

God's Comfort During Our Suffering

Introduction

In this life, we will all suffer in one way or another. Suffering may result from something as devastating as losing a loved one or it could come from any number of "trials" that we face every day. The point is that suffering is a difficult and evitable part of being a human being. The goal here is to discuss how we are to understand suffering as believers and how God comforts us during our suffering.

Understanding Our Suffering

1 Peter 1:3-9

What is suffering?

- Webster's dictionary defines suffering as the *state or experience* of pain or distress.
- In Scripture we see that suffering is the result of "all kinds of trials." *1 Peter 1:6-7*
- So we can define suffering as *emotional, mental, or physical pain or distress* that can result from any number of different trials, difficulties, afflictions, hardships, persecutions, etc. *2 Corinthians 1:8-9, James 1:2-4, Romans 5:3, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18*
- What about suffering for the gospel? Suffering persecution for the gospel seems to be an example of one kind of suffering that an individual might endure. The same things that apply to all other types of suffering seem to be applicable here as well. Granted, those that have the opportunity to be persecuted specifically for the gospel are truly blessed. *1 Peter 4:12-19, 1 Thessalonians 3:2-4, Matthew 5:10-12, 1 Peter 3:13-14*

Why do we suffer?

- God uses our suffering to purify and strengthen our faith, for His glory. *1 Peter 1:6-7, John 9:1-3*
- God uses our suffering to develop patience and perseverance in us. *James 1:2-4, James 1:12, Romans 5:3-4*
- God may use our suffering to teach us His truth. *Psalms 119:67-68, 71-72, 75-76*
- God uses our suffering to discipline us toward sanctification. *Hebrews 12:10-11*
- God may use our suffering to show us that His grace is always sufficient. *2 Corinthians 12:7-10, 2 Corinthians 1:8-11*
- God uses our suffering for our good to sanctify us and make us more like Christ. *Romans 8:28-30*

How should we respond to suffering?

- God wants us to be joyful when we suffer because we know that our suffering leads to perseverance and maturity. *Romans 5:3-4, James 1:2-4, James 1:12*
- God wants us to delight in the sufficiency of His grace when we suffer. *Hebrews 4:14-16, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:18*
- God wants us to remember that our sufferings are not worth comparing to the glory to be revealed in us. *Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18*
- God wants us to give praise, glory, and honor to Christ when we suffer; through Him we have an inexpressible and glorious joy. *1 Peter 1:7-8*
- God wants us to trust Him when we suffer and remember that all things are for our good and His purpose. *Ephesians 1:11-12, Romans 15:13*

Understanding God's Comfort

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

When we suffer, we're faced with so many distressing and painful thoughts and emotions. As believers, we know that our God loves and cares for us tremendously, but how does He comfort us when we suffer?

- God can comfort us because He is the source of all comfort. *2 Corinthians 1:3-4*
- God comforts us *through knowing* that there is nothing that can separate us from His love. *Romans 8:31-39*
- God comforts us *through knowing* that His grace is sufficient for our every need. *2 Peter 1:3-4, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Philippians 4:19*
- God comforts us *through knowing* that He directs all things for His purpose and glory even when we don't understand why. *Romans 11:33-36*
- God comforts us *through knowing* that He is unchangeably faithful. *Lamentations 3:19-33, Psalm 89:1-8*
- God comforts us *through knowing* that He will guard our hearts and minds when we struggle with anxiety during suffering. *Philippians 4:6-8, 1 Peter 5:6-7*

God comforts us in so many ways. He is always faithful to care for us when we suffer. God uses the Holy Spirit to comfort us by reminding us of His truth and caring for us spiritually in ways we can't even comprehend. He also uses the body to comfort us through mutual encouragement, love, and support as we go through times of suffering.

Application

- How are you suffering right now?
- What is it that you need to understand about your suffering?
- How have you experienced God's comfort during your suffering?
- How can the body help care for you and all those who are suffering?

Conclusion

We will all deal with suffering throughout our lives. Understanding what Scripture has to say about suffering is vital to our ability to honor our Lord when we suffer. It is also extremely important that we understand how God has said He would comfort us during our suffering. His comfort will give us the strength and grace we need to honor Him and live our lives for His glory no matter what trials or difficulties come our way. Through Him we know that not only are we cared for, but we are also able to care for others during suffering. What a wonderful truth.

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