



Does God REALLY Want Me to Suffer?

Matthew 11:28: (NASB) *Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*



Let's set the record straight right from the start. As Christians, God does NOT want us to suffer! Having said that, we know He does want us to learn and grow and mature. This means He will permit us to suffer and will use that suffering as a tool to serve our eternal welfare. What about the rest of the suffering experienced by everyone else? The answer is essentially the same - suffering is part of the permission of evil, which will be an eternal lesson for all.

While these are good lessons, how do we cope with our individual suffering here and now? We want to talk about two groups of people who are suffering: those who may know of and appreciate Jesus, and those who have dedicated themselves to follow him as his disciples.

In the first half of this podcast, we want to acknowledge and address those who may know of and appreciate Jesus. There are countless individuals in this situation who are hurting. They are suffering trauma, sickness, hardship and loss. Many feel that they have no answers and no hope. While we do not have the power to heal your hurts, we do have the power to encourage you. We do have the power to give you the gift we have been given - that is the comfort of God's plan! Knowing there is something better coming soon gives us hope and meaning to our suffering.

We begin with a basic principle of the human condition:

SUFFERING HURTS! WHEN I AM SUFFERING, I LOOK FOR RELIEF!

**WHEN I LOOK AT MY
SUFFERING,
WHAT DO I SEE AND WHAT DO I WANT?**

Do I see something overwhelming and untenable or something I can learn to deal with?

God sent Jesus to be the savior of the world:

1 John 4:14: (NASB) *We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the son to be the savior of the world.*

Certainly, Jesus, as the savior of the world, has the power to help. But we live in an age where divine healing is not a part of faith. Where does that leave us?



The how and why of early Christian healing and its place today



To learn about what we can see and hope for, let's take the principles of the following account.

The following account is about Bartimaeus, who suffered with blindness:

Mark 10:46-52: (NASB) ⁴⁶...as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! ⁴⁸Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me!

Bartimaeus did not care about the perceived need for quiet - his suffering was bigger than the reactions of those who still possessed what he had lost. His suffering was big enough to cry out.

Son of David - this man is acknowledging that Jesus is the promised Messiah. He believes in Jesus.

⁴⁹And Jesus stopped and said, Call him here. So they called the blind man, saying to him, Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you. ⁵⁰Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹And answering him, Jesus said, what do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!

Bartimaeus had lost his eyesight. He knew all that he was missing because he once could see, but now he could not. He longed for life to simply be normal again.

What do you want me to do for you - this question is profound. Jesus knew exactly what the issue was. Identifying him as the son of Timaeus means *everyone* knew his issue. He was "that blind guy" who always sat there. But Jesus asks this question of all of us. What are WE looking to get out of our Christian faith? To answer this we need two things:

1. Knowledge of what actually is available to us. (Does Christianity promise to physically heal us? No. Will it make us rich? No.)
2. Honest self-examination.

Throwing aside his cloak - this is an odd detail. He could have walked to Jesus with his coat on. Apparently if a person in Jesus' day wanted to be a beggar, he had to go to the authorities and prove he was really disabled and not just lazy. He would be licensed and could make a living by begging. Tradition has it that the license given to indicate their authenticity was an official uniform: a garment was issued to identify him as a licensed beggar. This garment was valuable. People would not be inclined to donate to an unauthorized beggar so as not to encourage laziness. If you are blind in a crowd, and you cast off your valuable coat and walk to a different place, you probably are not going to get that coat back. In this act, Bartimaeus was saying, "Jesus is calling me - I do not need this anymore. He will supply my needs." What faith!



His answer to Jesus' wide-open question was focused on simply living normally:

⁵²And Jesus said to him, Go; your faith has made you well. Immediately he regained his sight and began following him on the road.

Bartimaeus was made whole and followed Jesus! We see him asking, receiving and following. Personalizing this, the main point is somebody bigger than me (Jesus) knows about my sufferings and cares about me.

Because we do not live in a time of healing, what would this mean for us? For those of us who may know of or appreciate Jesus, there are strong lessons to contemplate:

When I look at my suffering, what do I see and what do I want? Let's change these questions to: WHAT CAN I SEE? WHAT CAN I HAVE?



- Jesus is approachable – it is a matter of having enough faith to believe it.
- We need to be clear with our needs and humble enough to ask for help.
- While we will not be physically healed, we can be given sight. This insight can enable us to see our suffering differently.
- Being blessed by Jesus should trigger a response of deeper faith and action.
- Our faith should help us spiritually "see" more than others do.

While suffering may not go away, we can make a major difference with it by what we look for in the context of my suffering - what can I see? What can I have?

Are we saying that every time we ask Jesus for something in sincerity, he will give it to us?

Not at all! What we are saying is Jesus cares about the human race that he redeemed. While all the healing he did as a man walking the earth was a preview of the next age, it showed us how the nature of Jesus was - and is - to be attentive and to alleviate hardship in whatever ways the plan of God allows.

God's plan allowed for a time of physical healing during the time of Jesus and the apostles, but that is not the case today. The "healing" from our suffering comes to us in a different way, in helping us cope with what we are dealing with.

Another basic principle of the human condition:





When I look to God and Jesus in my suffering, what do I hope for?

Do I settle into hoping and wishing for a miracle, or do I hope to simply find some relief?

SO...

My suffering is not going to go away...?
You mean I will have to work at it...?
And I am just going to have to see it differently? YES!

Those who are going through tremendous suffering might be skeptical of how just “seeing things differently” will help. We need to be able to put our suffering into a godly perspective. We will develop this further.

Jesus had just proclaimed that Tyre, Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah would have a *more tolerable* time on Judgment Day than some cities where he preached.

He then says this - a precursor to Jesus giving rest:

Matthew 11:25-26: (NASB) ²⁵*At that time Jesus said, I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.* ²⁶*Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.*

Jesus is saying that those who are honest and humble are capable of seeing what the proud and powerful cannot. Most of us going through horrible suffering have the humility of saying, “I do not know what to do anymore. This is beyond me. This is too big for me.” This is a good place from which to develop humility. Through our humility we can begin to listen.

