

he sees in me or what he hears from me, 12:7 even because of the extraordinary character of the revelations. Therefore,<sup>5</sup> so that I would not become arrogant, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to trouble<sup>6</sup> me—so that I would not become arrogant.<sup>7</sup> 12:8 I asked the Lord three times about this, that it would depart from me. 12:9 But<sup>8</sup> he said to me, "My grace is enough<sup>9</sup> for you, for my<sup>10</sup> power is made perfect<sup>11</sup> in weakness." So then, I will boast most gladly<sup>12</sup> about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in<sup>13</sup> me. 12:10 Therefore I am content with<sup>14</sup> weaknesses, with insults, with troubles, with persecutions and difficulties<sup>15</sup> for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

## THORNS

Sandra felt as low as the heels of her shoes when she pulled open the florist shop door, against a November gust of wind. Her life had been as sweet as a spring breeze and then, in the fourth month of her second pregnancy, a "minor" automobile accident stole her joy. This was Thanksgiving week and the time she should have delivered their infant son. She grieved over their loss.

Troubles had multiplied.

Her husband's company "threatened" to transfer his job to a new location. Her sister had called to say that she could not come for her long awaited holiday visit. What's worse, Sandra's friend suggested that Sandra's grief was a God-given path to maturity that would allow her to empathize with others who suffer. "She has no idea what I'm feeling," thought Sandra with a shudder "Thanksgiving? Thankful for what?" she wondered.. "For a careless driver whose



truck was hardly scratched when he rear-ended me? For an airbag that saved my life, but took my child's?"

"Good afternoon, can I help you?"

Sandra was startled by the approach of the shop clerk. "I . . . I need an arrangement," stammered Sandra.

"For Thanksgiving? I'm convinced that flowers tell stories," she continued. "Are you looking for something that conveys 'gratitude' this Thanksgiving?"

"Not exactly!" Sandra blurted out. "In the last five months, everything that could go wrong has gone wrong."

Sandra regretted her outburst, and was surprised when the clerk said, "I have the perfect arrangement for you."

Then the bell on the door rang, and the clerk greeted the new customer....

"Hi, Barbara, let me get your order." She excused herself and walked back to a small workroom, then quickly reappeared, carrying an arrangement of greenery, bows, and what appeared to be long-stemmed thorny roses. Except the ends of the rose stems were neatly snipped: there were no flowers.

"Do you want these in a box?" asked the clerk. Sandra watched - was this a joke? Who would want rose stems with no flowers! She waited for laughter, but neither woman laughed.

"Yes, please," Barbara replied with an appreciative smile. "You'd think after three years of getting the special, I wouldn't be so moved by its significance, but I can feel it right here, all over again," she said, as she gently tapped her chest.

Sandra stammered, "Ah, that lady just left with . . . uh . . . she left with no flowers!"

"That's right," said the clerk. "I cut off the flowers. That's the 'Special'. I call it the Thanksgiving Thorns Bouquet. Barbara came into the shop three years ago, feeling much as



you do today," explained the clerk. "She thought she had very little to be thankful for. She had just lost her father; the family business was failing; her son had gotten into drugs; and she was facing major surgery. That same year I had lost my husband," continued the clerk. "For the first time in my life, I had to spend the holidays alone. I had no children, no husband, no family nearby, and too much debt to allow any travel."

"So what did you do?" asked Sandra.

"I learned to be thankful for thorns," answered the clerk quietly. "I've always thanked God for the good things in my life and I never questioned Him why those good things happened to me, but when the bad stuff hit, I cried out, 'Why? Why me?!' It took time for me to learn that the dark times are important to our faith! I have always enjoyed the 'flowers' of my life, but it took the thorns to show me the beauty of God's comfort! You know, the Bible says that God comforts us when we're afflicted, and from His consolation we learn to comfort others."

Sandra sucked in her breath, as she thought about what her friend had tried to tell her. "I guess the truth is I don't want comfort. I've lost a baby and I'm angry with God."

Just then someone else walked in the shop.

