

Growing Through Suffering Student Notes
Session 2: What Good is it?

1. Introduction: A Tale of two Sufferings. Why the different perspectives?

2. What are the good purposes of God?

3. God uses suffering to make us more like Jesus:

a. **Enhance** our relationship with God

That I may know Him...(Phil 3:10). Suffering can drive us to know Him more deeply.

Focuses our attention. Reminds us of our dependence.

- We know Jesus empathizes and is able to help (Heb. 2:18; 4:1-16). He will see us through, and work with us the whole way. He will carry us. He will carry you.
- We find God as our ever-present comfort and refuge (Psalm 46; 2 Cor. 1:3-11) . “I will not forsake you” (e.g., Josh. 1:5). We know we will never be abandoned. We will never be alone. He will never give up on us.
- We see His grace, we find He is able to keep us from stumbling (2 Cor. 12:9; Jude 24; Heb. 4:16).

- 1 Corinthians 10:13 truths (See Jay Adams, *Christ and Your Problems*)

- We find God’s strength in our weakness (2 Cor 12:9-10; 1 Peter 5:10’ Isa 41:10)

Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. Ps 73:25

b. **Experience** a measure of Christ’s sufferings (Phil 3:10; MT 5:11; 10:24; 1 Peter 1:21)

Phil 1:29 *For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake...*

c. **Expose** our hearts; purge remaining sin (*Deut 8:1-3; Hebr. 12:7-13; 1 Peter 1:6-9; Psm 66:10; Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4 ; Job 23:10*)

Ps 119:67;71.

Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.

Refining of metal removes dross. Suffering is a means to free us from the enemy within, the single most destructive force impacting our lives (Rms. 7:14-25). In our clearest thinking, we hate sin. So God boils us to remove the scum, bringing a harvest of righteousness and peace (Hebrews 12). *When He has tried me, (Job said) I shall come forth as gold.* (23:10)

d. **Exhibit** Christ's work in us to others (Mt 5:13-16; Acts 4:13)

Acts 4:13 *When they saw the **courage** of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they **took note that these men had been with Jesus.*** (emphasis mine).

e. **Extend** our fellowship with other Christians (1 Cor. 12:26; Rms. 12:15)

1 Cor 12:26, *If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

Rms. 12:15, *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*

f. **Equip** us for wiser, more compassionate ministry (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

2 Cor 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

g. **Excite** our desire for heaven (1 Peter 1:13)

2 Cor 5:1 -2 *For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven.*

2 Cor 5:8 *we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.*

Summary: Why not me?

Recommended Resource:

Jones, Robert D. *When trouble shows up: seeing gods transforming love.* New growth press, 2013.