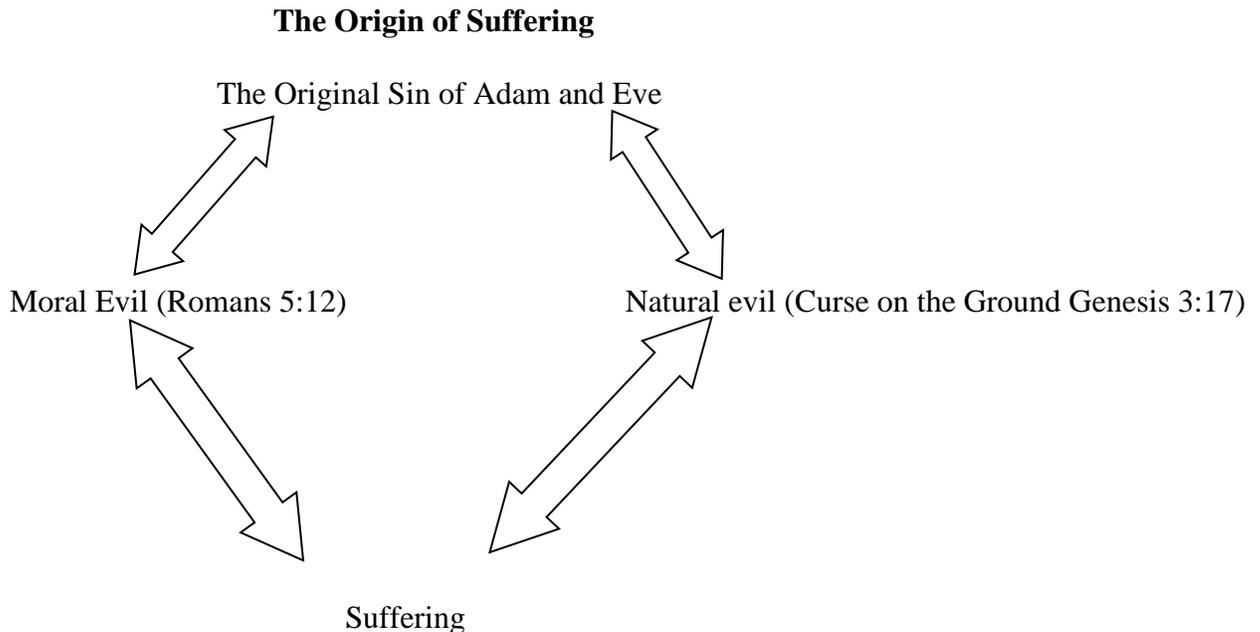


Understanding And Dealing With Suffering in Your Life

Definition of suffering: to experience pain or distress as the result of choices within our control and choices beyond our control.



Twelve Basic Categories To Trace Suffering Back To

1. Sometimes we suffer because of soil evil- curse on the ground as a result of Adam and Eve's sin resulting in all sorts of natural disasters. (Genesis 3:17, Romans 8:20—22, Job 1:19) (Creation subjected to futility ; Hence great winds striking the homes of Job's children leading to their death.)
2. Sometimes we suffer as a result of situational evil- malfunction of man-made items. (Luke 13:4-5) (Eighteen died from the tower in Siloam falling on them.)
3. Sometimes we suffer as a result of sickness- physical ailments and issues that limit or cause discomfort in the natural movement and function of the body accordingly. (Mathew 9:12)
4. Sometimes we suffer as a result of the sin of self- disobedience to God in all aspects of life. (Galatians 6:7-8, Psalm 38:1-18) (Walking in the flesh brings corruption; the unrepentance of David lead to suffering in the flesh)
5. Sometimes we suffer as a result of the sin of others- disobedience of others resulting in negative consequences in your life. (Psalm 119:161, 1 Samuel 26:17-25) (David being persecuted by Saul)

