

**What is the point of suffering? Why does God allow it?
"Is anyone among you suffering?
Let him pray..." James 5:13**

2008

2Ti 2:3 As a good soldier of Christ Jesus you must endure your share of suffering.

Being one with Christ (figuratively He is the Head and we are the body) insures we will suffer as Christians. However, some of us suffer because of wrong choices and poor decisions we made. I want to encourage you here. Even if the suffering and pain that you have right now is a result of your own doing, Jesus understands (1Pe 3:17), and promises to comfort you and restore you. We share in the terrible sufferings of Christ, but also in the wonderful comfort, he gives (2Co 1:5). Psalms 139:16 reveals that God foresaw even the disastrous sorrow happening to you and even allowed it to happen. However, we have to wonder-why does He do this?

At times, some of us are so willful and stubborn (like me) that God lets painful circumstances overtake us in order to drive us back to Him. The lessons I learned because of my own willful sins are lessons I have not forgotten. I never want to go back to the pain and loss of 'reaping what I have sown.' Therefore, we have the suffering that comes from our own sin and must often bear the consequences of that sin. However, God is faithful to forgive us when we confess (admit) our sin to Him and turn from it (to repent). The following passages from the Bible confirm this fact. If you will read these and pray for help, God will speak words of comfort to you.

Psa 25:18 See my troubles and misery and forgive my sins.

Psa 32:5 So I confessed my sins and told them all to you. I said, "I'll tell the LORD each one of my sins." Then you forgave me and took away my guilt.

Psa 79:9 Our God, you keep us safe. Now help us! Rescue us. Forgive our sins and bring honor to yourself.

Psa 86:5 You willingly forgive, and your love is always there for those who pray to you.

Other suffering comes because we have joined ourselves to Christ to serve Him and in so doing; we have incurred the wrath of Satan. God allowed His own Son to suffer in order to use the weak things to bring down the strong and He uses suffering to make us like Jesus. He says concerning the calling of Saul (the apostle Paul) in **Act 9:16** For **I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.** To make us like Jesus, God wisely allows us to suffer hardships, losses, sickness, etc. These hard things are like a chisel to our stubborn hearts (I bear marks of the chisel), or they are like the potter's hands to pliable clay for those who listen.

Throughout the New Testament, Paul writes to Christians that suffering produces good character in us. For instance in **Rom 5:3**, “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;” If we will allow pain to run its course and not run from it, medicate it (alcohol-drugs), numb it (with pornography, etc.), then God insures good will come out of our pain and will be the type of strength found in perseverance (endurance). However, is having endurance worth the pain of suffering?

Paul writes in Romans 8:17 “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

I find it hard to have joy when I am suffering pain, even though we are told in James 1:2 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds”, (NIV). Another version renders it-“My friends be glad, even if you have a lot of trouble.” (CEV) Now, if you are like me, when the pain hurts bad, it seems joy has no place in me and I admit, I have never felt joy or gladness when in this kind of pain. I do know from experience that God will work all things for our good (Romans 8:28) so that now, when sorrowful things come, I look at the promises where God has been faithful in the past. Instead of focusing only on the pain-filled circumstance I find myself in, looking at God’s promises helps me get through. Some of my darkest days were those I could only take in one-minute doses.

Finally, we have ways to endure and the promises of blessings when we do endure in and through the pain. In the following verses God tells us the ways to suffer, and that we can expect Him to raise us up. The last verse reminds us that we are not alone.

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

1Pe 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1Pe 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

1Pe 5:9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Stand firm in the pain.

If you cannot stand, kneel.

If you cannot kneel-lay down-rest in place.

Jesus stands watch over you. He will heal and restore you.

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