

A Book Preview for

Suicide

Prevention and Helps for Those Left Behind

(Finally a thorough, practical, Biblical Approach)

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Overview

I. The Content

A. Premise

Suicidal people need both short-term emergency prevention through intervention, and long-term transformation in their thinking and lifestyle. Because suicide is primarily a sin problem, God's spiritual prevention program presented in this book is the best solution.

The devastating feelings of those left behind can best be handled by the God of all comfort and wise Scriptural counsel also found in this book.

B. Unique Selling Proposition

If consumers in the target market purchase and read Suicide: Prevention and Helps for Those Left Behind, then they will receive clear-cut effective answers and instructions on how to listen, act, question and share in emergency interventions.

Concerning long-term prevention, the readers will discover the biblical approach to transformation of thoughts and actions and be given a twenty-one phase program through which they can guide their counselee.

To help those left behind, the readers will find biblical, sensible answers to help heal devastating feelings and to lead them from mourning to comfort.

This book has many true stories, outlines, instructions, programs and Scripture passages to help readers understand and implement the truths and procedures presented.

C. Overview

Section One

Introduction - Why the author wrote this book, including his first suicide rescue

Part One: What is Suicide?

Part Two: Is Suicide Sin? If So, Why?

Part Three: Suicide Statistics

Part Four: Who is Susceptible?

Part Five: The True Cause of Suicide

This includes the things that lead up to it which are usually sin. The Scriptural approach here is contrasted with most psychological approaches and illustrated with some amazing real life stories.

Part Six: Dangerous Influences - Three biblical dangers are given.

Part Seven: Triggers

Part Eight: Motives Summarized

Part Nine: Symptoms

Section Two

Help in Suicide Prevention

Part One: Short-Term Prevention

Introduction

- John's Story - an incredible rescue attempt
- Dos and Don'ts of Intervention
- Ten Steps of Intervention
- A Young Man's Peril: Another rescue that barely made it

Part Two: Long-Term Prevention - Biblical instructions on fighting the world, the flesh, and the devil plus following the Holy Spirit

Part Three: Your Ministry of Suffering - Seven crucial points

Part Four: Finding and Fulfilling Your Calling from God

Includes two life stories

Section Three

Helps and Healing for Those Left Behind

Part One: Handling Difficult Feelings with Biblical Answers

Part Two: Mourning - a journey with God toward comfort, including handling grief over a departed loved one who was likely unsaved

Part Three: Funeral and Final Things - some helpful suggestions

Conclusion

Appendix

Part One: Bible Principles and Promises to Comfort in Loss

Eighty-six selected Scripture passages on which to meditate and trust

Part Two: A sample funeral message delivered by the author at the funeral of a young suicide victim.

Part Three: A Twenty-One Phase Long-Term Prevention Program

Transforming thoughts and actions, including dealing with post-traumatic stress disorders and bullying

II. The Author

A. Background

Dr. James Bachman spent thirty-two of his fifty-plus years of ministry as the senior pastor of the Roanoke Baptist Church in Roanoke, Indiana. He is known for his caring and helpful counseling. He attentively listens, seeking wisdom from God, and then lovingly offers clear-cut Biblical answers to his counselees.

He attended Michigan State University (1960-61). He attended Grand Rapids Baptist Bible College for four years, Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary for one year and received his Doctor of Divinity degree from Shawnee Baptist College.

James Bachman married in 1961. His wife Sharon, daughter Vicky Bachman Pope, sons Dr. Mark Bachman and Dr. Jack Bachman have a combined 130 years of full-time Christian service.

God has enabled Dr. Bachman to rescue several people in the process of taking their own life. Some of these rescues are shared in this book.

Many family members and friends of those left behind by suicide have found comfort and new purpose to go on with their lives through the truths of this book.

However, the main qualification and motivation for authoring this book is God's calling. Spending many thousands of hours during his adult life studying and applying the Bible, the Lord revealed to the author among other things, His solution to the long-term prevention for the suicidal. That solution is learning to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil while following the Holy Spirit.

B. Previous Writings

The author has written and presented over 7,000 sermons designed to give Bible answers to life's problems. He has also written and taught numerous Bible college courses. For many years he has authored and continues to author a popular public newspaper series entitled Parson to Person. This is a question and answer article, which as in his sermons, answers life's problems from God's Word. (Circulation about 40,000 readers)

The author also wrote a book entitled The Tract Club Book published by Answer Publications.

III. Two Sample Chapters

Part One: ***Short-Term Prevention***

Introduction

The goal here is primarily to stop the suicidal person from taking his life and get him into a long-term prevention program like the one given in Part Three of the Appendix section.

