

How to Make the Best of the Worst A Biblical Seminar on Suffering by David Hinds

The responses of three Biblical suffers:

✠ Mary, an unwed mother: Luke 1: 46-50

✠ David, a king suffering from depression: Psalm 13: 5-6

✠ Job, a wealthy businessman who had lost his children, his health and everything he owned, except for a nagging wife and a few judgmental "friends": Job 19: 25-27.

Discuss how their understanding of the sovereignty of God affected their response to their individual suffering.

Practical Application: How do we handle the hard times?

✠ **Be Prepared.** John 16: 33, Jeremiah 12: 5, Luke 6: 46-49

Why?

✠ **Trust God, not your feelings.** Erect a monument. Take God at His word.

Isaiah 49: 14-16, Isaiah 41: 13

Philippians 4: 13, Philippians 4:19

Numbers 11: 4-6 Was meat a need or a want?

1 Peter 5: 6-7, Hebrews 4: 15-16

2 Timothy 1:7 Identify the source of your fear. I can't come from God, so from whom did it come?

Hebrews 13: 5-6

Romans 8: 38-39 This should be our credo. The real issue is "do we trust God and believe His word, or don't we?"

† **Understand your feelings.** We will not always "feel" close to God.

Isaiah 41: 10. What were the feelings of the one being commanded by God?

Psalms 13: 5-6 What is the context of this Psalm?

Matthew 27: 46 "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" What was Jesus "feeling" when he said this?

Mark 14: 32-36 What had Jesus done to prepare for the ultimate suffering?

† **Surrender all of your expectations to God.**

Galatians 2: 20 Who am I living for?

Philippians 4: 6-7 What is the key to peace in the storm?

Job 13:5 How much did Job trust God?

Applications from the texts

- What we truly give to God, Satan can never use to tempt or trouble us.
- Be realistic about your options.
- If everyone else fails you, God will hold you up. Deuteronomy 33:27

‡ **Live one day at a time.** Matthew 6: 33-34

‡ **Concentrate on the basics** of quiet time, Bible study, Bible meditation, scripture memory.
Matthew 11: 28-30

‡ **Look for opportunities to minister.** Hurting people draw hurting people. The lost and uncommitted want to know if Jesus really makes a difference in our lives. The way we deal with suffering on a personal level supplies that proof.

2 Corinthians 1: 3-7

‡ **Look for the positive.** Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18

1 Peter 5: 10-11

James 1: 2-4

‡ **Use down days to trigger trust.** Psalm 57: 1

‡ **Expect lessons to be summarized and restated.** John 14: 26-27

‡ **Write it down.** We will forget what God has done for us in the fury of living. The following two devotions are excerpted from Walt Hendrickson's excellent yearly devotional guide, Thoughts From The Diary of a Desperate Man.
<http://www.leadershipfoundation.org/orderForm.htm>to order.

Learning Obedience

"Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Heb. 5:8

Gethsemane is the only recorded incident of Jesus meeting the will of God and not wanting to do it. He pled with God, "let this cup pass from me." Earlier he said, "my food is to do the will of him who sent me." In Gethsemane he prayed, "not as I will, but as thou wilt." This tension between what he wanted and what his father wanted caused him to "sweat as it were great drops of blood."

You don't learn obedience by complying with commands you perceive to be in your interest. Rather, when like Jesus, you are denied the request you make to your heavenly father--that is the test through which obedience is learned. If God, who had no higher commitment than to his son, denied his request, you should not allow his denial of your request to threaten his love and commitment to you.

When my six-year-old son was dying of leukemia, the doctor had to run a large needle through his thigh and into his bone to draw bone marrow. I held him in my arms during the procedure, and as the pain mounted he looked me in the face asking, "It hurts so much, can't you make them stop?" I assured him that it was essential that they do it, and he said okay, squeezing his little arms around my neck.

As I heard him whimper in pain I prayed, "Oh God, if my son can trust me, a fallible, sinful man when I tell him 'no', help me to trust you when you refuse to remove my pain in the time of testing."

The Twin Pillars of Faith

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isaiah 46: 10

If you desire a satisfactory relationship with God, two pillars must be firmly anchored in your life. You must believe that He is in control and that He has your best interest at heart.

The sovereignty of God must be a deeply held conviction. When my son was dying of leukemia, a friend wrote, "I don't know how this tragedy came about, but I do know that it did not come from God. God is not in the business of killing little children. " As I pondered his observation, I concluded that if God did not kill my son, then I have a far greater problem than my son dying. I worship a god who is not in control. God was not sitting on the edge of the universe chagrined over the disease that ravaged my son's life. As I held my son in my arms while he slipped into eternity, I know that I was experiencing the beautiful handiwork of God.

This naturally leads to the second essential pillar: The goodness of God. God is good. He is incapable of doing anything but good. The debate, like so many debates in life, is over who gets to determine what good looks like. Do you truly believe that the hurts of life come from the hand of a good God who only does what is best for you?

The writer of Hebrews, quoting from the Psalmist says, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Hebrews 13: 6 quoting Psalm 118: 6). There are only two people in life that can hurt you: you and God. Because He is good, seeking only your best, in the final analysis, only you can destroy your life. He does not delegate your destiny to Satan or any other force on earth.

Without these pillars firmly embedded in your convictions, you will find it difficult to survive the storms of life.

Seminar on Suffering - Bible Verses - KMI 2011

Responses of biblical sufferers:

Luke 1:46–50: And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

Psalm 13:5–6 But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.

Job 19:25–27 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Be prepared:

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Jeremiah 12:5 “If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?”

Luke 6:46–49 “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

Trust God, not your feelings:

Isaiah 49:14–16 But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.” “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.

Isaiah 41:13 For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Numbers 11:4–6 The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, “If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!”

1 Peter 5:6–7 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Hebrews 4:15–16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

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

Hebrews 13:5–6 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

Romans 8:38–39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Understand your feelings, you will not always feel close to God:

Isaiah 41:10 So do not *fear*, for I am with you; do not be *dismayed*, for **I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you** with my righteous right hand.

Matthew 27:46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*”—which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Mark 14:32–36 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. “*Abba*, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Surrender all your expectations to God:

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Philippians 4:6–7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Job 13:15a Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;

Applications from the text:

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, 'Destroy him!'

Live one day at a time:

Matthew 6:33–34 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Concentrate on the basics:

Matthew 11:28–30 "***Come to me***, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ***Take my yoke*** upon you and ***learn from me***, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Look for opportunities to minister:

2 Corinthians 1:3–4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, ***so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.***

Look for the positive:

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

1 Peter 5:10–11 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

James 1:2–4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Use down days to trigger trust:

Psalm 57:1 Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me,
for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings
until the disaster has passed.

Bonus! Psalm 91:1–4 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my
fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare
and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings
you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

Expect lessons to be summarized and restated:

John 14:26–27 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my
name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do
not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.