Next, Jesus puts all things relating to God and His plan in perspective:

Matthew 11:27: (NASB) ²⁷*All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the son, and anyone to whom the son wills to reveal Him.*

(Easy-to-Read Version for the last part) *...and the only people who will know about the Father are those the son chooses to tell.*

Does this mean Jesus randomly may or may not choose to share the Father with us? No, remember the context of the previous text - *the wise and intelligent* (meaning the arrogant and people in power) turn off the opportunities. He will go to those who are humble and willing to listen. If we are humble and going through difficulty, maybe we have ears that will hear.



Because Jesus has just proclaimed the pathway to God is through him, he now invites any who have hardship in their lives to come to him.



The next verses (Matthew 11:28,29) speak of the drawing process.

First is the broad invitation from Jesus to those who would listen, to come to him (as described in verse 27):

Matthew 11:28: (NASB) *Come to me, all who are **weary** <2872> and **heavy-laden** <5412>, and I will give you **rest** <373>.*

Weary: Strongs #2872 *kopiaō*; to feel fatigue; by implication, to work hard

This word has a sense of exhaustion, exasperation. “I am just done. It is too much for me.” For those of us who feel this way and appreciate Jesus, he might be talking to us. Are we willing to listen?

Heavy-laden: Strongs #5412 *phortizo*; to load up (properly, as a vessel or animal), i.e. (figuratively) to overburden with ceremony (or spiritual anxiety)

This gives a sense of being completely worn out. The overloading has taken the energy out of our life. For those of us experiencing unbearable suffering and sorrow, is this not how we feel? “I can no longer cope.” Jesus is inviting those who are exhausted and completely overburdened by the weight of their experiences to come to him for rest.

Rest: Strongs #373 *anapauō*; to repose (literally or figuratively [be exempt], remain); by implication, to refresh

Greek-English Lexicon: 1) to cause or permit one to cease from any movement or labour in order to recover and collect his strength

In other words, the Greek word for *rest* here means take a breath, take a break and get back to it! The idea of rest does not mean going to sleep for three weeks. It is to give a break from the overwhelming fatigue and weight of your experience so that you can reorganize and get back to dealing with the circumstances.

The rest is not magical; it is practical. Jesus is here to give this to us.

Paraphrasing Matthew 11:28: If you are deeply fatigued and overburdened with many cares, I will help you to stop, collect your strength and then get back to dealing with what you have to deal with.

This promised rest does not solve the issue; it gives a way to walk through it. What can I see? What can I have? What do I hope for in this? For those who know or appreciate Jesus, this is a comforting invitation. Focusing on Jesus and his message can help us recover our strength to fight another day!

A broad invitation by Jesus to all those who will listen →

Matthew 11:28:
Come to me,
all who are weary and heavy-laden,
and I will give you rest.

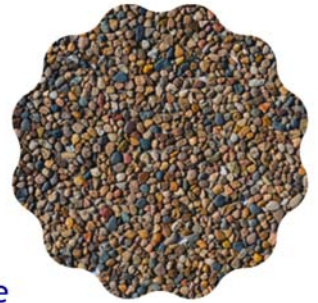
↖ The type of rest offered is a break to breathe, recover and get back to work



It is a matter of perspective. Lisa writes on our Facebook page:

An analogy I use is a pebble. The closer you bring it to your eye, the bigger it becomes.

That same pebble, if it is in your driveway, is so small and insignificant. It depends on how you look at things.



We are not calling the trials and sufferings of someone overburdened a “pebble.” When we hold something so close to our face, it blocks our ability to see other things.



We want to make sure we are holding our suffering in a place where Jesus can also be seen.

What is the bottom-line message of Jesus for all of humanity? Relief from suffering is coming but it comes in stages:

First is waiting for the plan to unfold:

Romans 8:19-22: (NASB) ¹⁹For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

The creation - everybody, including those who might be just getting acquainted with Jesus.

Subject to futility - it is no use! Humanity is stuck in this futile environment, but it is a temporary state. The entirety of mankind will be set free from the slavery of corruption created by Satan.

Into the freedom of the glory of the children of God - here is the promise of relief in the future.

We receive heartbreaking stories of suffering from those who write to us - sometimes they are pages and pages long involving murder, sickness, abuse, jail, mental illness, job loss. Sometimes it is a consequence of bad choices people make and other times it is through no fault of their own. We answer all of them, trying to provide an encouraging message about God’s coming kingdom. *The whole creation groans* - there is not even a name for this degree of suffering in every country that delights Satan. It is just a collective groan.

Complete relief might NOT come in this life, and we cannot wave a Bible three times and poof - everyone is healed! BUT WE CAN:

- focus on the many blessings we have
- seek help from our community or church
- make righteous choices
- keep good company
- keep our minds and bodies healthy



TO:

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- listen to podcasts from Christian Questions! Pick one about a person in the Bible and learn from how they handled overwhelming circumstances
- study what Jesus stands for, what he teaches and how it applies to you

In Episode 1173, we discussed five steps to take:

1. prayer
2. study and meditation
3. helping others
4. individual fellowship and co-laboring
5. fellowship with the body of Christ.



Discovering five practical and scriptural ways to combat loneliness

This is a good episode to review because the practical details we discussed about these steps will work in many situations - not just loneliness.

We can ask for:



Our suffering is real but needs context. It needs to be looked at through the eyes that can see a spiritual end result. This is all temporary.



In my own trials and traumas of life when bad things have happened, I said: Just for today, "I will." I will see things differently. I will look for God's blessing. Just for today, I will appreciate God's big plan. Just for today, I am going to try to get out of myself and bless someone else. Just for today. And what happens tomorrow? I say, just for today. Maybe this is a way we can address our suffering, by the grace of God and Jesus.

Next are the eternal results of the sacrifice of Jesus:

Revelation 21:4: (KJV) *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

Hold onto hope for the future, as described in this text. Just for today, work through what we are dealing with.



When I look to God and Jesus in my suffering,
what do I hope for?

God and Jesus What can I focus my expectation on?

*For anyone who is willing to have even a small measure of faith,
the Gospel provides both short-term and long-term relief.*

*Short-term relief because it gives us an unimaginable world
to look forward to and long-term relief because it promises
to destroy all suffering.*

There is a big-picture comfort that comes from the word of God through Christ. The question is, am I willing to look for it, to see it and to live with it in my daily sight?

Even a beginner's faith in Jesus can help us refocus how we see and what we expect from our suffering.

