## Discipling People Who Are Hurting

Session #12 November 19, 2017

#### Opening questions and comments

- How do you respond to these situations?
- What do you do? What do you say?
- What do you pray? How do you pray for this person?
   Where do you go in Scripture?
- How do you bring comfort?

#### **Introduction**

## In studying a theology of suffering, we need to ask a few questions:

- 1) How do I understand suffering?
- 2) How does my view of suffering shape my faith?
- 3) Are any of my thoughts on suffering unbiblical?
- 4) How does my views on suffering shape the way I care for others?

This morning, we will explore

why discipling people

who are hurting

is a critical arena of spiritual development.

#### What does the Bible say about suffering?

- The Bible is <u>realistic and honest</u> about suffering in a fallen world (Genesis 3:16-19; II Peter 3:8-22; II Peter 4:12-19).
- God is totally <u>sovereign</u> and totally <u>good</u> (Isaiah 40; Luke 18:19).
- At the same time, man is <u>sinful and responsible</u> for his actions (Philippians 2:12-13).

#### What does the Bible say about suffering?

- God uses <u>everything</u> for His good purposes (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28).
- God builds good things into the lives of His children, even through difficult circumstances (Hebrews 12:5-11).
- How should we respond to suffering as Christians? Turn to God, <u>not away</u> from Him. (Psalm 42:5,11; Psalm 56:3).

#### What are God's purposes in Suffering?

- Suffering gives us an opportunity to stand out as <u>followers of Christ</u> in a world that does not honor God (I Peter 4:16).
- Suffering teaches us to rely on God and <u>not on</u> <u>ourselves</u> (II Corinthians 1:8-9).
- Suffering teaches us God's <u>decrees</u> (Psalm 119:71).

#### What are God's purposes in Suffering?

- Suffering matures us into godly people the Lord Is molding for Himself (James 1:2-4).
- The Savior receives glory through our suffering (I Peter 4:13).
- Suffering even allows us to share in the <u>Son's glory</u> (Romans 8:17).

"Afflictions are as nails, driven by the hand of grace, which crucify us to the world. Afflictions are then blessings to us when we can bless God for afflictions; whose single view in causing us to pass through the fire, is only to separate the sin He hates from the soul He loves."

Augustus Toplady

## How do we prepare our discipling friends for suffering?

- Take some time to talk about suffering.
- Help them to <u>deconstruct</u> worldly assumptions about suffering.
- Study God's <u>purposes</u> for suffering as revealed in His Word.
- Study suffering using good Christian books.
- Build the relationship(s) before suffering comes.

#### How do we prepare our discipling friends for suffering?

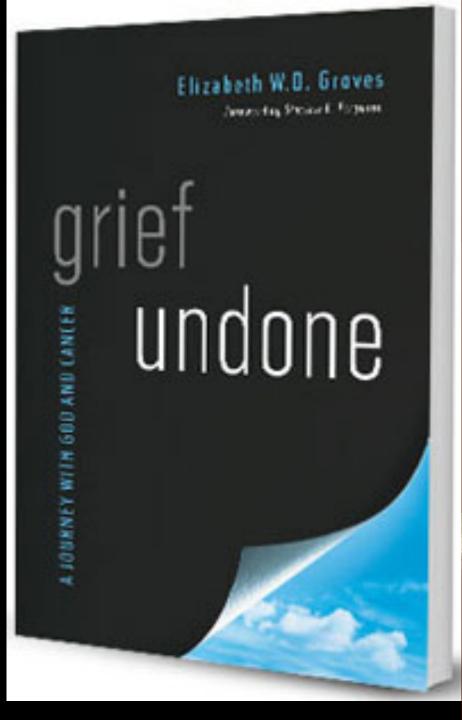
- Focus on <u>faith</u> (John 16:33).
- Help build a foundation in the goodness and sovereignty of God.
- Teach them to meditate on the gospel.

### How can we help our discipling friends when times are difficult?

- Accept your <u>covenant responsibility</u> to partake in their suffering (I Corinthians 12:25-26).
- Be <u>present</u> when suffering comes (Job 2:13).
- Be an <u>ambassador</u> of comfort (II Corinthians 1:3-4)
- Be willing to make <u>sacrifices</u> for others (Gal.6:10).
- Pray with them and for them (Ephesians 1:15-23).

#### How can we help our discipling friends when times are difficult?

- Reaffirm <u>God's character</u>. Talk about God's mercy and goodness.
- Don't try to <u>explain</u> what you do not know. Explain what you do know. The gospel.
- Truth is <u>always</u> true & sin is always sin.
- Think <u>practically</u> how to serve them especially in the midst of a crisis.
- Don't be <u>afraid</u> to ask for outside help.



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Reflections on Suffering and Evil



D. A. CARSON

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