Most people who are on the edge of taking their life are not in a rational mode of thinking, and reasoning with them is difficult. Changing their thinking usually takes time and retraining. Your best hope is to assure them of your love, and then promise to get them understanding, competent help, and hope soon.

Do not leave them alone. Remove any lethal items from their house. Get whatever help is needed to prevent suicide at this time.

John's Story

The following is a real experience I had several years ago. The man's name has been changed to protect privacy. We will call him John. When I met this man, he was about 50 years old. I had the joy of leading him to Christ.

At one time he had held a high administrative position in a large company in California. Some of the chemicals he had worked around ruined his health and caused some nervous problems.

Late one night he called from a nearby town where he had moved, to tell me goodbye. I asked if he had plans to relocate again. He admitted he was planning to take his life because he and his father, who lived in another part of town, had just been involved in a big argument. His father threatened to call the local police. John warned that if the police showed up, he would likely shoot. I kept him on the phone as long as I could before he finally hung up on me.

I contacted the police station and inquired if his father had called. They replied, "Not yet." I informed the officer that if the police went, they should not approach his door for he was armed and dangerous in his present state of mind.

I left, asking my wife to pray. As I drove approximately eleven miles I prayed I would arrive before he ended his life. Pulling into his drive, I left

my lights on temporarily so he would see I wasn't a policeman as I walked in front of my car to approach his mobile home.

He came to the door with his shotgun in hand, but allowed me to enter. I began speaking with him while praying under my breath for wisdom. The phone rang and I answered it. Someone from the police department wanted to know what was going on. I said we were talking and reiterated that he was armed. I asked them not to let the police, who were lying low out of sight across the street, enter the house at this time. They asked me to leave the phone off the hook so they could listen to our conversation. I cautiously placed the receiver near the phone base and continued talking to John.

Hearing a loud knock at the door I thought, "Oh no, not the police," but it was worse. John's dad and brother, who were extremely angry, demanded entrance. I begged them to stay out, but they forced their way past me and began arguing with John who was still holding his shotgun. Jumping up on the kitchen counter, I sat next to where John was standing, thinking that if he lifted his gun I would try to kick it up and out of his hand.

The argument continued and escalated. Finally John said, "That's it, and don't follow me!" He walked down the hall with gun in hand and entered the bathroom. John's father and brother left the house. I walked down the hall calling John's name. When I opened the bathroom door, John was sitting on the toilet lid with the stock of his gun resting on the floor, the barrel in his mouth, and his thumb on the trigger. In shock I instantly asked God for wisdom.

Remembering that John had been allotted approximately one million dollars in a damage suit, I questioned, "John, do you have a will?" He shook his head no with the gun barrel still in his mouth. I said, "Do you know who will get all your money? Your father! If that is not what you desire, you'd better write a note before you pull that trigger." I was quite sure a note would not change the legal outcome, but I was stalling for time, hoping he'd take the gun barrel out of his mouth.

I had a pen but no paper. I tore a deposit slip from my checkbook and said, "Here, use this." He removed the gun barrel from his mouth and began to write. Finishing, he handed the note to me. He had written that he wanted everything to go to my church. In light of that I continued my efforts to talk him out of it.

I heard footsteps coming down the hall. It was his dad and brother again. They had decided to physically attack him thinking they could

subdue him. That was a mistake! John was big and very strong. He tossed them around like toys.

I took opportunity to grab the gun and rush it across the street to the police. They asked if they should come in now and I requested they wait a bit longer as he had knives and some other guns in the house.

Going back in to check on the ruckus, I realized John was in total charge. While he concentrated on his dad and brother, I rushed behind him and with God's help put a full nelson wrestling hold on him. I instructed them to bring in the police who handcuffed him and took him off to jail. They held him overnight and then delivered him to a hospital in another town for counseling.

Finding out his location, I drove over to visit him. A few days later he called me to say they were releasing him and he wondered if I could come and take him home. I let him know that I would be glad to do so.

On our trip home I continued to encourage him and also returned the note he had written on my deposit slip, informing him that we were interested in him and not his money.

The information he received in counseling and from me helped him. As far as I know, there were no more attempts at suicide. Through the years, John's health continued to decline, and God eventually took him to heaven in His timing rather than John's.

Not all interventions are successful—but, praise God, that one was.

Dos and Don'ts of Intervention

(The following is adapted from metanoia.org.)

The Dos:

- Be yourself. Let the person know that you care and that he is not alone. The right words are often unimportant. If you are concerned, your voice and manner will show it.
- Listen. Let the suicidal person unload his feelings of despair and ventilate anger. Try not to interrupt. No matter how negative the conversation seems, the fact that it exists is a positive sign.
- Be sympathetic, nonjudgmental, patient, calm, and accepting. Your friend or family member is doing the right thing by talking about his feelings.
- Offer hope. Reassure the person that help is available and that suicidal feelings are temporary. Let the person know that his life is important to you.

