1Pet.3:18 Suffered for sins, that He might bring us to God
(See also Heb.2:17,18; 4:15; 5:7,8.)

B. FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE OF ENDURING SUFFERING:

Rom.8:17b If we suffer with Him...be glorified together
Phi.3:10 That I may know the fellowship of His sufferings
1Pet.2:21 Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example
1Pet.4:1 As Christ hath suffered for us, arm yourselves

8. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD SUFFERING:

Job 13:15a Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him
Phi.3:8 I suffered loss of all things, that I may win Christ

A. ENDURE SUFFERING PATIENTLY:

Jer.10:19 Truly this is a grief, & I must bear it
Lam.3:24-26 Lord is my portion...hope & quietly wait in Him
Rom.12:12a Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation
2Tim.4:5 Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions
Heb.12:7 If ye endure...God dealeth with you as with sons
1Pet.4:19 Let them that suffer...commit the keeping of their souls to Him (God) in well doing

B. PRAY FOR STRENGTH TO ENDURE SUFFERING:

Lk.18:1 Men ought always to pray, & not to faint
Jam.5:13 Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray

C. WE SHOULD EXPECT AFFLICTIONS & TRIALS:

Psa.34:19	Many are the afflictions of the righteous
Acts 14:22	Must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom
1Thes.3:3,4	No man should be moved by these afflictions: for...we are appointed thereunto
1Pet.4:12	Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial (See also 1Cor.10:13; 1Pet.5:9.)

D. STAND STRONG, ENDURE HARDNESS:

Acts 20:23,24	None of these things move me...that I might finish
2Tim.2:3	Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier
Heb.11:25-27	Choosing rather to suffer affliction...he endured
Jam.5:10,11	Take the prophets, for an example of suffering affliction ...we count them happy which endure

E. BE HAPPY DESPITE SUFFERINGS:

Jn.16:33b	Ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer
Rom.5:3	We glory in tribulations...worketh patience
2Cor.7:4b	I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation
1Pet.4:13,16	Rejoice..ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings

F. DON'T MURMUR AGAINST GOD:

Job 1:20-22	Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly (Also 2:9,10)
Psa.17:3	I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress
1Thes.5:18	In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God

G. REMAIN FAITHFUL:

Psa.119:143	Trouble & anguish...yet Thy commandments my delights
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9. WRONG ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUFFERING:

Exo.6:9	[Despair:] They (Israelites) hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, & for cruel bondage
Ruth 1:20,21	[Complaint:] for Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me
Job 2:7-9	[Bitterness:] Then said (Job's wife), Curse God, & die
Pro.24:10	[Giving up:] If thou faint in the day of adversity
Jer.15:18	[Questioning:] Wilt Thou be unto me as a liar? (See also Pro.18:14; Lam.3:39.)

10. GOD COMFORTS & STRENGTHENS US WHEN WE SUFFER:

Exo.3:7	I have seen the affliction of My people...heard their cry... I know their sorrows
Mat.5:4	Blessed are they that mourn...they shall be comforted
Jn.14:18	I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you
Rom.8:26	The Spirit helpeth our infirmities
1Pet.5:10	But God...after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (See also Psa.23:4; 37:24; 145:14.)

11. DELIVERANCE FROM SUFFERING:

A. THE LORD PROMISES TO DELIVER US FROM OUR SUFFERING:

Psa.30:5	Weeping may endure a night, joy cometh in the morning
Psa.34:19	Many are the afflictions...but the Lord delivereth
Psa.103:9-14	He will not always chide...He knoweth our frame
Lam.3:31,32	Lord will not cast off for ever: though He cause grief
Isa.54:7,8	For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but...mercy (See also Exo.3:7,9,10; Deut.26:6-8; Psa.66:11,12; 94:12-14; 107:11-14; 118:17,18.)

B. PRAY FOR DELIVERANCE:

Psa.34:6	Lord heard him, & saved him out of all his troubles
Psa.34:17	The righteous cry, & the Lord...delivereth them out
Psa.50:15	Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee (See specific examples in Ezra 9:5-15; Isa.38:1-3.)

C. GOD'S CONDITIONS:

2Chr.6:27-30	[Release from suffering if men repent & seek the Lord]
2Chr.7:13,14	If My people...shall humble themselves, & pray, & turn from wicked ways; I will hear...forgive...heal
Job 33:27-29	If any say, I have sinned...He will deliver his soul
Job 36:8-11	If they obey & serve Him, they shall (have) prosperity
Jon.2:1-10	[Jonah praised God in his trouble, & was delivered]

12. YOUR DUTY TOWARD THE SUFFERING & AFFLICTED:

Job 6:14	To him that is afflicted pity should be showed
Job 16:5	I would strengthen you...assuage your grief
Isa.50:4	Speak a word in season to him that is weary

Lk.10:30-37 [The good Samaritan] Go, & do thou likewise
Rom.12:15b Weep with them that weep
1Cor.12:25,26 Whether one member suffer, all...suffer with it
Gal.6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens
Heb.13:3 Remember them which suffer adversity
Jam.1:27 Visit the fatherless & widows in their affliction
(See also Job 19:21; Mat.25:34-45; 1Tim.5:10.)

