

**Suffering, and the Spirit Led Life**  
*Beginning Paul's second letter to the Corinthians*

**Accountability: Let's hold ourselves accountable!**

- Last time we discussed the need to make a priority of putting Jesus first, and how our priorities are often reflected by our schedules and our finances. Pastor Joel challenged us to identify any areas in our lives that needed to bow the knee to our Jesus priority. Did anyone make any breakthrough decisions that you would like to share with the group?
- What were your initial thoughts and reactions to this week's message? Was there anything that was a breakthrough moment? Anything that you strongly agreed or disagreed with, and why?

**Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.**

- We began this week by learning that Christians are not spared from suffering. Jesus taught us that our lives would have moments of difficulty, but that our joy was in His overcoming the world...which was realized in the gospel. Let's dig a little deeper and discover more about God in the midst of our suffering by looking quickly at these three support texts.
  - John 16:33
  - Psalm 46:1
  - John 14:16-18
- In our Bible study, we used several descriptors of God's ministry to a Christian in times of tribulation and suffering. We saw God as a "radical" comforter, a God of mercy and compassion, a God who takes us by His side in suffering for love, affection, and exhortation, and who helps us! He also uses our experiences of tribulations and suffering as a ministry tool to help others who are experiencing similar sufferings. Have there been times when you have suffered and experienced these descriptors of God's mighty presence in your life? Have you also had moments when God redeemed your suffering by using your experience to minister to someone who was similarly suffering?
- Paul shared with the Corinthian believers that he had been delivered from tribulation, was being delivered from tribulation, and would be delivered from future tribulation. Paul's confidence in God to deliver in the future was rooted in his past experiences of God's faithfulness. Let's look together at James 1:1-8 and discover a beautiful process of how God matures and grows us in trials, and in turn, why we should entertain trials with joy because of this process of personal growth. Read and discuss.

- We learned about living in the Spirit...which requires a daily seeking after God and a yielding to the direction of the Spirit. We learned that we must daily desire to walk in the Spirit, that living in the Spirit isn't automatic...we must seek Him, that we develop a sensitivity to what the Spirit is doing, and that we must live with a "what now" posture that is yielded to God's way and not our own. Here's a hypothetical scenario...Jack just lost his job and the lease is up on his apartment at the end of the month. He has several good options for work, but only one that does not require a relocation. Jack is connected to a great Calvary Chapel church in his community...and is in a terrific small group like this one. Let's help Jack out...what would it look like for Jack to live out this transition with a Spirit led posture? What are some specific things that Jack should do in this scenario?

**Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:**

- Genesis 50:19-21 - Joseph's view of how God used his suffering.
- Romans 8:18-28 - God uses all things for our good and for His glory.
- Job 42:10-17 - The "after view" of Job's suffering...God can restore.

**Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?**

- Is there an experience of suffering or tribulation in your life where you need God's comfort? Would you be willing to share this as a prayer need?
- We didn't take time tonight to discuss the unruly brother, and how just one or a few people in a church can make a mess of the whole thing when they aren't aligned with God's will. Nonetheless, it is important that we are working towards godliness in our conduct, and especially among the fellowship. Is there an attitude or way of thinking that you need to put on the altar tonight?
- Is there a present experience of tribulation in your life that needs a Spirit led solution? When you are tempted to act in the wisdom of the flesh, would you flush out what it looks like to yield this decision to the Spirit of God?