"Hey, Phil!" the clerk greeted the balding, rotund man.

"My wife sent me in to get our usual Thanksgiving arrangement . . . twelve thorny, long-stemmed stems!" laughed Phil as the clerk handed him a tissue wrapped arrangement from the refrigerator.

"Those are for your wife?" asked Sandra incredulously. "Do you mind telling me why she wants a bouquet that looks like that?"

"Four years ago, my wife and I nearly divorced," Phil replied. "After forty years, we were in a real mess, but with the Lord's grace and guidance, we trudged through problem after problem, the Lord rescued our marriage. Jenny here (the clerk) told me she kept a vase of rose stems to remind her of what she had learned from 'thorny' times. That was



good enough for me. I took home some of those stems. My wife and I decided to label each one for a specific "problem" and give thanks for what that problem taught us."

As Phil paid the clerk, he said to Sandra, "I highly recommend the Special!"

"I don't know if I can be thankful for the thorns in my life" Sandra said to the clerk. "It's all too . . fresh."

"Well," the clerk replied carefully, "my experience has shown me that the thorns make the roses more precious. We treasure God's providential care more during trouble than at any other time. Remember that it was a crown of thorns that Jesus wore so we might know His love....Don't resent the thorns."

Tears rolled down Sandra's cheeks. For the first time since the accident, she loosened her grip on her resentment. "I'll take those twelve long-stemmed thorns, please," she managed to choke out.

"I hoped you would," said the clerk gently. "I'll have them ready in a minute."

"Thank you. What do I owe you?"

"Nothing. Nothing but a promise to allow God to heal your heart...The first year's arrangement is always on me."

The clerk smiled and handed a card to Sandra. "I'll attach this card to your arrangement, but maybe you would like to read it first."

It read: "My God, I have never thanked You for my thorns. I have thanked You a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my thorns. Teach me the glory of the cross I bear; teach me the value of my thorns. Show me that I have climbed closer to You along the path of pain. Show me that, through my tears, the colors of Your rainbow look much more brilliant."

Praise Him for the roses; thank Him for the thorns.



June 8  
Monday

## A LIFE REMEMBERED

READ:  
Psalm 139:1-16

That we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

—2 Corinthians 1:4

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ 2 Chronicles 30-31

■ John 18:1-18

Daddy, help me.” Those were the last words Dianne and Gary Cronin heard their daughter say as she struggled to breathe. Kristin, 14 years old, died suddenly—just 2 days after saying she didn’t feel well. A strep infection attacked her body on Thursday. By Saturday, she was pleading with her daddy to help her.

Before Kristin died, I was scheduled to speak at her family’s church in Soldotna, Alaska. In God’s timing, I stood before the congregation the day after her funeral.

Kristin was one of those vivacious teens who loved Jesus and lived for Him—and whose sudden death leaves us with a million questions.

Because I went through a similar loss of my own teenage daughter a few years ago, I was able to offer some advice to this stunned and grieving church.

First, I said, we must recognize God’s sovereignty. Psalm 139:16 reminds us that Kristin’s life was the exact length God intended. Second, I asked the church never to forget her family. Whether it’s 2 months or 5 years later, the family will never “get over” losing Kristin. They will never stop needing Christians who care and remember.

In times like this, don’t forget that God is in control and that He wants us to be a comfort to others. —Dave Branon

*When we sustain a heartbreaking loss,  
When grief overwhelms our soul,  
The Savior who gave Himself on the cross  
Reminds us that He’s in control.* —D. De Haan

**In every desert of despair  
God has an oasis of comfort.**



GOLF: PGA TOUR

# Mickelson Making His Return To Golf

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) —

The idea was for Phil Mickelson to return to a routine as best as possible in his world now shaken with fear.

It has been three turbulent weeks since he announced his wife, Amy, was diagnosed with breast cancer.

\* Mickelson has always felt like he was in control, even if his golf at times suggested otherwise.

Now he feels helpless.