- If the person says things like, “I’m so depressed—I can’t go on,” ask the question, “Are you having thoughts of suicide?” You are not putting ideas in his head; you are showing that you are concerned, that you take him seriously, and that it’s okay for him to share his pain with you.

The Don’ts:

- Don’t argue with the suicidal person. Take mental notes concerning issues you can address later. Speak softly and calmly. (Proverbs 15:1)
- Don’t act shocked.
- Don’t promise confidentiality or be sworn to secrecy.
- Don’t justify his suicidal feelings. It is not about how bad the problem is, but how badly it’s hurting your friend or loved one.

Steps of Intervention

1. Upon becoming aware or even suspicious of someone’s suicidal thoughts or actions, understand you are already involved and responsible to start intervention whether it is welcomed or not.
2. Your first action should be to pray for wisdom, grace, understanding, boldness, and deliverance. You are wise to get others to pray with you. It is not always necessary to share the subject’s name.
3. Make contact, preferably face to face, even if the person does not want to talk with you. (Galatians 6:1 & 2) Sometimes it is helpful to have someone else with you whom the suicidal person really respects.
4. Let him know you have been concerned about him and want to hear about what’s hurting him. Tell him you know of some proven sources available which promise trustworthy help. Request, “Please let me listen and recommend the appropriate free sources.”
5. If he refuses, ask if there is anyone with whom he would be willing to talk. If there is no one, say, “At least let me ask a few simple questions,” and start right in. (Questions from **Mayo Clinic**)
 - a. When did you start feeling like this?
 - b. Did something happen that made you start feeling this way?
 - c. How are you coping with what’s been happening in your life?
 - d. Do you ever feel like just giving up?
 - e. Are you thinking about dying?
 - f. Are you thinking about suicide?
 - g. Have you had thoughts about how you would do it?
 - h. Do you know when you would do it?

- i. Do you have the means to do it?
- j. How can I best support you right now?
- k. Have you had thoughts about getting help?

(If his answers are short, go right on to the next question. If he elaborates, let him do so before moving on.)

6. If he refuses to let you ask questions and you are quite sure he is seriously suicidal, you may have to call 911 and inform the authorities of the situation. If he lets you ask the questions but doesn't let you go any further, you still may have to call 911. Occasionally, a suicidal person will agree to call a suicide hotline like (800) 273-8255, but you have to check on him to make sure he did so.
7. Continue to pray in your heart to God as you listen and talk. Ask for wisdom and understanding for yourself, and faith and deliverance for the one with whom you are working.
8. Share six truths that counter some of Satan's lies.

The Philippian jailor in Acts 16 was about to take his own life because he believed all the prisoners had escaped when the prison doors were opened. The Apostle Paul intervened and declared to him that all the prisoners were still there. The revelation of the truth not only saved the jailor's life but also resulted in his salvation, the salvation of his family, and the starting of the great church at Philippi.

Satan loves to make things look worse than they really are, hoping he can destroy someone through suicide. Truth remains the best antidote for deceit.

Perhaps sharing some of the following truths may help you intervene like the apostle Paul did.

Truth number one—You are loved and cared for by God. This is true whether the person believes and feels it or not. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John 3:16) *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.* (1 Peter 5:7) *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* (Romans 5:8)

Truth number two—If you are saved, you can be sure your salvation is everlasting according to God. If eternal life can be lost, it is not eternal. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* (John 1:12) *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* (John 10:28)

Truth number three—If you are not right with God you can be forgiven. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. (Psalm 103:2-3)*

Truth number four—You can forgive others through God. *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32) I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:13) Ask God to give you forgiveness toward others.*

Truth number five—Your life can be fulfilling in God. *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10b) For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. (Philippians 1:23-24) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)*

Truth number six—God's power and grace are sufficient for you through faith in God. *God can help you make it through your problems. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9a) God understands. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)*

Notice the following three promises from God's Word which are just awaiting your faith to become realities.

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. (Jeremiah 33:3)

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

9. Realize there are many reasons why this person should not take his life.

(You may read these ten reasons to him or have him read them verbally.)