**Let's shift gears. How do true disciples of Jesus
manage their suffering? Is it any different?**

We might say that suffering for one person is the same as suffering for another, but that would not tell the whole story. We know ALL suffering will eventually teach us the sinfulness of sin. However, the suffering of those who are called by God to follow Jesus has a deeper, more profound meaning.



**Just because we are followers of Jesus does not mean
we can get what we want when we want it.**

Remember Jesus' question to Bartimaeus - *What do you want me to do for you?*

Shortly before that event, Jesus asked the exact same question of two apostles:

Mark 10:35-38: (NASB) ³⁵James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, *Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.* ³⁶And he said to them, *what do you want me to do for you?* ³⁷They said to him, *Grant that we may sit, one on your right and one on your left, in your glory.* ³⁸But Jesus said to them, *you do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?*

Same question - two entirely different circumstances. Here, James and John want Jesus to promise them a special place in glory. They state they want him to do for them whatever they ask. This sounds presumptuous, right? However, they loved Jesus and really wanted to sit right up next to him in his glory. Jesus then asks, as he would later ask Bartimaeus, *What do you want me to do for you?* They wanted to be allowed to sit on his right and left in heaven. Jesus tells them they are asking beyond their capacity and implies that earning the positions they seek would cost them dearly. With Bartimaeus, the issue was to simply relieve suffering. A great difference exists in these two answers.



James and John seem focused on what they want Jesus to do for them:

Mark 10:39-40: (NASB) ³⁹*They said to him, We are able.*

They are adamant - *We can do this!* This is a wonderful enthusiasm but not a good understanding.

And Jesus said to them, the cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. ⁴⁰But to sit on my right or on my left, this is not mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.

Following him could bring even more suffering!

Jesus is alluding to what we discussed earlier in this segment, that as a follower of Christ, our sufferings have a more profound meaning. Jesus is also plainly saying: To follow me is to invite suffering into your life! Perhaps Jesus asked Bartimaeus the exact question he asked James and John to show them the humility of Bartimaeus' response. James and John had asked for something big and powerful - for a position of significant status. Bartimaeus asked simply and humbly for his sight. *Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*

Jesus clearly suffered, resulting in providing for us the way to life:

Hebrews 5:8-9: (NASB) ⁸*Although he was a son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered. ⁹And having been made perfect, he became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation,*

Please see the Bonus Material for an article called *Unbearable Sorrow*.

Our sister in Christ who lost her 5-year-old son in a farming accident wrote this article about dealing with her grief. It provides us with how she was even able to take another breath let alone turn closer to God.



Jeff wrote us and said he was baptized as a Christian in 2016 but jumped out of a second-story window when he went off his medication, breaking his back and ankle. He ended up homeless and in jail, among other things, and writes in part: *I hate my life with a passion and want to be off this earth. I thought my life would improve as a Christian; it sent me to hell on earth.*

We get a lot of mail from people who cannot understand why becoming a Christian did not solve all their problems, or make them rich or healthy or popular. In general, people of faith DO seem happier...? How is that?

Generally, Christians suffer as much, and sometimes more, than others. However, a mature Christian often copes with the suffering, so we are not as aware of it. These Christians come to Jesus with the understanding that he will give them rest. They recognize God's providence working with them, and they rely on His spirit to guide them through their experiences. As a result, they already have a path to follow to help work through really hard, heavy and overwhelming experiences. It may not be apparent to an outsider that they are dealing with deep suffering, but what *is* evident is their joy in their Lord.



That is what we want to strive towards - not to ask that our sufferings be removed, but to ask for the strength to walk whatever the path is that we need to navigate through that suffering. If we have the mindset that this experience is God's *permitted overruling* for us to help us develop into the best representation of Him - it becomes easier to focus on what we need to learn in this experience.



Let's get back to our verses in Matthew 11. Remember in the last segment, we said verse 28 was a general invitation to any who are weary and over-burdened to find a way to regain their strength in Jesus. This is a broad invitation intending to draw people towards Jesus, but they need to be humble enough to accept it.

Verses 29-30 go a step further:

Matthew 11:29-30: (NASB) ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find *rest* <372> for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Instead of just coming to Jesus, he now invites us to *work* with him. Remember, the *rest* in verse 27 was:

Rest: Strongs #373 *anapauo*; (reflexively) to repose (literally or figuratively [be exempt], remain); by implication, to refresh

Greek-English Lexicon: 1) to cause or permit one to cease from any movement or labour in order to recover and collect his strength

There is a big difference between *coming to* Jesus and *working with* him. The rest promised here is different from the rest promised in the previous verse. It seems deeper:

Rest: Strongs #372 *anapausis*; intermission; by implication, recreation: intermission, cessation of any motion, business or labour

Here is a different kind of rest. Cessation means a full stop.

For those whom the Father has called, the invitation to share in the sufferings of Jesus under the yoke of discipleship

Matthew 11:29-30:

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

The type of rest offered is a cessation (a full stop)

from labor



The previous rest was *“take a breath, pause, recover yourself so you can get back to dealing with the problem.”* This rest is *“take an intermission; stop.”*

Matthew 11:28:

Come to me,
all who are weary and heavy-laden,
and I will give you rest.

A different kind of offer

A broad invitation by
Jesus to all those
who will listen

A different kind of rest

The type of rest offered is
a break to breathe,
recover and get back to work

Matthew 11:29-30:

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
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The type of rest offered
is a cessation (a full stop)
from labor

Wait, did we not say that the life of a Christian is full of suffering and really hard? Yes, so how do we stop in the middle of all this? Let’s look at the following beautiful verses.

