

Prayer and Suffering
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Tuesday Morning Men's Bible Study
Park Cities Presbyterian Church
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Romans 5:3-5

³ ... but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Job 23:10

¹⁰ But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

Principle #1

During your suffering, pray for a changed life (endurance, character and hope). Look for the ways God is pouring His love into your heart.

Genesis 42:36-38

³⁶ And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. **All this has come against me.**" ³⁷ Then Reuben said to his father, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you." ³⁸ But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol."

Principle 2

God is always weaving a story for your life—and it's not over. God's hiddenness is not abandonment. During suffering, don't assume you understand what God is doing. Stay in the story and pray by: waiting, watching, submitting, thanking, repenting.

Job 42:1-2, 3b, 5-6

Then Job answered the LORD and said: ² "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ³ ... Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; ⁶ therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Principle 3

When you know the WHO, insistence on the "why... when... how" will fade. Peace and joy are found in praying & rehearsing God's attributes—not seeking additional info.

Psalm 142

A Maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer

142 With my voice I cry out to the LORD;
with my voice I plead for mercy to
the LORD.

² I pour out my complaint before him;
I tell my trouble before him.

³ When my spirit faints within me,
you know my way!

In the path where I walk
they have hidden a trap for me.

⁴ Look to the right and see:
there is none who takes notice of me;
no refuge remains to me;
no one cares for my soul.

I cry to you, O Lord;

I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."

⁶ Attend to my cry,
for I am brought very low!

Deliver me from my persecutors,
for they are too strong for me!

⁷ Bring me out of prison,
that I may give thanks to your name!

The righteous will surround me,
for you will deal bountifully with me.

Principle #4

God welcomes a true lament. It fosters relationship with Him. Try praying this pattern in any order that is honest:

MY REALITY <-----> TRUTHS ABOUT GOD <-----> ASK

Discussion Questions:

1. Which one of these Scriptures connected with you most? Why?
2. Recall a time of suffering in your life (it may be right now).
 - Was it easy or hard to pray? Why?
 - How did the Lord change you through it?
3. Is there anything you heard today that you could adopt for your prayers?
4. How comfortable are you offering "prayers of lament" to God?

Great Resources:

A Praying Life

When God Weeps

Walking with God Through Pain & Suffering

Deserted by God?

Hearing Jesus Speak into Your Sorrow

When Suffering Enters Your Door (Audio CD)

Paul E. Miller

Joni Eareckson Tada & Steven Estes

Timothy Keller

Sinclair Ferguson

Nancy Guthrie

Paul Tripp