- a. Suicide is sin and thus not the will of God for me. (Exodus 20:13)
- b. If I am not truly born again, I will not have another opportunity to be saved (Hebrews 9:27) and will spend the rest of eternity in hell fire. (Revelation 21:8)
- c. If I am born again, I will have to give an account. (Romans 14:11-12)
- d. I will set a bad example for others. (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Corinthians 11:1)
- e. In eternity I will deeply regret having taken my life. I will lose some of the eternal rewards I could have gained had I not taken my life. (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)
- f. By committing suicide, I will prove that those who questioned my character were right, and I will have a legacy of defeat. (Proverbs 20:11)
- g. I will miss the opportunity to have my earthly life turned around by the Lord and others. (1 Kings 18:21)
- h. My suicide will bring incredible pain and trauma into the lives of those who love me. (Proverbs 17:21 & 25)
- i. I will end my opportunities to be a blessing to others and to succeed in this life. (Galatians 6:10)
- j. I will bring shame on my family and close friends. (Proverbs 19:26)

10. Assurance of Salvation

Don't be afraid to deal with his assurance of salvation. Ask the person if he were to die tonight, or should the Lord return, what percentage number would represent his assurance of going to heaven—50%?, 75%?, 40%?, 90%? What number would he guess? If it is less than the 100% God wants him to have, he should make sure. 1 John 5:13 says, *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.* Yes, God wants him to be 100% sure.

There are no perfect people on earth. Though some sin a little and some a lot, all are sinners and deserve the price of sin, which is the second death in hell forever. (Romans 3:23, 6:23)

Only Christ could die in man's place because He did not have any personal sin for which to die. (1 Peter 2:22) He also had perfect righteousness, which is undeservingly applied to a person's account along with Christ's total payment of his sins when he receives Him as his Savior. (Romans 5:18)

There are three things one must do to make sure of his salvation: First—He must turn to Christ alone—not works, church, or baptism. It is a gift of God and not of works. (John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9)

Second—He must personally ask the Lord to save him. (Romans 10:13)

Third—He must truly believe and not just hope that God will save him. (James 1:6-7)

Can it be that simple? The repentant thief hanging next to Jesus mocked Him at first, but changed his mind after he heard Jesus say concerning the angry mob crucifying Him, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The repentant thief turned to Christ and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said unto him, "Verily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." He didn't get baptized, join a church, or even pay back the people he had robbed. Those are good things, but they do not save. He turned, called, and believed—and went to heaven, according to Christ's own word.

Say to your suicidal friend, "I am going to pray a prayer of assurance, and I would like you to pray with me and mean it in your heart. Ready?"

"Heavenly Father, forgive me for all my sins. I now receive Jesus Christ into my life as my personal Savior. Thank You for keeping Your promise to save me. In Jesus' name, Amen."

If he did not pray out loud, ask him if he was praying with you silently. If he says yes, tell him God can hear even the thoughts and intents of his heart.

Help him to understand that his salvation is eternal. (John 10:28) Though he will still have problems, hell is not one of them, and Christ will help him through all the rest as he by faith leans on Him for deliverance. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

If he did not pray to receive Christ, thank him for letting you go through the gospel and let him know you are available to help him more when he is ready.

11. Reassure him you will help him find understanding and competent help the next day. If he has a good pastor in whom he trusts, contact that pastor. If he doesn't attend church, you may find a pastor who is competent in counseling people in this situation and contact him. You can tell your suicidal friend about this book or even show it to them and offer to go through the long-term prevention program with him.
12. Ask him if he would be willing to gather the lethal items in his house and/or car and lock them in the trunk of your car for the night.
13. Do not leave him alone. Proverbs 17:17 says, *A friend loveth at all times*. If you are of the same gender, tell the person you will just sleep on the couch tonight so you are available if needed.
14. Encourage him to get some sleep and pray with him a prayer something like this: "Father, we thank You that You have promised to help us in our time of need. Please continue to do so. Thank You for loving us and proving it on the cross. Thank You for having a plan for us to have an abundant, meaningful, and peaceful life. We need help in following You into that life. Give us rest, faith, and protection. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen."
15. If your efforts are totally rejected and your suicidal friend or relative seems determined and adamant about taking his life, you are left with almost no choice but to call 911.

A Young Man's Peril

A young man used to attend our church on occasion with his older sister. He tended toward the ways of the world and followed the path of his ungodly friends. This also led to strife with his parents.

He finally went to culinary college and picked up some skills which allowed him to earn a fair living. He did not, however, change his habits which continued to bear bad fruit in his life. When he became totally discouraged, usually after drinking and about 3 AM to 4 AM, he would call me and talk for an hour or so.

He would often speak of committing suicide and had attempted on a few occasions to take his life. I could usually talk him out of these attempts, however, with the help of wisdom and patience from God.

Late one night he called to tell me goodbye. His voice was very drowsy, and he sounded like he was about to pass out. I asked if he had taken pills. He responded in the affirmative and told me what they were, how many

he had taken, and when he had taken them. I inquired where he was located, but he would not tell me.

I gathered from some of his previous statements that he might be in a motel. He said he needed to go and hung up.