"I've never been this emotional, where if I'm driving alone or what have you, I'll just start crying," he said Wednesday at the St. Jude Classic, his eyes tinged with streaks of pink, his voice no longer steady and sure.

"We're scared, yeah," he said.

"I think a lot of it is the unknown."

Tests on his 38-year-old wife have provided enough optimism that surgery has been pushed back to the first week of July, allowing Mickelson to return to competition this week, then go to the U.S. Open in New York, where he is beloved under normal circumstances.

His wife faces treatment for at least a year, so they decided to do what they normally would — play golf tournaments, take their three children to camps and activities. They plan a tropical vacation after the U.S. Open and before Amy's surgery.

Even so, this was not a normal routine for Mickelson in Memphis.

Author: 74  
Control  
Suffering



Suffering

742-20

*In Shaped by God, author Max Lucado uses a beautiful metaphor to describe the way God uses difficult experiences to form us:*

*To melt down the old and recast it as new is a disrupting process. [But] with time, a change occurs: What was dull becomes sharpened, what was crooked becomes straight, what was weak becomes strong, and what was useless becomes valuable.*

*Then the blacksmith ceases his pounding and sets down his hammer. In the still silence, he examines the smoking tool. The incandescent implement is rotated and examined for any marks or cracks.*

*There are none.*

*The pliable, soft mineral becomes an unbending, useful tool.*

*Lucado says, "God sees our life from beginning to end. He may lead us through a storm at age thirty so we can endure a hurricane at age sixty. An instrument is useful only if it's in the right shape. A dull ax or a bent screwdriver needs attention, and so do we. A good blacksmith keeps his tools in shape. So does God."*

106: Max Lucado, *Shaped by God*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1985, 50-51.  
p. 106

(Stop Whining, Start Living by Dr. Laura Schlessinger) New York, NY: HarperCollins.  
Copyright– Dr. Laura Schlessinger, 2008.

Suffering

744-05

*Sadly, sadness is an inherent part of life. There are innumerable tragedies, accidents, problems, disappointments, frustrations, offenses, losses, betrayals, challenges, diseases, and wars, as well as strife, hatred, bad luck, and random acts of malevolence that make everyday life some level of struggle for every human being on the planet. Opportunities for suffering and sadness are the one universal constant for all humanity.*

p. 83

(Charity: A Collection of Poems by Gail T. Burton by Gail T. Burton) Benton, AR: Gail T. Burton. Copyright - Gail T. Burton, 1997. 73 pp.

Suffering

130-06

### THE JOY OF HIS EMBRACE

When the problems of my earthly life  
are more than I can stand,  
And I learn what is required of me  
is a heavy harsh demand.

I find my Lord is ever near  
with comfort for the day,  
And problems that have plagued my life  
so quickly fade away.

Tho' He comforts me along my path  
this world will not relent,  
Each day I face anew the threat  
of problems life has sent.

But when the silver cord of life  
has finally reached the end,  
The glory of His perfect love  
Will make me comprehend.

Every problem, care, and threat  
will be conquered by His grace.  
And I'll spend a grand eternity  
in the joy of His embrace.

p. 23



- Suffering 027-262 As soon as we cease to bleed, we cease to bless.  
—John Henry Jowett  
p. 178
- Suffering 027-285 One verse in every six in the first three Gospels relates either directly or indirectly, to money. Sixteen of our Lord's forty-four parables deal with the use or misuse of money. A loving, joyful, liberal giving to the Lord's work is an acid test of a spiritual heart, pleasing to God.  
—William E. Allen  
p. 190
- Suffering 027-289 Pain is pain and sorrow is sorrow. It hurts. It limits. It impoverishes. It isolates. It restrains. It works devastation deep within the personality. It circumscribes in a thousand different ways. There is nothing good about it. But the gifts God can give with it are the richest the human spirit can know.  
—Margaret Clarkson  
p. 192
- Suffering 027-290 It is absurd for Christians to constantly seek new demonstrations of God's power, to expect a miraculous answer to every need, from curing ingrown toenails to finding parking places; this only leads to faith in miracles instead of faith in God.  
—Charles W. Colson  
p. 192
- Suffering 027-291 If God is in charge and loves us, then whatever is given is subject to His control and is meant ultimately for our joy.  
—Elisabeth Elliot  
p. 192
- Suffering 027-292 God prepares great men for great tasks by great trials.  
—J. K. Gressett  
p. 192



## TEN LIES ABOUT GOD

\* 48 others die early and painful deaths by starvation, natural disasters, or disease. Take a hard look at nature, and you will never guess that God really cares. It all reminds me of Rodney Dangerfield's quip, "I put a seashell to my ear and got a busy signal."

