

Surviving the Summer

A series on surviving...and even thriving!

"I know how to survive..." Philippians 4:12a Voice

"Surviving Suffering"

"So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you." 1 Peter 4:19

A. Why do we have suffering?

"In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation." 1 Peter 5:10 NLT

1. God did not create suffering!

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Genesis 1:31a NIV

2. God gave each of us a free will resulting in two kinds of evil. As Lee Stroebel shares, "There are two kinds of evil, moral evil and natural evil."

"Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own." John 7:17 NLT

3. God can use suffering in all our lives.

"Distress that drives us to God does that. It turns us around. It gets us back in the way of salvation. We never regret that kind of pain. But those who let distress drive them away from God are full of regrets, end up on a deathbed of regrets." 2 Corinthians 7:10 The Message

C.S. Lewis said: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains; it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

4. God can use suffering to strengthen our character.

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation." Romans 5:3-4 NLT

5. God may use it to discipline us.

"Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered." Hebrews 5:8

"For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way." Hebrews 12:10-11 NIV

B. How should we respond to suffering?

"where they strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God." Acts 14:22 NLT

Joni Eareckson-Tada puts it: "Every sorrow we taste will one day prove to be the best possible thing that could have happened. We will thank God endlessly in heaven for the trials He sent us here. This is not Disneyland — this is truth."

1. Realize God has a purpose and plan for all that He allows into our lives.

"for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." Philippians 2:13 NIV

2. Allow God the freedom to use suffering and to accomplish His will.

"My old self has been crucified with Christ- It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20 NLT

3. Put suffering in perspective.

"Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later." Romans 8:18 NLT

From the depths of a Nazi death camp, Corrie ten Boom wrote these words: "No matter how deep our darkness, he is deeper still."

4. Give God praise allowing Him to completely fulfill His plan and purpose in your life.

"Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church." Colossians 1:24 NIV

"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy." James 1:2 NLT
"Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT

C. What will you do with the circumstances and suffering that have come into your life?

"We are confident of all this because of our great trust in God through Christ. It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life." 2 Corinthians 3:4-6

1. Remember...it's a choice! It requires your will! For suffering to accomplish good, you must choose!
And, all suffering has an end!

"For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!" 2 Corinthians 4:17 NLT

2. Choose to trust God.

"This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people and particularly of all believers." 1 Timothy 4:10 NLT

3. Choose to give thanks.

"And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:20

4. Choose to wait on God!

"Yet I am confident I will see the LORD's goodness while I am here in the land of the living. Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the LORD." Psalm 27:13-14

"Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near." James 5:7-8

Next two weeks:

June 26 – Freedom Fest – Celebrating our Freedom Part 1

July 3 – Freedom Fest – Celebrating our Freedom Part 2