I prayed for wisdom and then called the poison control center to see how much time we had. They figured two to three hours. I notified the police department, explaining the situation and my assumption of where he was. They contacted several motels in Fort Wayne to see if his name was registered. Within a few hours they called to say they found him. He was barely alive. They transported him to a hospital where he recovered after a week or so. He called to thank me for saving his life.

He seldom calls anymore, and to my knowledge, has not attempted suicide again. I was glad I intervened, and so was he after his recovery.

Part Three: ***Your Ministry of Suffering***

It is essential that you understand, accept, and lean on God concerning your ministry of suffering.

Recognition and Examples

People who are tempted to take their own life are usually under some form of suffering. Some endure the loss of a position, freedoms, finances, or health. Some go through a divorce or the death of a child or a mate. Some sustain physical, mental, or social abuse. All suffering is painful and difficult. Satan imparts lies to them, which they tend to believe. Guilt or despair overcomes them, and they think there is no way out other than to commit suicide. If they possessed a proper understanding of their ministry of suffering, they could overcome Satan's lies with God's truth.

Suffering for you as Christian should be an expected part of your life. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* (Philippians 1:29) Each completed day is a victory. When your ordeal is handled correctly, you lay up more treasure in heaven, provide more blessings for others, and produce more glory for God. You also advance one day closer to heaven where there will be no more suffering ever.

The concept of ministry does not seem to fit well with the term suffering until you see it from God's point of view. The trouble that man causes inflicts misery, but the suffering God allows His children to experience is

meant for ministry to deliver good. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* (Romans 8:28) God is good and wants to produce good through His children. When God allows suffering for His children because of ministry, however, it usually arrives in disguise so it is seldom recognized or welcomed.

Examples:

As a young inexperienced Christian, I had very little understanding of the ministry of suffering. Over the years God has taken me through many of my own unwelcomed encounters. Each of these hardships strengthened me and allowed me to help others and brought glory to God.

One of the first persons whose suffering left a major impact on my life was a young lady who as a teenager was left a quadriplegic after a serious diving accident. Her name was Joni Erickson. Even though she was a Christian, her physical, emotional, and social struggles were more than she could bear without leaning completely on the Lord. By her own admission, she would have taken her life had she been physically able to do so.

As God granted ongoing grace and, yes, degrees of acceptance, He revealed to her His calling into the ministry of suffering. She began to develop her remaining gifts. One gift was art, though now she had to hold her pencils and paintbrushes in her mouth. Another gift was music as she used her beautiful voice to sing for her Savior. A third gift was her ability to view things from God's perspective and communicate to the disabled and other hurting people the hope that she had found in God's sufficient grace.

Through her art, singing, writing, speaking, and worldwide radio program, she has ministered to millions including me.



Let me tell you of another lady who impacted my life through her ministry of suffering. When I first came to Roanoke, Indiana, in 1976 to pastor the Roanoke Baptist Church, I met a dear lady named Pansy Stephens who was one of the founding members of the church. She maintained a sweet and helpful spirit day after day. She stayed busy finding ways to clean and beautify the church and gave needed assistance to whomever she could.

She carried many difficult concerns of her own. She was very burdened for her unsaved husband and consumed with the care of their adult son,

Jim, who suffered from Down's syndrome. Those who were aware of her burdens marveled at her positive spirit, uncomplaining attitude, and testimony. Her unselfish spirit was a major part of her husband coming to Christ before he passed away.

Eventually her son was moved to a group home because Pansy began to show signs of Alzheimer's disease. As it progressed, my wife and I visited her in a nursing home in a nearby town. The attendants and residents loved her. Her spirit was so unlike the other Alzheimer's patients. As time passed, she was unable to frame a logical sentence, but when my wife and I sang or quoted Scripture she joined in and hardly missed a word.

Finally she curled up in a fetal position and was not even aware of our presence. Months passed. One day when traveling home from visiting Pansy I asked God why He didn't just take her home to heaven. What value was there in her being in such a condition here on earth?

Immediately my mind went to a number of people in that nursing home who had trusted Christ. I visited and prayed with Pansy, even though she was unresponsive to me, I then visited other residents and led a number of them to Christ. I would not have even been there to witness, if it were not for Pansy. I said, "God, You are still using Pansy to bring people to Christ."

The testimonies of Joni and Pansy prove wrong those who argue that the lack of quality of life calls for ending that life.

The ministry of suffering all makes more sense when we see it through God's Word. So follow along with me as we do a Bible study on this subject.

Reality

Good news! You've been called to the ministry of suffering. Isn't that exciting? Let's take a closer look at this ministry for which you've been chosen.

