

How Do We Suffer?

November 13, 2016

I. Introduction

A. How do I do it right? How do I get good at it?

B. Suffering is experienced as a weight.

- It can become your identity
- Peter wants us to learn how to outweigh our suffering so, that it is no longer the heaviest thing in life.

II. Four things that counterbalance our suffering.

1. The First Counterweight to Suffering is Connection.

A. We must connect with one another.

1 Peter 3: 8 “Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.”

Galatians 6:2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

B. When you use connection as a counterweight to suffering, it makes you a better, more loving Christian.

- When suffering is counterbalanced by connection, it leads to sympathy, brotherly love, and compassion.
- The blessing of the connection is bigger than you can imagine.

2. The Second Counterweight to Suffering is the Cross Of Christ.

A. We must remember the cross.

1 Peter 3:9-11 “Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing

1 Peter 2:23 “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate.

1 Peter 3:9-11 "...because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, 'Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.'"

- Jesus suffering on the cross is now your great calling, your example.

B. The suffering of Jesus becomes a counterweight to your suffering.

- His suffering means your suffering can be redeemed.

3. The Third Counterweight to Suffering is God's Love.

A. It's in the suffering times you have to give special attention to the love of God.

- The more you listen, the more tangible his love will become to you, and the weightier it will become.

B. How does God tell you he loves you when you are suffering?

1 Peter 3:12 "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous..."

1 Peter 3:12 "...and His ears are attentive to their prayer."

- His eyes are on us. His ears are attentive to us.

1 Peter 3:12 "But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

- God wants you to be assured that he will deal with your enemies.

1 Peter 3:13 "Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed."

C. Suffering is not the worst thing that can happen to you.

- The worst thing is to be someone who doesn't know God. To be someone who doesn't talk to God.
- *Would you rather be suffering and know the eyes of the Lord are on you? Or, would you rather be happy and carefree with the face of Lord set against you?*

4. *The Fourth Counterweight to Suffering is Your Witness.*

- A. Your suffering can give you a witness that is a blessing to other people.
- B. When you realize that your suffering can actually be used by God to glorify him and lead people to Jesus, that can tip the scales and fill you with joy.

1 Peter 3:15-17 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."

- C. Suffering Christians need to see that their suffering could give them credibility with other people who are suffering.