6. Sometimes we suffer as a result of **Satan**- the enemy seeking to kill, steal, and destroy. (Luke 22:31) (Satan seeking to sift Peter not to bless him but to hurt him.)
7. Sometimes we suffer as a result of coming to **salvation**- the flesh, the world, and devil seeking to keep one from embracing the salvation of Jesus Christ through some sort of pain or distress. (1 Thessalonians 1:5-7) (The Thessalonians received the word in much tribulation)
8. Sometimes we suffer as a result of pursuing **sanctification**- pain or distress that has come to motivate biblical change or as a result of biblical change. (Hebrews 12:11, 1 Peter 4:1-3) (No discipline seems joyful but after one is trained from it one develops in righteousness; As one seeks to walk in what is right they will suffer in their flesh.)
9. Sometimes we suffer as a result of **servicing**- being used by God as a vessel of honor to be productive for the advancement of His Kingdom in all aspects. (2 Timothy 4:14-15, Matthew 5:11-12). (Alexander the coppersmith did much harm to Paul as Paul was serving God; You are blessed when insulted, persecuted, or someone falsely accuses you as a result of serving Jesus Christ.)
10. Sometimes we suffer to keep us from **self-importance**- to keep us from exalting ourselves we may suffer some form of pain. (2 Corinthians 12:7, because Paul was given so much revelation God sent a messenger of Satan to torment him, a thorn in the flesh to keep him from exalting himself.)
11. Sometimes we suffer to discover and demonstrate the **soundness of our faith**- going through various kinds of trials and tribulations so that we may see how strong or weak our faith is in Christ our King and to change or to continue in that faith accordingly resulting in receiving the prize of our faith . (1 Peter 1:5-9; Saints were suffering through various trials and their faith demonstrated love, belief, and rejoicing.)
12. Sometimes we suffer as result of God **snipping** us- God pruning our character to make us more productive in bearing fruit for him. (John 15:2, God pruning the disciples that they may bear more fruit for the Kingdom of God.)

II. The Right Perspective to Consider when Suffering

- A. We must embrace the fact that God is in **control** of all suffering (Ecclesiastes 7:13-14, 9:1).
- B. We must embrace the fact that we will not **escape** from the experience of suffering in this lifetime (John 16:33).
- C. We must embrace the fact that God has already undergone the **worst** of all suffering on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:21-25).
- D. We must embrace the fact that God the Son and the God the Holy Spirit are praying on behalf of individuals who **belong** to Jesus Christ to God the Father (Romans 8:26-27, Hebrews 7:23-25).

- E. We must embrace the fact that God will bring **good** (transformation of character into the image of Jesus Christ) out of suffering for the individuals who belong to Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-32).
- F. We must embrace the fact that God will bring **comfort** to the people who are His and are suffering as a result of seeking to serve for God's will and good pleasure (2 Corinthians 1:1-7).
- G. We must embrace the fact that God will bring the people who are His **through** the suffering they encounter accordingly (1 Peter 5:10-11).
- H. We must embrace the fact that God will inflict more **suffering** on the people who belong to Him when they refuse to turn away from practicing the sin that is currently bringing suffering to their lives (1 Corinthians 11: 27-32).

III. The Right Response To Suffering

- A. If we are suffering from **soil evil** and **situational evil** we should seek to worship God as we grieve our suffering accepting the Sovereignty of God over our lives while working through the matter with endurance; pursuing wisdom to fix, resolve, or work through the matter and seeking support from fellow Christians. (Job 1:19-20, Ecclesiastes 7:13-14, 9:1, James 1:1-5, Romans 12:15)
- B. If we are suffering from **sickness** we should pray for help, repent of sin if there be any tied to the sickness, trust in the Lord and function in obedience in spite of our sickness. (James 5:13-15, Proverbs 3:5-8)
- C. If we are suffering from the **sin of self** we should renounce our sin, repent of our sin, renew our minds in the truth, and replace our sin with right living to restore the joy and peace to our lives. (Proverbs 28:13-14, Psalm 51:1-19, 32:1-11)
- D. If we are suffering from the **sin of others** we should embrace the reality that what others meant for evil, God will use to bring good to our lives while obeying God in spite of the sin of others; Where appropriate, we should confront them about the sin accordingly. (Genesis 50:12, Romans 8:28, Romans 12:17-21, Luke 17:3, Galatians 6:1)
- E. If we are suffering from **Satan** or to be kept from **self-importance** we should submit to God and resist the devil with the spiritual armor given to us by God which will cause the devil to flee from us. (James 4:7, Ephesians 6:13-17)
- F. If we are suffering from receiving **salvation** we should become an example to others as we serves God and wait for the return of Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 1:6-10)
- G. If we are suffering from **sanctification** or to demonstrate the **soundness of our faith** we should endure and persevere anticipating the perfect result of our sanctification and soundness of our faith which is the

transformation into the image of Jesus Christ and focus on the hope to be realized in Christ Jesus our Lord. (James 1:1-5, Romans 8: 28-29, Romans 5:1-5)

- H. If we are suffering from *servings* or from the *snipping of God* we should embrace the fact that God will provide comfort in the midst of our affliction while continuing to serve which will result in developing in endurance leading to Christ-like character being developed. (2 Corinthians 1:1-7, James 1:1-4)