

Doctrine of Suffering

- 1) Preliminary considerations.
 - a) Suffering is to endure or undergo anything unpleasant such as pain, distress, pressures, loss, damage, etc.
 - b) An individual will suffer both physically and mentally (cf. Paul, **2 Corinthians 11:23-28** Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷ *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure upon me *of* concern for all the churches.).
 - c) Clearly there is a great deal of suffering in the world today, but the causes and reasons are grossly misunderstood.
 - d) There are trials and various sufferings that are common to all mankind (i.e. “common human problems”, 1 Cor. 10:13).
 - e) Importantly, the believer is not exempt or somehow shielded from experiencing suffering over the course of his life.
 - f) All believers will experience various degrees of suffering and distress.
 - g) Those who believe otherwise are deluded and at odds with the Divine viewpoint (cf. Col. 1:24, 1 Peter 5:8-10).
 - h) Indeed the adjusted believer ought to expect it and have the proper mental attitude toward suffering (cf. John 15:18-21, 16:33, Acts 14:21-22, 1 Thess. 1:6).
 - i) Quite simply it is a normal part of our existence as believers especially in the last days of the Church Age.
 - j) All believers will suffer tribulations and testing, so it is of great importance for every believer to understand and apply the Divine viewpoint in this area.
 - k) Do not react to suffering with bitterness, negativity, complaining, soul fainting, etc (Heb. 12:3).
 - l) A human viewpoint/OSN reaction will only worsen one’s suffering and tribulation.
 - m) Furthermore, the adjusted believer recognizes that human viewpoint is never the appropriate response to any problem.
 - n) The believer must maintain the FGHS and is commanded to have inner happiness in the midst of his testing (James 1:2).
 - o) Additionally the growing believer must recognize that all his sufferings are ultimately working together for his good in time and eternity (Rom. 8:28).

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- i) “All things” (πᾶς- pas) encompasses all circumstances from unpleasant to pleasant.
 - ii) God is actively causing “all things to work together for good.”
 - iii) However, this doesn’t apply to all men. Rather, it applies specifically to those that love God.
 - iv) In light of all the cosmic rhetoric and misinformation regarding the topic of love, what does it mean to “love God?”
 - v) The believer that loves God consistently **obeys His commands** (John 14:15, 23).
 - vi) This applies to the +v believer regardless of the level of spiritual maturity.
 - p) The +v believer should take comfort in the knowledge that God is actively working on his behalf.
 - q) On the other hand, when suffering befalls the unbeliever and believer in reversionism, he will not have the inner peace and stability of the +v believer (cf. - v believer, Matt. 13:20-21).
- 2) Vocabulary.
- a) Various Hebrew and Aramaic terms and idiom.
 - i) דָּכָא, dak: oppressed, miserable (Psa. 9:9).
 - ii) יָגוֹן, yagon: sorrow, grief (Est. 9:22).
 - iii) לָחַץ, lachats: to squeeze, oppress (Judges 2:18).
 - iv) מִכָּאֵב, makob: sorrow, suffering (Isa. 53:3-4).
 - v) נִזָּק, nezaq: to suffer injury, to come to grief (Dan. 6:3).
 - vi) עֹמֵל, amel: sufferer, burdened with grief (Job 3:20).
 - vii) עֲנִי, oni: misery, affliction, oppressed situation (Psa. 9:13).
 - viii) עָנָה, anah: to be suffering, to oppress (Gen. 15:13).
 - ix) צָרָה, tsarah: distress, anxiety (Gen 42:21).
 - x) “Heavy heart”, “broken spirit”, “despair of soul,” etc. (Deut. 28:65, Isa. 65:14).
 - b) Various Greek terms.
 - i) βασανίζω, basanizo: to afflict, torment, harass (2 Peter 2:8).
 - ii) πάσχω, pascho: to suffer (1 Peter 2:19).
 - iii) πάθημα, pathema: that which one suffers or has suffered; externally, a suffering, misfortune, calamity or affliction.
 - iv) παθητός, pathetos: one with the capacity for suffering, subject to suffering (Acts 26:23).
 - v) συμπάσχω, sumpascho: to suffer with some one else (1 Cor. 12:26).
 - vi) προπάσχω, propascho: to suffer before.
 - vii) κακουχέω, kakoucheo: to be ill-treated, to be oppressed, to suffer.