Jesus is quoting from the book of Jeremiah:

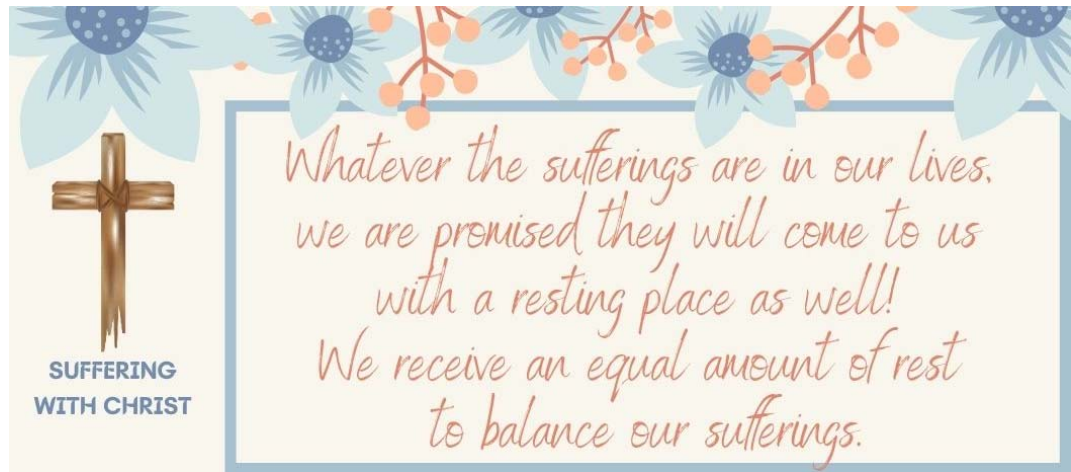
Jeremiah 6:16: (NASB) *Thus says the LORD, Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; and you will find rest <4771> (a resting place) for your souls. But they said, we will not walk in it.*

Coming to Jesus is good, but becoming a follower and laborer with him opens up a new life! This life, a life of always following God’s righteousness, has rest built into it. *The ancient paths* - following God’s righteousness. Search out *where the good way is*, and there is where we should walk. If we do, we will find a resting place. Jesus quotes this verse to tell us that by walking with God through Christ as true Christians, there is a resting place *for our souls while we walk*. Even if we suffer, we have that overwhelming presence of God that helps us cope, and therefore, gives us *rest*.



The Apostle Paul calls Jehovah our *God of all comfort:*

2 Corinthians 1:3-5: (NASB) *³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.*



Discipleship does not mean life is easier, but it does mean life can have powerful tools such as built-in rest to manage the difficulty!

We just said discipleship is a life of testing and suffering and a life of rest. How can both be true?

Both are true but they obviously need to be explained. The first thing to remember is that the privilege of discipleship brings God's providence and His holy spirit into your everyday activities. Discipleship is also focused on our growing into the obedience and maturity that heaven requires. Going to heaven is not a free pass; it requires obedience, maturity and eternal loyalty.

Let's dig deeper into the Matthew 11 Scriptures we have been talking about:

Matthew 11:29-30: (NASB) ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find *rest* <372> for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is *easy* <5543> and my burden is *light* <1645>.

HOW DOES SUFFERING FIT IN WITH "MY YOKE IS EASY"?

Easy: Strongs #5543 *chrestos*; employed, i.e. (by implication) useful (in manner or morals)

Greek-English Lexicon: 1) fit, fit for use, useful 1a) virtuous, good 2) manageable

Jesus is saying: Work with me and be productive. When an ox is yoked with another (a yoke-fellow), they are working together to move something, to be more productive than working alone. Jesus asks us to work with him and lead a productive life.

On top of the suffering from personal trials, we also have the suffering of public opinion and our reputations. Jesus suffered this, and we will too.

To be reproached may be one of the hardest tests of faith - after all, it is our reputation being questioned:

Matthew 5:11: (KJV) Blessed are ye, when men shall *revile* <3679> you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Revile: Strongs #3679 *oneidezō*; to defame, i.e., rail at, chide, taunt



When we stand up for the higher principles of Christ, we should expect taunting.

For a true Christian, a disciple of Jesus, our suffering has deep and profound meaning and a very important place in our lives.

How is this easy?

1 Peter 4:12-16: (NASB) ¹²*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*

But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing - Jesus stood out in a crowd no matter where he went. He did not necessarily seek this attention, but he was different. He spoke differently, acted differently, and he had a different mission. We, also, should stand out in a crowd - not because we seek attention, but because we are different. If we do not stand out in the crowd, we should ask ourselves why we are fitting in so nicely.

¹⁴*If you are reviled <3679> for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

Being reviled is “easy” because handling this kind of persecution is productive. Remember, *easy* can mean “manageable” or “useful.” It is useful because it will ultimately bring glory to God two ways:

- 1 It challenges us to be spiritually-minded, to be vessels of God’s glory by maturing through the spirit.
- 2 It will serve as a GREAT witness of standing for that which is right when the world goes through their time of crisis in the Day (period of time) of Judgment.

If we are willing to be reviled, taunted, chided and looked down upon because we stand up for righteous principles, it shows that we think our relationship with God is worth going through this for. This is a *productive* stance. We also have to remember that when we are sharing the yoke with Jesus, he is right there with us as we go through this persecution because he went through it first.

HOW DOES SUFFERING FIT IN WITH "MY BURDEN IS LIGHT"?

Burden: Strongs #5413 *phortion*; an invoice (as part of freight), i.e. (figuratively) a task or service



Think of a truck carrying cargo. The invoice tells us what freight is on the truck. What Jesus has assigned us to carry is known by him and will be *light*. Following Jesus, being yoked with him, means we have something very specific assigned to us.



Light: Strongs #1645 *elaphros*; light, i.e., easy

We will not be given two truckloads full if we only have one truck!

We can handle it because Jesus said we could. He is aware of the burden. Contrary to being *heavy-laden*, Jesus will give us only what we will unequivocally be able to carry.

In the middle of trauma, it may seem that we just cannot carry this load. Somehow, by God's grace, the next day comes and we can move forward one more day. When we look back on the experience, we see that we actually were able to carry a bigger burden than we thought. Jesus does not let us have more than we can handle. His *yoke is easy* (productive) and his *burden* (what is assigned to us) is manageable.

Even if those around us do not defame or taunt us, they will put pressure on us to compromise our Christianity. This is an ever-present battle on top of whatever other issues we may be dealing with.

The crowd tried to keep Bartimaeus quiet - to intimidate him to suffer in silence, making him feel unworthy of attention from Jesus. He professed his faith in a hostile atmosphere! Are we quiet with our faith because we are embarrassed about making a big deal about what we believe or we don't want to draw attention to ourselves "in that way"? This is magnified if we are being persecuted by our government as is the case for some of our listeners around the world.

The example of Bartimaeus is good. The people around him kept telling him to be quiet. But Bartimaeus had an issue and he was not afraid to reach out to the Messiah. Of course, once Jesus called to him, the crowd jumped on board, encouraging him to come forward! Suddenly he was the popular one. But this was a false, self-seeking turn around.