Suffering takes many forms. There are six main terms in the Bible which help us understand the trials of God's children: *afflictions, infirmities, persecutions, temptations, tribulations, and, of course, sufferings.*

God's children hurt in many different ways and degrees. Some suffering is physical with infirmities that cause pain, disease, or handicaps. Some of these infirmities are temporary, while others last a lifetime. Some folks suffer materially, some intellectually, some socially, and some emotionally. Some are persecuted, some are oppressed by evil forces, and many encounter injustices. The fact that bad things often happen to good

people cannot be denied. That doesn't mean that God is unjust or uncaring, as we learn from His Word.

Those who properly accept their suffering and respond appropriately bring much good for others and earn many rewards for themselves. Check out the story of Joseph in the book of Genesis. Though he was unjustly hated and sold into slavery by his own brothers and mistreated by others, he continued to trust and obey God without complaint or bitterness.

He ended up saving the nations of Israel and Egypt from starvation. When the time of reckoning came for his brothers, Joseph simply said to them, *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.* (Genesis 50:20) Besides allowing Joseph to minister to many people, God made him second in command in Egypt. Had he not willingly endured his suffering, history would be forever changed for the worse.

I see a slingshot principle here. Every time Joseph tried to do right, he seemed to go backwards. However, in doing so, he gained potential until God's timing was right. Then instantly he shot forward from the prison and entered the palace. Had he refused to suffer or even been released earlier, he may have gone home and starved to death with his entire family.

In reality, God has a ministry of suffering for every child of His. Again, this ministry is designed to provide service to God, others, and yourself through various forms of affliction. Note the following Scriptures.

(Philippians 1:29) *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* Suffering for Christ's sake is a real part of your calling as God's child. It just goes with the territory.

(Acts 14:22) *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.* Paul was warning the new believers that between the time of their salvation and the time they entered heaven, they would of necessity experience much tribulation. As obedient believers, we cannot live in a world of unbelievers and Satan's attacks without serious opposition. Jesus said in John 15:19, *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12) Jesus taught us, *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.* (John 3:20) Jesus is the Light. (John 8:12) He expects you to be a light as well.

(Matthew 5:14-15; Philippians 2:15) Your light is both needed and hated by the worldly.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. (Psalm 34:19) *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.* (1 Peter 2:21) Your tribulation in this world is not an option, but rather an opportunity.

Though the Lord permits you to suffer, it is not His primary desire to hurt you. Lamentations 3:33 says, *For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.* James 5:11 says, *Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

My life changed when I accepted the fact that my sufferings will be with me until I go to heaven, but I can choose happiness even in times of trial. If you think you can't be happy while suffering, then you will seldom be happy in this life. At the end of each day, I often think, "That wasn't so bad. The Lord got me through and things could have been a lot worse."

Reluctance

Regardless of the cause of our suffering, we are all humanly reluctant to participate. Pain (whether physical, emotional, or any other form) is not normally pleasant. Hebrews 12:11 says, *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

When our suffering is undeserved as in Job's case, we are more reluctant to accept it. Even Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane said, *...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* (Matthew 26:39b) God does not want us to seek testing (Matthew 6:13), nor to deserve them (1 Peter 4:15), but to yield our will to Him when suffering best accomplishes His purposes.

Recipients

There is a seemingly endless list in Scripture of those who suffered. Some people deserved the suffering while others did not. Some received it willingly and others did not. Some showed proper responses and others did not. Some were rewarded and others were not. All of them, however, left us examples—some good and others bad. Let us examine just a few.

- a. **Adam and Eve** sinned in the Garden of Eden, and lost not only their home in the beautiful garden, but also their sinless nature and close fellowship with God.
- b. **Noah** suffered sixty or more years of labor and ridicule while building the ark, but everyone born after the flood owe their lives to Noah's suffering.
- c. **Abraham's** sufferings included leaving his homeland. He waited decades for God's promise of a son (Isaac) through which the Savior of the world would come. His testing and faith eventually provided all mankind with a chance to be saved.
- d. **Moses** suffered separation from his family and the agony of trying to lead a rebellious nation to its promised land. His ordeals, however, provided the giving of the Law and a picture of the coming Savior and salvation through the Tabernacle.
- e. **Joshua** suffered the fighting of many battles over the span of forty-five years, but his battles provided a homeland for the children of Israel.
- f. **David** suffered at the hands of King Saul and even at the hands of some of his own children, but God used those trials to show us through the Psalms how to handle our own testing. David also provided a lineage for and a picture of many aspects of the Messiah.
- g. **Job** suffered incredible losses of his riches, servants, children, friends, reputation, and health; but God gave him exoneration, restoration, and a tremendous example for us of patience and of the tender mercies of God.
- h. **Esther** risked her life for a chance to plead her cause for the Jewish race. God and the king granted her mercy and saved the Jews from extermination.
- i. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** faced the threat of death in a burning fiery furnace for not bowing down to an image, but God preserved them in a fire seven times hotter than normal, bringing glory and worship to Himself and great promotions for themselves.
- j. **Daniel** suffered a planned destruction by his jealous underlings in the den of hungry lions, but God was glorified through delivering Daniel and destroying his adversaries by those very lions.
- k. **Christ** suffered more than any man. He left His perfect home and glory in heaven to face a meager and, at times, homeless life on earth. He was rejected by His own race, his siblings, his disciples, and finally His heavenly Father because He became sin for us. He gave up His clothes, His honor and modesty, His vengeance, His