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- viii) συγκακουχέομαι, sugkakoucheomai: to suffer persecution or affliction with someone.
 - ix) κακοπαθέω, kakopatheo: to endure hardship or troubles, to be afflicted or suffer.
 - x) κακοπάθεια, kakopatheaia: the suffering of evil, distress, trouble or hardship (James 5:10).
 - xi) συγκακοπαθέω, sugkakopatheo: to suffer hardship together with someone.
 - xii) “To drink a cup”, take up his cross”, “fiery ordeal”, etc (cup: John 18:11, Luke 22:42; cross: Matt. 10:38; ordeal: 1 Peter 4:12).
- 3) Categories of suffering.
- a) Deserved suffering: the suffering which comes upon an individual because of his own thinking and actions. This may be in the form of:
 - i) Divine discipline for OSN activity (Psa. 94:12, 119:67, Heb 12:6-10).
 - (1) Just as a natural parent administers discipline on a disobedient child so God administers His righteous discipline on believers.
 - (2) God’s discipline demonstrates His love for His children (Prov. 3:11-12).
 - (3) The wise believer will be trained by it.
 - (4) The fool will scorn and reject it (cf. Prov. 15:10).
 - ii) “Self-induced” misery brought about by faulty thinking and decisions (Prov. 19:15, 2 Peter 2:13 cf. **Proverbs 1:27-32** When your dread comes like a storm, And your calamity comes on like a whirlwind, When distress *and* anguish come on you. ²⁸ "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me, ²⁹ Because they hated knowledge, And **did not choose** the fear of the LORD. ³⁰ "They **would not accept** my counsel, They spurned all my reproof. ³¹ "So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, And be satiated with their own devices. ³² "For the waywardness of the naive shall kill them, And the complacency of fools shall destroy them.).
 - iii) Suffering brought about because of close association with those who disregard the plan of God (Prov. 13:20, 22:24-25 cf. 1 Cor. 15:33).
 - iv) The ultimate in deserved suffering is reserved for the unbeliever. His suffering includes separation from God and confinement to the Lake of Fire for all eternity (Rev. 20:11-15 cf. Luke 16:19-26).
 - (1) The eternal suffering of the unbeliever is attributable to one cause. Namely, the failure to believe in Jesus Christ (**John 3:36** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.").
 - (2) Salvation is made available to all men. Hence those who refuse to believe in Christ only have themselves to blame (Titus 2:11).
 - b) Common human problems: suffering that comes upon an individual which are common to the entire human race (e.g. aging, 2 Cor. 4:16).