13. THE SUFFERING OF THE WORLDLY WICKED:

--OR EVEN OF BACKSLIDDEN, DISOBEDIENT CHRISTIANS:

Deut.28:20 The Lord shall send upon thee cursing...because of the wickedness of thy doings
Deut.28:15-67 If thou wilt not hearken...these curses shall come...
Job 15:20a The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days
Psa.32:10a Many sorrows shall be to the wicked
Isa.42:24,25a Neither were they obedient unto His law. Therefore He hath poured upon him the fury
of His anger
Isa.57:20,21 Wicked are like troubled sea...no peace to the wicked
Heb.2:15 Who through fear of death were...subject to bondage
1Jn.4:18 Fear hath torment
(See also Job 20:all; Eccl.2:22,23; Lam.3:42-47.)

14. MUCH OF THE WORLD'S SUFFERING IS OFTEN SELF-INFLICTED:

A. DRUG ABUSE, ALCOHOLISM ETC.:

1Cor.3:17 If any man defile (his body), him shall God destroy
Pro.23:29-35 [Alcoholism brings on woe, sorrow, wounds]
(See also Pro.23:21; 31:4,5; Isa.5:11; 28:7.)

B. OVEREATING:

Num.11:19,20, [Hebrews gluttonously overate quails & as a result, the fattest of them" died--See
31-34 Psa.78:26-31]
Phi.3:19a Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly
(See also Pro.23:1-3,21a)

C. OVERDOING PHYSICALLY GETS BODY'S RESISTANCE DOWN:

Eccl.12:12b Much study is a weariness of the flesh

Phi.2:27a,30 He was (sick) nigh unto death, not regarding his life

D. SUFFERING BECAUSE OF SEXUAL SINS:

Rom.1:27 [Sodomites]...receiving in themselves that recompense of their error [disease & infection]

E. POLLUTION BY FACTORIES, PESTICIDES, CHEMICALS ETC.:

Isa.24:5 The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof
Jer.2:7 Ye defiled My land, & made (it) an abomination
Amos 7:17b Thou shalt die in a polluted land
Mic.2:10b Because it is polluted, it shall destroy you
Zeph.3:1 Woe to her that is filthy & polluted, to the oppressing city
Rom.1:30,32a Inventors of evil things...worthy of death
Rev.11:18b [God will] destroy them which destroy the earth
(See also Gen.4:8,16,17; Isa.5:8; 14:21 re: unnatural cities & industrialisation)

F. GREED & OPPRESSION CAUSE WARS, SUFFERING & MISERY:

Josh.7:1-26 [Achan's covetousness caused many Israelites to die]
Pro.15:27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house
Nah.3:1 Woe to the bloody city! it is full of lies & robbery
1Tim.6:9,10 They that will be rich...drown in destruction...sorrows
Jam.4:1,2 From whence come wars?...even of your lusts...ye kill
Jam.5:1-6 Rich men...ye have condemned & killed the just
(See also Psa.73:3-20; Mic.6:12-15 .)

15. WHAT SUFFERING DOES FOR THE UNSAVED OR DISOBEDIENT:

A. SOME DO NOT REPENT DESPITE SUFFERING & AFFLICTION:

Isa.1:5 Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt
Isa.42:25 Yet he knew not...yet he laid it not to heart
Isa.57:17 I smote him...he went on in the way of his heart
Jer.2:30a In vain have I smitten...they received no correction
Jer.5:3 Thou hast stricken them, but they...refused to return
Dan.9:13 All this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer
(See also Neh.9:26-29; Isa.9:13; Amos 4:6.)

B. SUFFERING CAUSES THE TRULY WICKED TO CURSE GOD EVEN MORE:

2Chr.28:22 In time of his distress did he trespass yet more

Pro.29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, & that without remedy

Isa.8:21 When they shall be hungry, shall curse...their God

Rev.16:9-11 Men scorched with heat, blasphemed God, repented not
(See also Lev.26:23,24)

C. IT CAUSES SOME TO REPENT & SEEK GOD:

Deut.31:17 Many evils & troubles shall befall them [to make them realise they've forsaken God]

2Chr.15:4 When they in their trouble...sought Him, He was found

Psa.78:34 When He slew them, then they sought Him: & returned

Isa.26:16 Poured out prayer when Thy chastening was upon them

Jer.2:27b They have turned the back...but in the time of trouble

D. IT EVEN TURNS SOME UNSAVED OR DISOBEDIENT TO GOD:

2Chr.33:9-13 [Manasseh's suffering in prison turned him to God]

Job 34:31,32 I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more

Dan.4:30-37 [King Nebuchadnezzar's abasement & salvation]

Lk.15:16-20 [Suffering caused the prodigal son to repent]

Rev.11:13 Earthquake (killed) 7,000...remnant gave glory to God
(See also Hos.2:6,7)