



1. The Problem of Suffering and the Bible's Answer

The wisdom of God and a call to trust

Job on suffering:

- Suffering is real
- God is sovereign over suffering
- Our job is not to understand but to trust

Progression through Scripture:

Exodus→Naomi→Habakkuk→Cross→End of Faith

2. God's Revealed Purposes for Suffering

How God can use suffering for our good and his glory

God's revealed purposes as *evidence* for faith, not *substitute* for faith. Heb 11:6

- Grow us in holiness. Ps 119:67
- Build perseverance. Rom 5:3
- Teach us his word. Ps 119:71
- Encourage others. 2 Cor 1:3-4
- Etc.
- Glorify God. Phil 3:7-8

3. The Future of Suffering

The importance of heaven and hell for the suffering

- Hell guarantees justice; it is what we deserve. Rom 12:19
- Heaven
 - Suffering makes us fit for heaven. 2 Cor 4:16-18
 - In heaven God will remake our bodies. Phil 3:20ff
 - In heaven our treasure is visible

More questions?

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4. God's Grief Over Suffering

The empathy of a suffering God

Jesus' understanding of temptation helps us trust him when we don't understand. Heb 4:14-16; Ps 56:8

Jesus' suffering is an example for us. 1 Pe 2:20-24

5. Unbiblical Reactions to Suffering

Temptations to find hope in what is passing away

The stiff upper lip: God doesn't exist (1 Pe 5:6-7)

Escape: running to false Gods (1 Cor 7:29-31)

I deserve better: God rewards the righteous (1 Pe 4:12-13)

Fear: God can't help it (Psalm 73)

God's got it out for me: he's not good (Heb 12:5-8)

6. Fighting for Faith, Part 1

Struggling for faith in God's sovereignty and goodness

Read the Bible (protect against rote duty, busyness, exhaustion)

Pray the Bible (ACTS for the suffering; praying the Psalms)

Remember the Bible (memorize, preach to yourself)

Sing the Bible (the importance of engaging our affections)

7. Fighting for Faith, Part 2

Helping others fight for faith in the local church

Real encouragement = fighting for faith (Heb 3:13, Eph 4:7ff)

Different encouragement for different situations (Thes 5:14)

Our ministry:

- Of God's word (Rom 10:17)
 - o Common themes: God uses suffering for our good; God is in control, deliberate, careful; this world is passing away.
- Of prayer (1 John 5:14)

8. Sharing Their Burdens

A biblical perspective on the relief of physical suffering

Love is the posture of a Christian (Luke 10:25ff)

Moral proximity (1 John 3:17 v. 2 Cor. 8-9)

The priority of need (1 Cor 15:3)

9. Suffering for the Gospel

Biblical wisdom for the persecuted

Persecution is a normal part of following Jesus (2 Tim 3:12)

Persecution glorifies God (Col 1:24)

Rejoice because:

- Your reward is great (Phil 2:12)
- Your assurance is great (1 Pe 1:6-7)
- Christ has loved you (Rom 8:31-32)

10. Suffering as Witness

Making the most of your suffering for the glory of God

More glory in redemption than in creation.

Suffering proclaims the gospel

So we...

- Talk honestly about our faith, struggles, and hope.
- Submit to authority in a way that shows our trust in God.

11. Applying the Framework

A case study in fighting for faith

12. The Secret of Contentment

Finding joy in Christ in any and every situation

Contentment is having sufficiency independent of circumstances or conditions or surroundings. It is an expression of being satisfied.

We find it through experience, obedience, listening to truth, and finding satisfaction in Christ.