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- c) Undeserved suffering: the suffering that befalls the believer from an outside source and is unattributable to any OSN activity.
 - i) This category of suffering results in blessing for the believer (1 Peter 2:19-20, 3:14, 4:13).
 - ii) God will tailor and permit various tests in the life of the believer (Gen. 22:1ff., Dan. 3:14-30, Job 1:8ff., , Acts 16:16-24, 2 Cor. 12:1-10, Rev. 2:10).
 - iii) Suffering by association (Num. 14:33, 1 Sam. 21:1-10, 22:9-20, **1 Corinthians 12:26** And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.).
- 4) The spiritually astute believer will consider the life of our Savior, Jesus Christ in regard to undeserved suffering.
 - a) Christ is the pre-eminent example of one who was perfectly acclimated to all of His suffering (1 Peter 2:21-23).
 - b) In His humanity, Christ was tested and perfectly resisted all external temptations (Luke 4:1-13, Heb. 2:17-18, 4:15).
 - c) He perfectly applied the Divine viewpoint under suffering to include those sufferings related to His unique role of bearing the sins of the world (Heb. 2:9-10, 13:12).
 - d) One of the reasons Jesus suffered was to fulfill the prophecies about Him (Luke 24:25-27, 44).
 - e) Various sufferings of Christ:
 - i) Betrayal by a close associate (Matt. 26:47).
 - ii) Faced accusations by false witnesses (Matt. 26:59-61 cf. Psalms 35:11).
 - iii) Faced opposition from government authorities and religious leaders (Matt. 2:13, 12:14, 24).
 - iv) Physically abused (Matt. 26:67, Luke 22:63 cf. Isaiah 50:6).
 - v) Being mocked (Matt. 27:31 cf. Psalms 22:7-8).
 - vi) Scourged (Matt. 27:26 cf. Isaiah 53:5).
 - vii) Crucified with criminals (Matt. 27:38 cf. Isaiah 53:12).
 - viii) People shook their heads in derision of Him (Matt. 27:39 cf. Psalms 109:25).
 - ix) His teaching was distorted and ridiculed (Matt. 27:39-44 cf. Psalms 56:5-6).
 - x) He was forsaken by the Father and the Holy Spirit while on the cross (Matt. 27:46 cf. Psalms 22:1).
 - xi) Forsaken by His own disciples (Mark 14:46-50 cf. Luke 22:57-62).
 - xii) Hands and feet pierced at His crucifixion (Luke 23:33 cf. Psalms 22:16).
 - xiii) People stared or gawked at Him (Luke 23:35 cf. Psalms 22:17).
 - xiv) Friends stood at a distance (Luke 23:49 cf. Psalms 38:11).
 - xv) Rejection by His people (John 1:11 cf. Isaiah 53:3, Acts 3:12-15).

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- xvi) Rejected by His own family who didn't even believe in Him during His ministry (John 7:5).
 - xvii) He was hated by people without cause (John 15:25 cf. Psa. 69:4).
 - xviii) He was stripped and His garments were divided (John 19:23-24 cf. Psa. 22:18).
 - xix) He suffered thirst and was offered gall and vinegar (Matt. 27:34, John 19:28 cf. Psa. 69:21).
 - xx) The humiliation or condescension of Christ (Phil. 2:5-8 cf. Isa. 53:1-5).
 - (1) The Son of God became man and was born into the peasant class of Israel. His deity agreed not only to associate with an inferior, but with one who was from the lower classes.
 - (2) He cloaked the glory of His deity and was unable to tap into His deity whenever He wanted.
 - (3) He made a decision over the course of His life on earth not to exercise the independent use of His divine attributes to make His way easier and so circumvent the sufferings and limitations of the incarnation.
 - (4) He humbled Himself to the point of accepting death on the cross.
 - (5) Christ was willing to undergo whatever was necessary to provide salvation for mankind, including the shame associated with the cross (cf. Heb. 12:2).
 - f) His sufferings were a necessary part of His spiritual advancement during the incarnation (**Hebrews 2:10** For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings., Heb. 5:8-9).
 - g) The extent and quantity of His sufferings render Him a perfect comforter to those that are suffering (**Hebrews 2:17-18** Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. **Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin.).
- 5) Suffering and the believer.
- a) In the cosmos, the Devil's world, the believer ought to anticipate various suffering in his life (cf. **John 15:17-20** "This I command you, that you love one another. ¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. **John 16:33**

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"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.", 1 John 3:13).

