

JOY IN SUFFERING

LAUGHING IN THE DARKNESS
PHILIPPIANS 1:29
May 07, 2017 • Ron King



The Bible takes our suffering very SERIOUSLY.

How do I GET THROUGH this suffering?

How can I see anything GOOD come out of this suffering?

God is SOVEREIGN.

God is not the AUTHOR of my suffering.

He will be with me THROUGH my suffering.

God can and will REDEEM my suffering.

God uses suffering as a tool to bring us to Jesus in a DEEPER and more meaningful way.

God uses suffering for our Christ-like character DEVELOPMENT.

God uses our suffering to RESCUE others.

God uses our suffering to teach CONTENTMENT in Him and dependence on His strength.

Take heart in knowing that you are not ALONE.

ACT like Epaphroditus and not Job's friends.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Why do we typically seek to avoid suffering at all costs?
2. What evidence is there that God takes our suffering seriously?
3. Why does Paul have such credibility to speak about this topic? (see 2 Corinthians 6:4-10 and 11:24-29)
4. How can Paul make the statement in Philippians 1:29, "It has been granted to you for the sake of Christ that you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake." What privilege is there in suffering?
5. Often times we will pray for God to remove our suffering. Is there a better way to pray?
6. Why was Paul rejoicing in Philippians 2:17-18?
7. How can a person suffer in such a way that God is honored and suffering becomes purposeful?
8. In Philippians 3:8 Paul speaks of gaining Christ in the middle of his suffering. What does that mean and how does it address the purpose we discover in suffering?
9. What does Paul communicate in the wonderful words of Philippians 4:13, "*I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*"
10. Have you ever really blown it, like Job's friends did, when trying to encourage someone in their suffering? What are you learning about what to do in those difficult moments? How can you best help them know joy?

TAKING IT HOME

Read Philippians once more. Be sure to craft a statement that defines what you want your greatest life accomplishment to be. If there is a person in your life that you know is suffering, seek to bring the presence of Jesus to them. Just spend some time with them without offering opinions or suggestions.