

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

What does the Bible say about suffering?

- God uses everything 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, not away 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 followers of Christ in a world that does not honor God (I Peter 4:16).
- Suffering teaches us to rely on God and not on ourselves (II Corinthians 1:8-9).
- Suffering teaches us God's decrees (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 Son's glory (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 deconstruct worldly assumptions about suffering.
- Study God's purposes 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 faith (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 covenant responsibility to partake in their suffering (I Corinthians 12:25-26).
- Be present when suffering comes (Job 2:13).
- Be an ambassador of comfort (II Corinthians 1:3-4)
- Be willing to make sacrifices 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 God's character. Talk about God's mercy and goodness.
- Don't try to explain what you do not know. Explain what you do know. The gospel.
- Truth is always true & sin is always sin.
- Think practically how to serve them – especially in the midst of a crisis.
- Don't be afraid to ask for outside help.