- b) However, believers are to avoid coming under deserved suffering due to OSN activities (cf. 1 Peter 2:20, 3:17, 4:15).
 - i) Suffering in a believer's life is a common consequence of thinking and acting according to human viewpoint.
 - ii) The believer consistently refuses to implement God's standards in his life, will suffer. This is a fundamental principle of Divine blessing and cursing which is evident throughout Scripture (cf. **Deuteronomy 11:26-28** "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known.).
 - iii) When we suffer, we must give careful consideration to the possible causes.
 - iv) Do not be stubborn and refuse to examine every aspect of your life.
 - v) In the CWL, there are truly no "sacred cows."
 - vi) We must be absolutely honest when appraising our OSN weaknesses.
Do you have trouble with separation? Do you have trouble making it to class? Is your job more important to you than sound doctrine? Are you bored with subject matter currently being taught? Do you fail to see the relevance of biblical truth?
 - vii) If a believer is not willing to at least recognize his OSN weaknesses, he will not take the proper steps to consistently control them.
 - viii) Are we weak in the "flesh?" Yes. Are we to make allowances or excuses for sin? No. The fact that one possesses an OSN does not provide grounds to legitimize any sinful activity (cf. Rom. 13:14, Gal. 5:13).
 - ix) Rather, the focus in Scripture is to cease from sinful activity and combat the OSN (Col. 3:5-10).
 - x) As children of God, we ought to be pleasing to Him in our daily life (2 Cor. 5:9, Col. 1:10 cf. John 8:29, Heb. 11:5).
 - xi) No excuses for will be permitted in eternity so don't start making them now. It sets a poor precedent.
 - xii) If a believer consistently disregards Divine viewpoint and falls into suffering, he must not consider his suffering to be undeserved.
 - xiii) The violation of God's righteous standards results in His righteous judgment.
 - xiv) Sadly, some believers are hardened by their sin so that they lack biblical discernment in this area.

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- xv) In this regard, believers are commanded not to harden their hearts. Put another way, we aren't to allow ourselves to be calloused in our thinking in regard to any sin (Heb. 3:8, 15 cf. Psa. 36:1-4).
 - xvi) In the case of deserved suffering, the wise believer will make the appropriate corrections in his thinking and conduct to comply with God's righteous standards (Psa. 32:1ff).
 - xvii) However, repentance from sinful activity doesn't guarantee freedom from further suffering.
 - xviii) In other words, the suffering brought about as a result of personal sin may not necessarily cease when the believer overrules his OSN (i.e. FGHS, etc. cf. 2 Sam. 11:27- 12:19).
 - xix) Even if he suffering doesn't stop, the adjusted believer may still earn rewards for acclimating to the suffering in his niche.
- c) Within the sphere of undeserved suffering, the believer will undergo both abundance and variety of afflictions (Psa. 34:18-19, 2 Cor. 1:5, 1 Peter 1:6).
- i) Various examples:
 - (1) Testing with people (Job 2:1-10, Mark 12:13-17).
 - (2) Separation (Matt. 10:34-39).
 - (3) Persecution for espousing and applying sound doctrine (Mark 4:17, John 15:20; 2 Tim. 3:12).
 - (4) Pressure to orient to one's political, geographical and socio-economic niche (Luke 3:14, 1 Tim. 6:8).
 - (5) Isolation, loneliness (2 Tim. 4:9-16).
 - (6) Living grace tests (Luke 12:22ff. 1 Cor. 4:11, **2 Corinthians 11:27** *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.).
 - (7) Sorrow due to the -v of others (Luke 19:41-44, Rom. 9:1-4, cf. 2 Tim. 4:3-4).
 - (8) Health tests (**2 Corinthians 4:16-18** Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal., Phil. 2:25-30).
 - (9) Financial testing (Phil. 4:11-12).
 - (10) Various temptations from within and from without (Gal. 6:1, James 1:13, 4:1-3).
 - (11) Challenges while applying under one's spiritual gift (cf. **Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders, and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you., 1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 1:6).

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- (12) Public humiliation (Heb. 10:32-33).
 - (13) Verbal attacks:
 - (a) Maligning: the defamation of one's reputation, often associated with showing intense often vicious ill will (1 Peter 4:4).
 - (b) Slander: to speak evil against, to express hostility in speaking (1 Peter 2:12).
 - (c) Revile: to threaten abusively, to insult (1 Peter 3:16).
 - (14) Unfair authorities (e.g. fathers: Col. 3:21, employers/bosses: 1 Peter 2:18, spiritual authorities: 1 Peter 5:3, civic authorities: John 18:19- 19:16, James 5:1-6).
- 6) A believer's response to undeserved suffering.
- a) It is clear in Scripture that the believer will suffer in the AC.
 - b) As this is the case, we as believers must decide how to respond to the onset of suffering in our lives.
 - c) Are you going to resort to human viewpoint or Divine viewpoint to weather your trials? Are you going to be self reliant or rely upon God?
 - d) The adjusted believer recognizes that when faced with suffering on any level, from minor to severe, he must utilize Divine viewpoint and rely on God.
 - e) Do not react to suffering under the OSN (**Hebrews 12:1-4** Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, **so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.** ⁴ You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;).
 - f) Some inappropriate reactions include:
 - i) Trading "evil for evil or insult for insult" (**1 Peter 3:8-9** To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹ not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.).
 - ii) Taking revenge (Rom. 12:17-21).
 - iii) Resorting to threats against one's antagonist (cf. 1 Peter 2:23).
 - iv) Compromising the Truth to alleviate pressure (**Galatians 2:11-13** But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

