

Why Does The Believer Suffer? Sermon Supplement by Phil Kayser

I. Reasons For Suffering

A. General Reasons

1. He lives in a sin-cursed world (Rom. 8:22; Gen. 3)
2. He possesses a sinful nature (Rom. 7:7-25)
3. He is identified with Christ and is therefore hated by Satan and the world system (John 15:18-19; 1 Pet. 5:8; Col. 1:24)
4. He is identified with other members of the body who hurt (1 Cor. 12:26)

B. Disciplinary Suffering (all suffering is disciplinary in the sense that it makes better disciples out of us, but I am referring here to chastisement.)

1. When there is unchecked sin, discipline is for the loving purpose of restoration (1 Cor. 11:28-34; Heb. 12:4-11). It is administered out of love (Heb. 12:5,6) for the purpose of repentance (Psalm 32:3-5; James 5:15), to promote holiness (Heb. 12:10), an obedient spirit (Heb. 12:9) and all the fruits of righteousness (Heb. 12:11). Suffering can thus prevent further complications of sin.
2. The longer sin goes unconfessed, the greater the consequences (1 Cor. 12:29-30; 1 John 5:15,16).
3. God may use the authority of government, home, school or church to discipline the believer (1 Pet. 3:17; 4:15; Eph. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 5:1-8)

C. Non-disciplinary suffering

1. To promote maturity (James 1:2-4)
2. To promote endurance - the ability to turn adversity into spiritual prosperity (James 1:2-4).
3. To promote wisdom - the ability to relate truth to experience (James 1:5-8).
4. To produce humility (James 1:9-11)
5. To provide the opportunity for rewards (James 1:12)
6. To prove the genuineness of our faith (1 Pet. 1:6-8).
7. To manifest the fruit of the Spirit (2 Cor. 4:11; Gal. 5:22-23)
8. To provide opportunities to witness for Christ (1 Pet. 3:15; Phil 1:12)
9. To learn contentment (Phil 4:11).
10. To help others who suffer (2 Cor. 1:3-24)
(over)
11. To rebuke believers guilty of pride and spiritual cowardice (1 Cor. 4:9-16).
12. To demonstrate the power of God in our lives (2 Cor. 11:24-33; John 9:2).
13. To learn obedience to the will of God (Heb. 5:8).
14. To vindicate the character of God before Satan (Job 1:6-12).
15. To vindicate Job before Satan (Job 1:6-12).
16. To instruct the believer in the holiness of God's character (Job 42:5-6).

II. Adjusting To Suffering

A. General

1. Don't jump to hasty conclusions (remember Job's three friends)
2. Don't misapply Scripture.

3. Don't indulge in anger or self-pity
 4. Don't think passivity is patience.
 5. Don't think God is obligated to remove the suffering if you ask Him to.
 6. Don't think pain is alien to the Christian way of life.
- #### B. Specific admonitions from Peter given to suffering saints
1. "Arm yourself" by having the attitude of Christ (1 Pet. 4:1)
 2. Put the suffering in perspective (1 Pet. 4:7)
 3. Utilize your prayer privilege (1 Pet. 4:7)
 4. Demonstrate love for others in times of suffering (1 Pet. 4:8)
 5. Demonstrate hospitality during times of suffering (1 Pet. 4:9)
 6. Benefit the body with your gifts during times of suffering (1 Pet. 4:10-11)
 7. Rejoice in time of suffering (1 Pet. 4:12-13)
 8. Seek to benefit from the time of suffering (1 Pet. 4:15-16).
 9. Seek always to glorify God in your suffering (1 Pet. 4:16).
 10. Commit your soul to God in time of suffering (1 Pet. 4:19).
 11. Seek out help (and be willing to receive help) from the church (1 Pet. 5:1-3)

This material taken (and condensed) from Howard E. Dial, "Sufferology": Counseling Toward Adjustment in Suffering," in *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, vol 3/2, pages 19-24.