This helps us understand this kind of pressure:

John 16:33: (KJV) *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

Tribulation: Strongs #2347 *thlipsis*; pressure (literally or figuratively)

The whole discipleship pathway of Jesus is about drinking from that *cup of suffering* we talked about earlier. Jesus felt this "pressure" throughout his life and he overcame it. With his help, we can overcome as well.

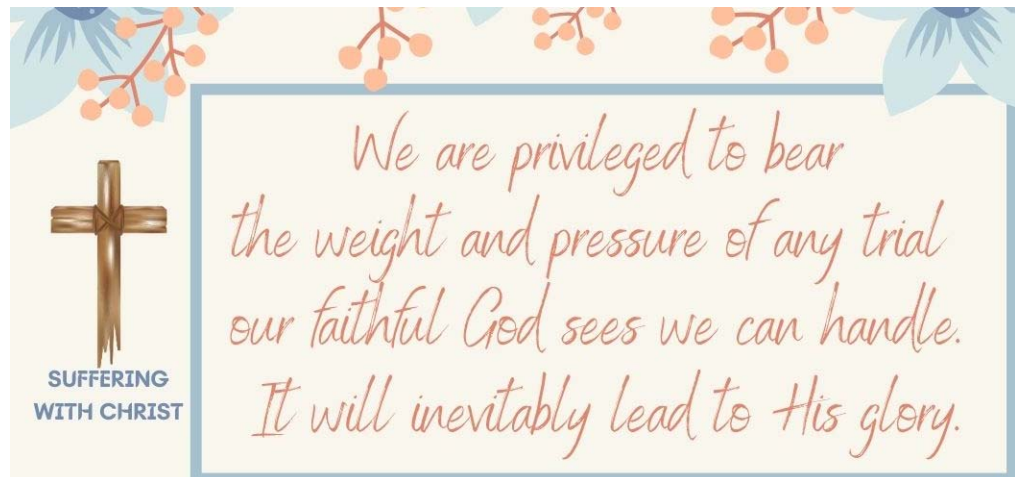
Some might feel that God wants us to suffer. But suffering was never in the plan of God for man. It came about because Satan interfered with the intent of God and brought upon man the curse of sin and death. People suffering greatly sometimes curse God for their predicament. Really, the curse should be against Satan and the evil he brings upon us. God uses the natural consequence of disobedience to build character and to prove eternal loyalty to Him.



When we struggle with wondering if God wants us to suffer, it might help to think of a surgeon removing a tumor from a patient. He does not delight in causing pain or leaving a nasty scar. The purpose of the surgeon is for his patient to be healed. He tells the patient that he has to cut him open to remove the tumor, even knowing the pain he will cause. The pain and long rehabilitation are needed to effect healing.

God does not want us to feel the pain of the presence of Satan, the tumor. He wants it permanently out of the human race. To accomplish this might require pain and suffering, but there is a reason for it. For the followers of Jesus, we have to deal with the suffering by learning the lessons it brings now. For the “everybody else,” these lessons learned under Satan’s reign of sin and death will be realized in God’s kingdom when Satan and his influence have been excised from mankind.

Acts 14:22: (KJV) *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much **tribulation** <2347> enter into the kingdom of God.*



One way or another, our suffering now will later lead to the glory of God. It is to our benefit that we learn the lessons now. Let’s look at suffering through the eyes of Jesus and the far-reaching plan of God instead.

As Christians, we have productive personal reasons to suffer:

Romans 8:16-17: (Rotherham) ¹⁶*The spirit itself, beareth witness together with our spirit that we are children of God; ¹⁷And, if children, heirs also -heirs, indeed, of God, but co-heirs with Christ, - if, at least, we are suffering together, in order that we may also be glorified together.*

Heirs... of God, co-heirs with Christ. Such a promise! We are suffering together, in order that we may also be glorified together. It is worth going through whatever God sees that we can handle to realize this incredible blessing.

We will NOT be tested beyond our capacity:

1 Corinthians 10:13: (NASB) *No temptation (meaning “putting to the proof,” or test) has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*



Our sufferings, which are *common to man*, are tests God allows. However, we are promised He will never allow them to overwhelm us if we keep our focus on Him and on His mission.

The result? A *tested faith* that is more valuable than gold, which brings inner peace, direction and rest:

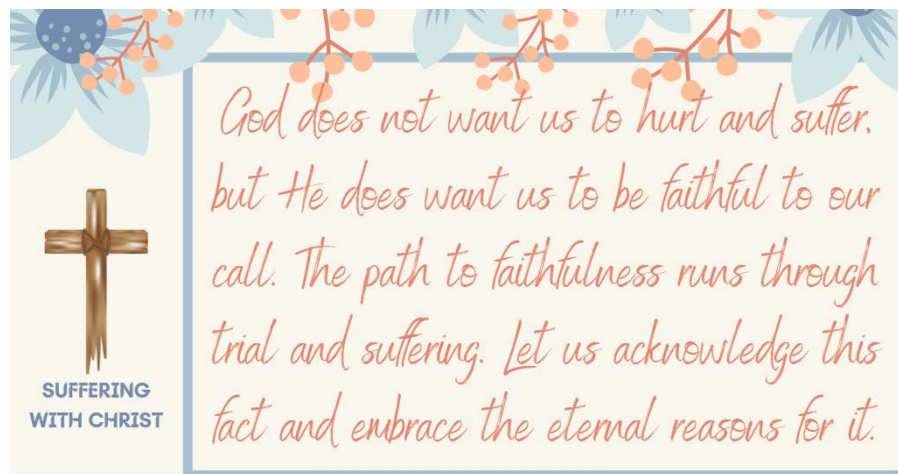
1 Peter 1:4-7: (NASB) *⁴to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

This testing, *the proof of your faith, is more precious than gold!* It has incredible power in our lives.

This testing creates and polishes us:

1 Peter 2:9: (NASB) *You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

Once we have the gospel, what do we do next? We cannot keep it to ourselves. We want to reach out to those who are suffering, and like Bartimaeus, come *out of darkness into His marvelous light.*



Our suffering has eternal reasons. If you are just getting acquainted with Christianity and going through difficult sufferings, there is good news. Jesus died for you, too, and Jesus can give you rest if you choose to see your suffering through different eyes. Approach each day, one at a time, and think that by God's will, you can do this. This experience is building a stronger, better character within you.