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- ¹³ And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.)
- v) Fear, worry (cf. Rom. 8:15-17, **1 Peter 3:13-14** And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, **Revelation 2:10** 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.)
 - vi) Shame (1 Peter 4:16).
 - vii) Surprise (**1 Peter 4:12** 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;).
 - viii) Other reactions: soul-fainting, bitterness, self-pity, complaining, anger, etc.
 - g) In order for the believer to successfully endure undeserved suffering, he must maintain his focus on Divine viewpoint.
 - i) The believer must consistently maintain the FGHS.
 - ii) The believer must maintain the resolve that he is going to suffer (cf. 1 Peter 1:13).
 - iii) Additionally, the believer must be willing to suffer (Rom. 12:12, Phil. 1:29, 2 Tim. 2:3-10).
 - iv) We are to emulate Christ through the patient endurance of suffering (**1 Peter 2:20-21** For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God. ²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.)
 - v) We ought to be diligent in prayer regarding our circumstances. Pray for endurance and deliverance (Heb. 4:15-16, 1 Peter 5:6-7 cf. Psa. 71:2-3, 1 Thess. 5:17).
 - vi) We must trust God to resolve our suffering (1 Peter 4:19 cf. Psa. 9:9-10, 28:7).
 - vii) As our trust is in God, we ought to have courage in the midst of adverse circumstances (**John 16:33** "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.").
 - viii) Maintain inner happiness or joy in the period of suffering (2 Cor. 6:10, Col. 1:24, **James 1:2-3** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.)
 - ix) We must focus on our ph. 3 and recognize that our suffering is only temporary (2 Cor. 4:17).

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- x) Maintain inner peace (Phil. 4:6-9, cf. Gal 5:22).
 - xi) The believer ought to be comforted in the knowledge that other believers in the AC are facing the same suffering (**1 Thessalonians 2:14** For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they *did* from the Jews, **1 Peter 5:9** But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.; cf. 2 Cor. 1:7).
 - xii) Discard any human viewpoint approach to suffering. Instead rely on the inner resources of sound doctrine (cf. Psa. 119:143, Eph. 3:16-19).
 - xiii) Suffering renders the believer worthy of God's kingdom (2 Thess. 1:5).
- 7) The fact that suffering is a certainty in the life of the believer brings up a pertinent question, "Why does God cause us to suffer or allow us to suffer in the AC?" Some reasons:
- a) We suffer in order to glorify God (i.e. enhance His reputation, **1 Peter 4:16** but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God. cf. John 21:19).
 - b) To provide training in Divine viewpoint and promote spiritual growth (Heb. 12:11, 1 Peter 5:10).
 - c) To test the sound doctrine in one's soul and provide an opportunity to make the appropriate application. As believers it is critical that we both hear and apply doctrine (1 Peter 1:6-7, cf. Titus 3:14, James 1:22).
 - d) Suffering is necessary to build up endurance or patience in one's ph. 2. Patience is a necessary in order to make the MAJG (Rom. 5:3-4, **James 1:3-4** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Cf. Luke 8:15, 2 Thess. 2:15, Heb. 10:36).
 - e) To provide a witness of the life and an opportunity to evangelize (Luke 21:12-13, Acts 9:15-16, cf. Acts 27:24).
 - f) To cause us to place our trust in God and not our own inferior abilities (2 Cor. 1:8-10, 12:7-10, 1 Pet. 4:19).
 - g) To produce an occupation with Jesus Christ (Phil 3:8-10).
- 8) The spiritually astute believer will recognize that suffering is an excellent opportunity to gain eternal reward (i.e. SG3, cf. **2 Corinthians 4:17-18** For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.).
- a) The believer who applies the principles of Bible doctrine to the multitude of sufferings in the CWL will accumulate SG3 (James 1:12, **1 Peter 1:3-7** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to

