



YOU ASKED FOR IT

Week 2 | How Do I Face Suffering?

| KEY THOUGHTS

- **Everyone faces suffering.**
- All suffering ultimately stems from sin, our desire to live under our own leadership rather than God's.
- There are some kinds of suffering we don't see as evil, but **we're actually willing to endure it in order to gain something we want**, such as...
 - Working extra hours at a job with a boss we don't like in order to provide for our family, or to earn enough money for a particular goal;
 - Enduring difficult physical training to get our bodies into the condition we desire to be in.
- Unintentional suffering differs from the kind we choose in many regards, but **it's predominantly a matter of control**; we resist suffering we didn't expect or agree to.
- Some people in the Bible chose to trust God in their suffering, such as...
 - Joseph in the Old Testament, who understood that all he endured was so God could use him to preserve the lives of countless others;
 - The woman who suffered from a bleeding disorder for 12 years was led to new and eternal life in Jesus Christ as a result of it;
 - **Jesus himself, whose intense suffering on our behalf brought us the greatest good we could ever receive.**
- God, the King, gives purpose and meaning to your suffering, using it for His glory and for our good
- We can't always choose whether or not to endure suffering, nor the intensity of it, nor its duration. **But we can choose to navigate it well by relying on God.**

| SCRIPTURE

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:6-8 (ESV)

You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.

Genesis 50:20 (NLT)

⁸ We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. ⁹ In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (NLT)

| PRACTICAL

- Read the book of Job this week to be reminded of the character and the promises of God.
- When in the midst of suffering...
 - Think of it not as a punishment from God, but as a gracious invitation to trust Him;
 - Know that God doesn't intend for me to suffer alone; He's inviting me rely on Him, and also on other people;
 - Ask God to use your suffering to minister to others;
 - Realize that you can't out-suffer God, who endured everything we go through, and far more.
- When others are suffering...
 - Pray that God would relieve their pain; and also
 - Pray for God to lead them to trust in Him;
 - Be there for them; they don't need your suggestions, just your presence to remind them they're not alone.

| REFLECT

- When things don't go the way you'd like, do you respond with anger? Bitterness? Resentment? Have you found that to be helpful, or does it just increase the frustration?
- What might happen if you made the intentional decision to trust God in your suffering instead of trying to escape it?
- Consider that the concept of God using suffering to bring us to a greater good is the very essence of the gospel.
- The story of Job, like that of the gospel, shows that we only enter into the goodness God wants to give us through humble repentance...
 - of our need to be in control;
 - of desiring to know every step of the path before us;
 - of thinking we can go it alone.
- There is no resurrection without first enduring death; and death can only come through suffering.

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