

People often ask why bad things happen to good people. Suffering may occur as a result of the Fall, poor choices, sin, someone else's sin or simply an unexplained injustice. Suffering is not always a result of sin. It is through suffering that we draw closer to God and seek His will for our life. God may be asking us to repent, grow and/or mature in our walk with Him. We often less rely on God when things are going well. Also, Jesus came to bring peace between believers and God, however, He also came to divide the light from darkness. As a result we may suffer pain as believers who have chosen to follow Christ as our redeemer.

- John 9:1-3 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.
- Luke 21:17-19 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.
- James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.
- Rom 5:3-5 And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- 2 Cor 6:4-5 But in all *things* we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;
- Phil 3:10-11 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.
- Hebrews 2:18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.
- Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Discussion Item 1: *How does God reveal Himself to you during times of suffering?*

Discussion Item 2: *What have you learned from each of your times of suffering?*

Life Application: *Ask God what He wants you to learn during your next time of suffering rather than ask to be freed from the circumstances.*

Helpful Definition:

suffering - To feel pain or distress; sustain loss, injury, harm, or punishment. To tolerate or endure evil, injury, pain, or death. (*Webster*)

Notes:

Proverb 22:3 A prudent *man* foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished.

Psalms 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.