rights, His body and blood, yea, even His life for His enemies. However, He made available what no other man could, salvation for all, and promised it to all those who believe. Then God raised Him from the dead and highly exalted Him, giving Him a name which is above every name. He also provided understanding and help for all who suffer. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

- l. **Peter** suffered several times the humiliation and failure pride brings, but he turned back to the Lord and through the Holy Spirit brought thousands of both Jews and Gentiles to Christ.
- m. **Paul** brought much persecution to the Jewish Christians which Christ said, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." That means his suffering was because of Christ and for Him. Certainly it is true that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. However, may I add, that on the other side of forgiveness, reaping turns into great blessing. Read carefully in the book of Acts and you will see Paul reaping the same injustices he had passed out as an unbeliever. Note 2 Corinthians 11:23-28: *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

In 2 Corinthians 12 after asking for delivery from his thorn in the flesh, Paul received three answers of "No," but found grace and strength to sustain him. Paul's response is found in verses 9 and 10. *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.* Paul was strong indeed through his sufferings for they made him lean on the Lord for His strength. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* (Philippians 4:13)

Through his sufferings, he was enabled to be a leader of those who turned the world upside down for Christ.

Do you get the picture? God wants to bring glory to Himself, help to others, and rewards to you through your trials.

Reasons, Results, and Rewards

We already saw many of the reasons, results, and rewards of suffering through the recipients we just noted, but there remains much more.

The ultimate purpose for the ministry of suffering is for the Lord. Philippians 1:29 says, *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ [for His benefit] not only to believe on him, but also to suffer FOR HIS SAKE*. In Acts 9:16 Christ says concerning Paul, *For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for MY NAME'S SAKE*.

Though the ministry of suffering is primarily to further the Lord's purposes and bring Him glory, there are also overflowing benefits. God allows only suffering that is designed to produce His will. *For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.* (Acts 4:28)

A. Suffering provides acts of ministry toward others.

1. You can pass on the comfort you have experienced. *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.* (2 Corinthians 1:4)
2. Experience that is gained enables you to help others who are suffering. *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour [help] them that are tempted.* (Hebrews 2:18)
3. Suffering can provide more opportunities to preach the gospel. *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only... And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* (Acts 11:19, 21) The church that started in Antioch played a major part in reaching the world.
4. Suffering can bring glory to God on your part. *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.* (1 Peter 4:14) See also 1 Corinthians 10:31; Acts 9:16, 15:26, 21:13 and 1 Peter 2:21.

B. Suffering provides improvements for ministry.

1. Help you increase your patience, experience, and hope. *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope.* (Romans 5:3-4)
2. Help you better know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* (Philippians 3:10)
3. Help you call on God. *And said, I [Jonah] cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.* (Jonah 2:2)
4. Help you repent when needed. *I [God] will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.* (Hosea 5:15)
5. Help you to learn God's statutes. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.* (Psalms 119:71)
6. Helps you learn obedience. *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.* (Hebrews 5:8)
7. Help to perfect you. *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* (Hebrews 2:10)
8. Help give you assurance of your salvation. *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* (Hebrews 12:6)
9. Help to refine you. *Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.* (Isaiah 48:10)
10. Help you to be happy. *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.* (1 Peter 4:14)

C. Suffering provides rewards from your ministry.

1. Faithful sufferers will receive rewards. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* (Matthew 5:10-12)

2. Faithful sufferers will reign with Christ. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.* (2 Timothy 2:12)
3. Faithful sufferers will receive praise, honor, and glory at His appearing. *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* (1 Peter 1:7)
4. Faithful sufferers will be glorified with Christ. *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* (Romans 8:17)
5. Faithful sufferers will receive consolation. *And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation [comfort].* (2 Corinthians 1:7)

Summary

Christ set the pattern for the ministry of suffering. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* (Philippians 2:5-8) He was willing to put all people above Himself. His whole life on this earth exemplified the ultimate in the ministry of suffering for others. As a result, He will receive the ultimate position and rewards. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* (Philippians 2:9-11)

Your sufferings with Christ and for Christ are temporary, but your rewards are eternal. However, the unsaved person's rewards are temporary but his sufferings are eternal. Paul said in Romans 8:18, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

We usually want the results and rewards without the repercussions of the sufferings which produce them. We are like those who want riches without work. No wonder Paul said, *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because*

the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:3-5) Jesus stayed focused on the joy that was set before Him which enabled Him to endure the cross, despise the shame, and be set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2) Note also Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Reinforcements and Relief

Going through sufferings and maintaining a proper spirit is not humanly possible without God's help. You must turn to Him in faith, follow His commands and examples, and claim His awesome promises.

