

LESSONS THAT SHAPE OUR LIFE - 8 - SUFFERING

2Tim. 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus **will suffer** persecution.

I. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SACRIFICE AND SUFFERING

A. SACRIFICE IS A CHOICE - SUFFERING IS OFTEN A SNEAK ATTACK

1. **SUFFERING IS REAL. *My suffering can press me toward wholeness, healing and deliverance, which will transform me.*** CHOOSING self-pity, bitterness and resentment will also change me.
SUFFERING IS PART OF THE GROAN THAT ALL CREATION PARTICIPATES IN TO REVEAL THE GLORY OF THE SONS OF GOD.

ROM. 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, ***even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.***

2. **WE CAN HAVE ABUNDANT LIFE EVEN IF WE SOMETIMES SUFFER IF we live from the promises of God to us.** FAITH PERSEVERES
3. **WHEN YOU SUFFER, MAKE SURE TO ALL BREAK AGREEMENT WITH DEATH, DEPRESSION, SELF-PITY OR BITTERNESS. *Renew your mind*** with the reality of heaven. A HEAVENLY MINDSET OVERRULES ALL DEFEAT BECAUSE GOD RULES OVER ALL THINGS

Col. 3:1 NLT Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on ***the realities of heaven***, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand.

² ***Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.*** ³ ***For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.*** ⁴ ***And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.***

- **SUFFERING PAIN** - teaches us to value health and life as precious.
- **SUFFERING LOSS** - teaches us the importance of unconditional love.
- **SUFFERING PERSECUTION** - teaches us how to harness the power of righteousness and endurance.
- **SUFFERING LACK** - teaches us how to endure privation and how to trust God.
- **SUFFERING INJUSTICE** - teaches us how to forgive and how to humble ourselves

- **SUFFERING REJECTION** - teaches us how to lead through harsh treatment.
- **WHEN WE SUFFER IT CHANGES US-** For good or for bad. We can become more humble and grateful because we realize we are in God's hands and live by His mercy.

II. SUFFERING AND HOW TO GET THROUGH IT

A. FACE YOUR SUFFERING WITH A VICTORIOUS STRATEGY

(Everyone has a plan until the first punch is thrown. So, do your best to do these things when you suffer)

1. FOCUS ON THE ULTIMATE JOY SET BEFORE YOU

Heb. 12:1 *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

2. FACE SUFFERING WITH HUMILITY FIRST. We are in God's hands - ALWAYS. *It's always best to position myself under shadow of His wing.*

HEB. 5:7 *[Jesus] who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with **vehement cries and tears** to Him who was able to save Him from death, **and was heard** because of His godly fear, ⁸ **though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.** ⁹ And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him*

- **JESUS IN GETHSEMANE** - **Obedience is to discover the cost of our submission.** *Higher levels of obedience release higher levels of authority, higher levels of honor, and higher levels of intimacy.*

3. REPENT OF ALL OFFENSE AND FORGIVE God, self, others for all real or perceived injustice. ***There is no other way forward that will result in your freedom***

4. BREAK AGREEMENT WITH ALL LIES. DECLARE TRUTH AND WALK IN YOUR AUTHORITY

- **Common lies:** *God is punishing me. I've made a mistake that that I will always have to pay for. I can never be free of my suffering. **All***

hopelessness will trap you in anguish of spirit.

5. **WHAT HAS THIS PAIN TAUGHT ME? THERE'S ALWAYS A LESSON**
6. **RECOGNIZE ASSIGNMENTS FOR AFFLICTION OR INFIRMITY that cause prolonged suffering - JESUS CARRIED AWAY OUR SORROWS**

"Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering" ISA. 53:4: The original Hebrew words for "pain" and "suffering" can refer to ***physical diseases as well as deep inner, emotional, and spiritual anguish.***

7. **WEAPONIZE THE POWER OF INTIMACY AND ENCOUNTER**

The state of someone who suffers is transformed through encounter. Not just worship, but worship that results in divine encounter. I am changed by His glory. The pain I carry is transformed in His presence. When my worship, gratitude, praise goes past an obligation it touches me so I can feel the embrace of A loving Father. TRAUMA BONDING - When I suffer in fellowship with Him it binds me to Him in special ways. (Comrade in arms) JOHN BEVERE

B. RECOGNIZE THE DYNAMICS OF SUFFERING

1. **PHYSICAL PAIN / DISABILITY threatens our identity and robs us of hope**

Luke 13:15 The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?" ***16*** So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" ***17*** And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

2. **EMOTIONAL PAIN or anguish of spirit is suffering that will persist IF we don't own it as our responsibility to resolve. WE SHOULD NEVER FACE THIS KIND OF PAIN AS A VICTIM but as an OVERCOMER.**
3. **FINANCIAL OPPRESSION should never be tolerated LONG-TERM.**
4. **SUFFERING FROM TRAUMA from war, loss and injustice requires healing, forgiveness and spiritual restoration to get past it.**
5. **IF MY SUFFERING REDUCES ME TO SELF-PITY or bitterness, I will never access the authority to overcome it**

6. **IF I LOOK BEYOND PAIN OR INJUSTICE I can hope for better things.**
If I can believe the Lord will be faithful and good to me, there is a real possibility I will escape bitterness or depression and discover peace.

7. **SUFFERING HAS PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES BEYOND PAIN.**
Suffering is an abrupt confrontation with my mortality and death. It is the opposite of life. ***IT IS A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN ME! WILL I LIVE FULLY ALIVE OR WILL I LIVE DYING SLOWLY?***

III. **SUFFERING IS A FELLOWSHIP** - There is hope and inspiration in the knowledge that someone else has walked where I am now walking.

Phil. 3:10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and **the fellowship of His sufferings**, being **conformed to His death**, (SHAPED BY HIS SUFFERING)¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

- **MY VICTORY OVER SUFFERING DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN THAT SUFFERING ENDS. IT MEANS I HAVE LEARNED TO EMBRACE LIFE EVEN WHEN MY BODY SUFFERS because RESURRECTION IS COMING!**
- **FORGIVENESS AND HUMILITY CAN RESTORE LIFE IN MY BODY - I'VE SEEN IT HAPPEN!**
- **WHEN YOU SUFFER YOU ARE ENTERING HIS FELLOWSHIP**

Acts 5:41 *So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to **suffer** shame for His name.*

Rom. 8:17 *and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we **suffer** with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

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

1Pet. 2:23 *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

1Pet. 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* ⁹ *Resist him, steadfast in the faith,*

knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.