For those who are already dedicated Christians, our suffering has a deeper, more profound meaning. This suffering is there *specifically* to make us stronger in Christ. It is allowed specifically by God to prove that we will be loyal to Him forever, no matter what happens to us in this life.

All suffering will be eliminated in the plan of God. Give it time, let God's plan unfold and watch how these things change. Let suffering be a tool in your life!

*So, Does God really want me to suffer?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

Bonus Material and Study Questions



Join us next week for our podcast on May 10, 2021
Ep. 1177: Is It Still Stealing If I Deserve It?

Don't think you're on the right road just because it's a well-beaten path.
– *Anonymous*

An exhaustive word study of the key words in Matthew 11:28-29 regarding *labor*, *being heavy-laden* and *rest*:

Labor/weary: Strongs #2872 *kopiaō*; to feel fatigue; by implication, to work hard

The King James Version translates this as “labour” 16 times, “bestow labour” three times, “toil” three times, “be wearied” once

Greek English Lexicon: 1) to grow weary, tired, exhausted (with toil or burdens or grief)
2) to labour with wearisome effort, to toil 2a) of bodily labour

All uses:

Matthew 6:28: (KJV) *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they **toil <2872>** not, neither do they spin:*

Matthew 11:28: (KJV) *Come unto me, all ye that **labour <2872>** and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Luke 5:5: (KJV) *And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have **toiled <2872>** all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.*

Luke 12:27: (KJV) *Consider the lilies how they grow: they **toil <2872>** not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

John 4:6: (KJV) *Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being **wearied <2872>** with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.*

John 4:38: (KJV) *I sent you to reap that whereon ye **bestowed <2872>** no **labour <2872>**: other men **laboured <2872>**, and ye are entered into their labours.*

Acts 20:35: (KJV) *I have shewed you all things, how that so **labouring <2872>** ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

Romans 16:6: (KJV) *Greet Mary, who **bestowed <2872>** much **labour <2872>** on us.*



Romans 16:12: (KJV) *Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour <2872> in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured <2872> much in the Lord.*

1 Corinthians 4:12: (KJV) *And labour <2872>, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:*

1 Corinthians 15:10: (KJV) *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured <2872> more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

1 Corinthians 16:16: (KJV) *That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth <2872>.*

Galatians 4:11: (KJV) *I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed <2872> upon you labour <2872> in vain.*

Ephesians 4:28: (KJV) *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour <2872>, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

Philippians 2:16: (KJV) *Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured <2872> in vain.*

Colossians 1:29: (KJV) *Whereunto I also labour <2872>, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

1Thessalonians 5:12: (KJV) *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour <2872> among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;*

1 Timothy 4:10: (KJV) *For therefore we both labour <2872> and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men...*

Heavy laden: Strongs #5412 *phortizo*; to load up (properly, as a vessel or animal), i.e. (figuratively) to overburden with ceremony (or spiritual anxiety): The King James Version translates this as “be heavy-laden,” “lade”

Greek English Lexicon: 1) to place a burden upon, to load
2) metaphorically, to load one with a burden (of rites and unwarranted precepts)

The only other use:

Luke 11:46: (KJV) *And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade <5412> men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.*

I will give you rest <373>

Rest: Strongs #373 *anapauo*; (reflexively) to repose (literally or figuratively [be exempt], remain); by implication, to refresh

The King James Version translates this as “rest” four times, “refresh” four times, “take rest” two times, “give rest” and “take ease” once

Greek English Lexicon: 1) to cause or permit one to cease from any movement or labour in order to recover and collect his strength 2) to give rest, refresh, to give one’s self rest, take rest 3) to keep quiet, of calm and patient expectation

All uses:

Matthew 11:28: (KJV) *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest <373>.*

Matthew 26:45: (KJV) *...take your rest <373>: behold, the hour is at hand, and the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*



Mark 6:31: (KJV) *And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest <373> a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.*

Mark 14:41: (KJV) *And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest <373>: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

Luke 12:19: (KJV) *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease <373>, eat, drink, and be merry.*

1 Corinthians 16:18: (KJV) *For they have refreshed <373> my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.*

2 Corinthians 7:13: (KJV) *Therefore, we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed <373> by you all.*

Philemon 1:7: (KJV) *For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed <373> by thee, brother.*

Philemon 1:20: (KJV) *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh <373> my bowels in the Lord.*

1 Peter 4:14: (KJV) *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth <373> upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*

Revelation 6:11: (KJV) *And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest <373> yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

Revelation 14:13: (KJV) *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest <373> from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

Rest for your soul: Strongs #372 anapausis; intermission; by implication, recreation

**Greek English Lexicon: 1) intermission, cessation of any motion, business or labour
2) rest, recreation**

All uses:

Matthew 11:29: (KJV) *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest <372> unto your souls.*

Matthew 12:43: (KJV) *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest <372>, and findeth none.*

Luke 11:24: (KJV) *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest <372>; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.*

Revelation 4:8: (KJV) *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest <372> not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

Revelation 14:11: (KJV) *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest <372> day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*



Rejoicing with Unbearable Sorrow

(Source: Herald Magazine November/December 2017, Volume 99, Number 6, heraldmag.org) *The following article is based on a personal testimony written by a mother who lost her young son in a tragic accident. By Rachel Kraynick*

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted (Matthew 5:4).

We all face hardship, challenges, and difficulties at some point in our lives. Some have more difficult trials than others. I am no different than anyone else. And to be quite honest, God never promised a life free from pain, hardship or trouble. Even Job, who was considered a man “blameless and upright, one who revered God and avoided evil,” was subject to unimaginable loss and suffering.

I, too, have experienced a hurt that is so deep - so great - that I struggle to find the words to describe it. I am not sharing my story looking for pity or sympathy but in hopes to comfort others struggling, and to encourage them to rely on God and trust in His plan when they have hit rock bottom. I will share the questions that I asked, the lessons that I have learned, and the things that I will never forget.

I was fortunate enough to be raised in a family that has a very strong love for God and His wonderful plan for the whole world of mankind. As a child, my family met regularly for Bible studies every Sunday morning and Friday evening. I remember looking forward to participating in our Sunday school lessons taught by my aunties and being involved in Friday evening studies, which was usually led by my grandpa. Our class consisted mainly of family members, but we would invite friends or neighbors to attend if the opportunity arose. I always felt so comfortable asking questions in our class because “no question was a silly question.” We would be asked to read scriptures and participate in the in-depth conversations to improve our understanding in any of the topics we studied. Our class always encouraged the children to participate, and my curiosity, love for, and interest in God’s plan remains a predominate interest of mine to this day.