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- ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which* is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ 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; also 1 Peter 3:9).
- b) To the extent that a believer is willing to orient to his allotted suffering, as a sharer in the sufferings of Christ, he will inherit ph. 3 reward (**1 Peter 4:13** but 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, cf. Rom. 8:17)
 - c) Although a believer's suffering in time may be intense and excruciating, it is insignificant when compared to our glorious eternal future (1 Cor. 2:9 cf. Rom. 8:18).
- 9) In addition to his eternal blessings, the believer who faces his sufferings with doctrine will be blessed in time (1 Peter 3:13, 4:14, cf. Job 42:10, Mark 10:29-30).
- 10) For the adjusted believer, God will provide comfort in the midst of suffering (2 Cor. 1:3-4).
- a) Our comfort doesn't necessarily take the form of deliverance from various tribulations.
 - b) God's comfort will be extended during a period of testing (1 Thess. 3:4-7).
 - c) The believer who has properly endured suffering in time will be able to comfort and encourage other believers.
 - d) The more a believer suffers, the more he can expect to receive God's comfort (2 Cor. 1:5).
 - e) There is no suffering that is too great for God to provide comfort (Psa. 23:4).
 - f) We must be diligent to maintain the FGHS and apply doctrinal principles towards our testing.
 - g) When the believer is FGHS he is under control of the "Comforter." Furthermore, the provision of help or comfort to the believer is a ministry of God the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31 cf. John 14:26, 15:26).
 - h) The correct doctrinal application(s) brings about comfort (cf. Job 6:10, Psa. 119:52).
- 11) Concluding remarks.
- a) The believer ought to expect suffering and have the proper mental attitude toward it.

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- b) From a biblical standpoint, suffering is categorized as deserved, undeserved, and common to all humanity.
- c) Of the three categories, deserved suffering is a consequence of OSN activity.
- d) Unlike undeserved suffering, deserved suffering is not pleasing to God and the believer ought to minimize this category. Consistent deserved suffering is a mark of consistent OSN failures (**1 Peter 2:20** For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God., **1 Peter 4:15** By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler).
- e) It is absolutely imperative that the believer refrain from reacting to suffering or testing under the OSN.
- f) Consider the example set by Jesus Christ who patiently endured His undeserved suffering without complaint.
- g) We must suffer without bitterness, anger, complaining, a fatalistic attitude, etc.
- h) One must maintain proper control over his emotions during periods of testing.
- i) The believer who attempts to remedy his suffering with human viewpoint solutions will not have lasting peace, stability or happiness.
- j) Contrary to the prevailing attitudes in the cosmos, human viewpoint doesn't enable the believer to successfully endure persecution and suffering.
- k) The failure to properly cope with suffering on the part of the believer often results in the desertion of sound doctrine (cf. Luke 8:13).
- l) Instead the believer must utilize Divine viewpoint under the FGHS and be confident that God will provide a resolution.
- m) He is aware of all of our suffering and tribulations (Psa. 35:10).
- n) God will not put the maturing believer through insurmountable tests (**1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation 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, that you may be able to endure it.).
- o) Moreover the +v believer will recognize that God is actively using the suffering in his niche to his temporal and eternal benefit (cf. **Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.).
- p) When suffering is dealt with via sound doctrine in the soul, under the filling of the Holy Spirit, eternal rewards are the result (**Romans 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.).
- q) Do not despair, our sufferings only last for a short period of time (James 4:14, 1 Peter 1:6).

Doctrine of Suffering

- r) The believer ought to be diligent in prayer especially during periods of suffering (**Hebrews 4:15-16** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need., James 5:13).
- s) God has promised to strengthen and establish the believer who has undergone suffering (1 Peter 5:10).
- t) No suffering, deserved or undeserved, can remove us from God's plan, including death (Rom. 8:35-39).

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