

FOLLOWING JESUS WHEN IT HURTS

SUFFERING WELL

Discuss

How do you answer the question of why a loving and all-powerful God allows people (including His children) to suffer?

*When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that **through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.***

(Acts 14:21,22)

Introduction

How can we suffer well?

God is sovereign

Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand. (Proverbs 19:21)

Asking why – looking forward not backward

Benefits of suffering

Sanctification

1 Peter 1:3-9

Romans 5:1-5

1 Peter 2:21-23

Consolation

2 Corinthians 1:3,4

Not the end of the story

Revelation 21:1-5

Discuss

In what ways can you say that God has used suffering for good in your life?

Pray

Pray that we suffer well:

- remembering who we are in Christ
- trusting in God's sovereign plan
- resisting the temptation to despair
- knowing that the Lord is near as we walk through the valley

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love and ev'ry grace,
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer,
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favoured hour
At once He'd answer my request
And, by His love's constraining
pow'r,
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart
And let the angry pow'rs of hell
Assault my soul in ev'ry part.

Yea, more with His own hand He
seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe,
Crossed all the fair designs I
schemed,
Humbled my heart and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this," I trembling cried;
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to
death?"
"Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and
faith."

"These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free
And break thy schemes of earthly joy
That thou may'st find thy all in Me."

(John Newton)