After completing university, I moved back home to work, which is where I met my husband. Although raised in a different faith, he attends our Bible studies and supports me in strengthening my understanding of the truth. In 2005 we welcomed our first baby, Chase, then our second baby boy, Cooper. My husband runs a large cattle and grain operation, and I work full time for the Ministry of Agriculture. My boys were always involved in extracurricular activities such as baseball, swimming and hockey, but their passion was being on the farm exploring and experiencing all the wonderful things farm life offered. Our lives were full and we were blessed beyond measure.



A Change

In the spring of 2011, our lives took an unexpected and drastic blow. Our oldest son, Chase, was killed in a farm accident. He was six years old. I do not know if I can articulate in words how extremely painful this experience was to us. I can remember the numbing that lasted months, the feeling of anger, regret and sadness that seemed to cripple us for years and which affects us in our lives even to this day. I did not understand how the world could continue on when something this devastating happens! Children are not supposed to die before their parents! Things like this don't happen to people like us! I was living in a nightmare. I hurt. I ached. I cried. I was numb! Our world collapsed. Time stood still and did for a long time. How could we continue in this world without our beautiful child?



Grief overtook our lives and I did not function properly for a long time. There was nothing that could comfort a grieving mother for her child. Even though I knew the plan of God, it did not provide instantaneous relief because I wanted Chase here with us. I wish it would have been me rather than him. Thankfully, we were surrounded by a family that loved us, a community that supported us and a Bible class that strengthened us. We knew that we would never get over the death of Chase, but we needed to find ways to get through it. I initially struggled with, "Why did this happen? Why Chase?" Even though I still do not know why it was Chase, I do know that all of our trials and experiences are "Father filtered" and have been specifically designed for each of us. We read in Isaiah 55:8-9: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

In Hebrews 11 the "Hall of Faith" names are recorded. Every one of those names listed represented someone God shaped using severe trials in order to fulfill a major role in His plan. Each one experienced unimaginable trials, such as Joseph in the pit, Daniel in the den, Paul in prison, Job as he sat among the ashes and Moses in the wilderness. But the one who suffered the most was God's only son. *He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief* [Isaiah 53:3](#). Jesus himself even cried at the cross, *My God, why have you forsaken me?* So, I know God uses ordinary people to carry out extraordinary works, but they all have to be "prepped" to do the job.

For every question I had on why this was happening to us, the Bible seemed to provide some insights and answers. Every time our class had a study on a particular topic, we would come across scriptures that would really resonate with me and our situation and provide me a better perspective. The Bible became our survival guide to navigating into a "new" normal way of life.



So, when I asked “Why me? Why do bad things happen to good people?” here are some scriptures I considered:

- Hebrews 5:8: *Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.*
- Hebrews 2:10: *For it was fitting that he for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering (hope).*
- 1 Peter 1:6-7: *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, as was necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith - more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*
- 1 Peter 4:1-2: *Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking; for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.*
- James 1:2: *Count it all a joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds; for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness, and let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (patience).*
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: *Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort who comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we are able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (to comfort others).*
- 2 Corinthians 4:8-10: *We are afflicted...but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed - so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies (a witness to others).*
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10: *I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities, for when I am weak, then I am strong (strength in weakness).*
- John 9:1-3: *...He saw a man blind from birth, and his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

Looking back on our experiences, scriptures gave us all the necessary principles for how to conduct ourselves in the most trying of times. God gave us his Word to equip us (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and the holy spirit to guide us and to reveal truth to us (John 14:25-27). These are the things that have been reinforced by our loss.



A Grander Perspective

Perspective is both innate and learned, based on our genetics, life experiences and values. However, there is another element of perspective, which is choice. More than just looking on the bright side, perspective is how we choose to see things. I know that we cannot always control what happens to us, but we can control how we react to them. We choose how we act in the face of adversity - we either get bitter or we get better.

I remember a counselor talking to us after the accident and sharing the statistics of marital breakup after the death of a child. The statistics were not in our favor, but at that moment I decided that our marriage would not fall to that statistic. I knew that this experience could either break us apart or make us stronger. We made a choice to have it make us stronger. *He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

Trust the Lord

I have come to realize that I am not in control of my life, but God is. I need to trust Him even if I do not understand. Trials present opportunities to trust that the Lord is in control and is working all things for our good. Looking back, I know God has used this particular season of hardship and uncertainty to draw me closer. I have learned more about God and myself in this experience than perhaps at any other time of my life.

These trials may be designed to test us, to refine us, to deepen our characters in a way that we may not have done otherwise. These trials may have been designed to prepare us for a future work that is beyond our comprehension. Whatever His reason was for permitting this experience, I will continue to trust in Him and pray for His will to be done rather than for my circumstances to change.

- Proverbs 3:5-6: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.*
- Psalm 18:2: *The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

Pray for His Will to be Done, Not Ours

Sometimes we do not know what is best for us. What we think we need is not what we should have. Only God can know what circumstances are needed to prepare us for what is ahead. That is why we need to pray for His will to be done, not ours. When I encounter moments or days that seem unbearable, I pray to God to provide me with strength and guidance, and to use me in whatever way He sees fit. *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God (Philippians 4:6).*



Be Humble

I used to think that things “like that” do not happen to people “like us” and we took a lot of things for granted. I felt strong and confident that I was in control of circumstances. Was I wrong! It is strange how, in a moment, your life can change and how you can fall to your knees.

The Grief Cycle goes between Anger, Denial, Regret and Sadness. Sometimes you go through that cycle multiple times in a day. This is when I really understood I was not in control of my circumstance, but God was. This experience has taught me humility that I may not have had otherwise. C.S. Lewis said, “True humility is not thinking less of yourself, but it is thinking of yourself less.” These humbling, tearful and uncertain circumstances deepened our trust in the Lord and helped us realize the power of God’s grace.