A. Helpful Examples (of those who sought relief)

1. Joseph—*And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. (Acts 7:10)*
2. Children of Israel
 - a. *And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression. (Deuteronomy 26:7)*
 - b. *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. (Psalm 22:24)*
 - c. *Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry. (Psalm 106:43-44)*
3. David
 - a. *Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. (Psalm 119:92)*
 - b. *This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. (Psalm 119:50)*
4. Infirmity Multitude—*And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. (Luke 7:21)*
5. Paul
 - a. *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what*

persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. (2 Timothy 3:10-11)

b. *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:12-13)*

c. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Romans 8:35) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38 & 39)*

6. Church at Philippi—*Notwithstanding ye [Philippians] have well done, that ye did communicate [helped financially] with my affliction [need]. (Philippians 4:14)*

7. True Believers

a. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27)*

b. *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (Romans 15:1)*

B. Comforting Statements

1. God the Father

a. *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich).*

(Revelation 2:9a)

b. *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (2 Corinthians 1:4)*

c. *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. (2 Thessalonians 1:6)*

2. Christ the Son of God

a. *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)*

- b. *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation [comfort] also aboundeth by Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:5)*
3. The Holy Spirit
Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)
- C. Prayers of David
1. *Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. (Psalm 25:18)*
 2. *Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. (Psalm 35:3)*
 3. *I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word. (Psalm 119:107)*
 4. *Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law. (Psalm 119:153)*
 5. *LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions. (Psalm 132:1)*
- D. Sure Promises
1. *If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry. (Exodus 22:23)*
 2. *For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high [proud] looks. (Psalm 18:27)*
 3. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. (Psalm 34:19)*
 4. *I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. (Psalm 140:12)*
 5. *Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. (Isaiah 49:13)*
 6. *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)*

Responses to Suffering

Now we come down to where the rubber meets the road. How you respond to your sufferings will determine how much ministry and good will come out of them.

A. Wrong Responses

1. Fear

The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? (Psalm 118:6)

But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. (1 Peter 3:14)

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

2. Shame

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:13)

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed. (2 Timothy 1:12a)

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. (1 Peter 4:16)

3. Retaliation

Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee. (Proverbs 20:22)

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (Romans 12:19)

B. Right Responses

1. Forgive those who wrong you.

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. (Luke 23:34a)

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14-15)

2. Thank God for your suffering.

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

3. Pray believing God for His coming help.

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. (James 5:13a)

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

4. Partake of your sufferings willingly.
...but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. (2 Timothy 1:8b)
5. Endure your sufferings gladly.
Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life. (James 1:12a)
But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions. (2 Timothy 4:5a)
6. Trust and be patient.
Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer. (Romans 12:12)
Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. (James 5:10)
7. Overcome evil with good.
But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. (Matthew 5:44)
Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:20-21)
8. Commit yourself and the situation unto God.
Who, [Christ] when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. (1 Peter 2:23)
Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4:19)
9. Rejoice with exceeding joy.
Let me make a comment here. Rejoicing is the most telling response. Rejoicing is an evidence of your trust in the promises of God for victory and rewards. This is not self-confidence because most of it comes when you appear to be losing in suffering. Instead of looking at your present situation, you are to look ahead to God's sustaining grace and your future victory. The battle is not yours but the Lord's.
Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:13)

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (Matthew 5:12)

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (James 1:2-4)

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. (Acts 5:41)

10. Glory in your sufferings.

Why? God has chosen to manifest His strength through your weakness.

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecution, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Is this how you respond over your sufferings which are intended to minister to Christ and others? Ask yourself if you do the following things:

- Forgive those who wrong you
- Thank God for your suffering
- Pray believing God for His help
- Partake of your sufferings willingly
- Endure your sufferings gladly
- Trust and be patient
- Overcome evil with good
- Commit yourself and the situation unto God
- Rejoice with exceeding joy
- Glory in your sufferings

If not, trust God to help you do things His way. Why go through all this suffering and fail to accomplish God's plan or receive His rewards? Thank God in faith for the suffering He has chosen for you even though you don't understand it all.

Surrender and commit yourself with a sincere prayer like this:

Dear Lord, I accept my ministry of suffering because You have called me to it. I thank You for it because You will use it to bring forth good. I trust You in it because I need Your help to do it right and because You are faithful.

In Jesus' name, Amen

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