

November 4, 2018

Growing 101

Introduction to Foundational Principles

Week #9 – “Suffering: A New Perspective”

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.”

Romans 8:28 (NLT)

IF/THEN

If I’m **alive**, then I will suffer. (John 16:33)

If God is alive, then He will use my suffering for **good**. (Rom. 8:28)

If I suffer **purposefully**, my character will be strengthened. (Rom. 5:3-4)

BEFORE I SUFFER...

Invest Intentionally

Notes:

WHILE I SUFFER...

Rejoice Repeatedly

Notes:

AFTER I SUFFER...

Digest Decidedly

Notes:

WHY? 1. There is **hope** that does not disappoint! (Rom. 5:5)

2. God is using it for **good**. (Rom. 8:28)

ACTION

What phase am I in? I’m going to _____.

**A NEW LIFE:
HOW TO BENEFIT FROM ADVERSITY**

Often, bad things happen to good people. Since the fall of Adam, pain and suffering have been in the world. Becoming a Christian does not exempt one from adversity, yet the new believer draws upon a new source of strength. God has promised to uphold His children with His hand.

HOW HAS GOD USED SUFFERING IN YOUR LIFE TO HELP YOU?

COMPARE THE OLD LIFE WITH THE NEW LIFE:

The Old Life:

1. Hopelessness in trouble
2. Depression
- 3.
- 4.

The New Life:

1. Confidence in God
2. Assurance
- 3.
- 4.

Sometimes when we suffer loss, we are tempted to ask “why” and grow bitter. The Bible gives us some definite ways we can profit from suffering, and becoming spiritually enriched. In this lesson, we will study how we can benefit spiritually when we experience suffering.

I. THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING

God did not plan suffering and death for His world. To discover the source of all sorrow, read Genesis 3 and discuss the following questions.

1. What does Genesis 2:15-17 say that God originally planned for man?

2. According to Genesis 3:4-5, who tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit?

3. Because Adam & Eve sinned, what happened to them in Genesis 3:16-24?

1. Who then is to blame for all the suffering in the world?

II. CHRISTIANS ARE NOT EXEMPT FROM SUFFERING

1. What often accompanies a person’s faith in Christ? Philippians 1:29 (NASB)

2. What is promised to those who live godly lives? 2 Timothy 3:12

3. What should be our attitude toward suffering? James 1:2

III. THE PURPOSE OF SUFFERING

1. How is suffering beneficial for spiritual progress? Psalms 119:67

2. How does affliction help us to comfort others? 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

3. According to Philippians 1:12, what was the result of Paul’s adversity?

4. Discuss the fourfold aspect of God’s purpose:

a) God’s purpose is inclusive... “all things”

b) God’s purpose is active... “work”

c) God’s purpose is harmonious... “together”

d) God’s purpose is beautiful... “for good”

IV. THE COMPARISON BETWEEN PRESENT SUFFERING AND COMING GLORY

“Bearing the cross precedes wearing the crown”

1. According to 2 Corinthians 4:17 what is the relationship of present suffering to eternal glory?

2. In 2 Corinthians 5:1, what are we promised when life’s sufferings are over?

CHALLENGE: Follow Job’s example

Job is the all-time example for those who suffer.

1. He suffered ridicule from his wife
2. He suffered scolding from his friends
3. He suffered the loss of his property
4. He suffered the death of his children
5. He suffered the loss of his influence
6. He suffered the loss of his health

In spite of all Job’s suffering, what did he say about his commitment to serve God in Job 13:15?

QUESTION: How can I be an overcomer during adversity?

APPLICATION:

1. Ask a fellow believer how he has overcome suffering in his life.

2. Find a Bible character who suffered and discover how he was victorious.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

1. Read Psalm 119:67 & 71. How did this man benefit from suffering?

2. From Hebrews 12:5-8, we discover that God's correction is a reminder of His...

3. What kind of suffering is Jesus speaking about in Luke 6:22-23?

4. What is commendable before God according to 1 Peter 2:19-20?

5. Summarize what 1 Peter 2:21-23 teaches about the example of Christ.

6. Read Romans 12:19. Why should we not seek revenge when we suffer?

7. What did the apostles do when they were called upon to suffer for Jesus? Acts 5:40-41

CONCLUSION:

Yes, there is suffering now, but we must understand that God will eventually bring the world back to His original will- a new heaven and earth without suffering. In the meantime, we must recognize God as loving and wise. Let us trust God in our sufferings. Let us realize that He has a purpose - even though we may not see it. Let us sing with the songwriter, "For I know what'er befalls me, Jesus doeth all things well."

*John Maxwell