- **Psalm 59:16:** *But I will sing of your strength. I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.*
- **Luke 14:11:** *For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*
- **1 Peter 5:6-7:** *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

The Strength of our Bible Class – Share Our Burdens

Just as we learn to trust the Lord, trials push us to lean on others, either in our class or in our communities. We have the most wonderful Bible class. I say that thankfully. Our Bible class group is small, it meets at homes and has very interactive studies.

After the accident our whole class was grieving. We not only lost a son, but we lost a great-grandson, a grandson, a nephew and a cousin. We grieved together, we listened to one another, we shared the memories and we helped carry each other’s burdens. Humbling as it can be, if we share our hurt, we develop a resilience that leads to connections, trust and deeper relationships.

- **1 Corinthians 12:26:** *If one member suffers, all suffer together, if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*
- **Galatians 6:2:** *Bear one another’s burdens.*

Empathy/Compassion

Our own trials and hardships have helped us develop empathy for others. After experiencing this devastating hurt, I have become highly aware that most people hide their sorrow. We force a smile, we leave out details, and we even convince others we are fine. I developed a soft spot for those who put on a brave front and who are able to keep others at an arm’s length for far too long. A silver lining in sorrow’s dark cloud is that God can use our experiences to reach out to others with compassion and comfort.



- **Ephesians 4:32:** *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*
- **Colossians 3:12:** *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

Count Your Blessings

Have an attitude of gratitude! The more people I meet, relationships I build and experiences I gain, my awareness of God's rich abundant blessings deepens. I know I have so much to be thankful for, including a wonderful family and a class and the knowledge of God's plan. My love and adoration for our heavenly Father is independent of my earthly trials. I know I will see Chase again and my circumstances are temporary. I continually pray to have a spirit of thanksgiving, to be a positive example for all families and for God to strengthen our faith.

- **2 Corinthians 2:14:** *Thanks be to God who leads us, wherever we are, on his own triumphant way and makes our knowledge of him spread throughout the world like a lovely perfume!*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:18:** *In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.*

Stay Focused

Your mind will go wherever you let it, so choose to fill it correctly. Train it to focus on the positives and the good, not because you are naive to the reality, but because it keeps you focused on that future hope for the whole world.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:13:** *I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus.*
- **Philippians 4:8:** *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

Be Patient

God has kept every single promise He has ever made, so why would He stop now? Everything He has promised to come true has, so now it is my turn to wait on Him, so in His due season these things will come to pass.

- **Romans 12:12:** *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*
- **Psalm 27:14:** *Wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.*



Be a Light Unto Others. Pay it Forward.

In 2011, Chase's elementary school took on the task of spreading the idea within the community that it only takes one person to make a difference. They taught their students the concept of "Paying it Forward" and handed out Pay it Forward cards to each student, asking them to think about ways to use them. To perform a random act of kindness, a willingness to give your time, energy, or talent without expecting anything in return.

Chase was only six years old when he came home with his card, and he was constantly thinking of ways he could make a difference. Whether it was shoveling the neighbor's driveway in the winter or opening doors for others, Chase's heart was so full of love and goodness to share. The lesson our family learned from Chase's assignment is that no matter how young or old, rich or poor, everyone has something to give. When he passed away, we handed out these cards to all the people who attended his funeral, and still do this day, as a reminder of who Chase really was - a loving little boy with so much to offer.

Every time I pay it forward, I not only think of our little boy, but it is a chance to brighten someone else's day and let our light shine. *You, Lord, keep my lamp burning, my God turns my darkness into light (Psalm 18:28).*

We Will Never Forget

Having a hope is what is most precious to me. I know that our circumstances are temporary and a promised kingdom awaits us all. I know someday our Heavenly Father will *wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things will disappear (Revelation 21:4).* I also know that *my flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever (Psalm 73:26).*

We will never forget Chase and the wonderful life we had with him. I am thankful for everything he has taught us while on earth and even after he has left. Without him, we would not be who we have become. This experience has strengthened our marriage, made me a better mother, sister, daughter and friend - and because of this I am so very thankful.

In 2014, our family welcomed another baby boy, Coy. Coy has renewed our strength and brought more joy and laughter into our lives. *Truly, God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea (Psalm 46:1-2).* *To God be the Glory!* May He continue to use me and my life as a testimony to others.

Christian Questions Weekly
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CQ Rewind Show Notes and
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to **22828** to get started.



Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1176: Does God REALLY Want Me to Suffer?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1176-suffering/>

See:



1. What can we learn from Bartimaeus' encounter with Jesus? How can we apply his approach to Jesus when we talk to the Lord about our suffering? What was the depth of Bartimaeus' belief in Jesus? (See Mark 10:46-52)
2. What should we hope for when we look to God and Jesus in our suffering? Is it reasonable to assume that God and Jesus will remove all suffering from our lives? (See 1 Peter 4:12-19)
3. How can looking at things from a godly perspective help when suffering? What attitude of mind do we need to be able to hear Jesus? What did Jesus promise the weary and heavy-laden that came to him? (See Matthew 11:25-29)
4. Does the "rest" promised in Matthew 11:28 solve or remove the issues with which we are dealing? What is the practical application of this rest?
5. How will relief come to all of humanity? What can we do while we wait for the fulfillment of God's plan? Where should our focus be? List all the things we can do, and that we can ask for, to help with our struggles: (See Romans 8:19-22, Revelation 21:4)
6. As Christians, do we receive everything we ask for from God and Jesus? What can we learn from the request of James and John to Jesus? Do you think they were motivated by greed or seeking influence? Why was their request naïve? (See Mark 10:35-38)
7. What should followers of Jesus expect for their lives? Where can we find resting places? How is the "rest" in Matthew 11:28 different from the "rest" in verse 29? Why is it different? (See Jeremiah 6:16, Matthew 11:27-30, 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, Hebrews 5:8-9)
8. What does "reproached" or "reviled" mean? Why can our experience of being reproached by others be considered "easy"? (See Matthew 5:11, 1 Peter 4:12-16)
9. Why can we consider our burden as Christians to be "light"? How does being "yoked" with Jesus help? (See Matthew 11:29-30, John 16:33, Acts 14:22)
10. Why do Christians have struggles and sufferings? In what way are our struggles "common" to all men? If all men suffer this way, how are Christian sufferings different? How does this understanding offer us comfort? (See Romans 8:16-17, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 Peter 1:4-7, 2:9)
11. What are you suffering in your life? How do/will you work with God and Jesus to deal with these sufferings?