Or you might be tempted to point the skeptic to mankind. We all know people who care about each other; this must mean that God cares about us. But for every person who is loving, there is someone who is cruel; for every generous person there is one who is greedy. Just look at the headlines of today's paper to see what people do to one another. You'll find scant proof that there is a God who genuinely cares about the world.

Intuitively, we believe that a God who cannot suffer is a God who cannot love. As believers we cannot get a hearing from a cynical world unless we can show that God cares and that because He cares, He not only understands our suffering but also has experienced it Himself.

False religions proliferate, because of cynicism, the conviction that the Christian God has proved indifferent to our plight. Even those who would like to believe conclude that God isn't benevolent, and sadly, it appears that His followers aren't either. Many find Christians to be judgmental, self-serving, and unwilling to be uprooted from their comfortable lifestyles.

C. S. Lewis wrote that he was often on the verge of deception: "Not that I am in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is to believe such dreadful things about Him. The conclusion I dread is not 'So there is really no God after all,' but 'So this is what God is really like. Deceive yourself no longer.'"<sup>1</sup>

Do we have some reason not to think some dreadful things about God? Can we say with integrity that God cares and therefore people matter? Only at the cross do we see the love of God without ambiguity. Here is God's farthest reach, His most ambitious rescue effort. God personally came to our side of the chasm, willing to suffer for us and with us. At the cross His love burst upon the world with unmistakable clarity. Here at last we have found solid reasons to believe that there was a genuine connection between God and man. Here is mercy; here is justice. And here is a God who suffers with us.



**PATTERN NUMBER FIVE**  
**FOLLOW THE COACH 2:18-25**

**KEY VERSE: 2:21**

For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you leaving you a model to imitate in order that you might follow in His footprints.

**MEMORY VERSE: 2:21**

**TEXT: 2:18-25**

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect not only to those who are kind and gentle but also to those who are harsh (unjust). For this is approved, if through a spiritual awareness of God, he is enduring pain while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it, if when you are sinning and are doing good and suffering for it and this you are enduring is commendable in the sight of God. For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you leaving you a model to imitate in order that you might follow in His footprints. He committed no sin, nothing false was found in His mouth when He was being reviled He was not reviling in return, and who while suffering was not threatening. But was committing Himself to the one who is judging righteously. Who Himself carried our sins to the cross in His body, in order that we having died to sins, might live to righteousness by His wound you have been healed. For you were as sheep going astray but now have been turned back to the Shepherd and guardian of your souls.

**EXPOSITION:** Throughout the Gospels we find the Lord Jesus using the phrase "follow me". Peter himself heard these words on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. In Matt. 4:19, "Jesus said to them, Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

Luke 9:23, "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

It is only as a person has learned the lessons of the previous patterns that he is prepared to follow the coach ① Don't get shook, God has the controls ② Get tough and start growing. ③ You are part of the establishment ④ Submit to authority ⑤ And after having practiced these patterns, then in a very real, meaningful way, it is possible to follow the coach, Jesus Christ.

**Verse Eighteen:** Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect not only to those who are kind and gentle but also to those who are harsh (unjust).

1. Peter's subject of submission will be continued on into chapter 3. In this verse we find that he is commanding servant's to be submissive to their masters. This submission is also taken a step further in this 18th verse in that it is not only to be a submission to those who are "kind and gentle", but also to those who are "harsh or unjust".

2. Lange, in his commentary on the Holy Scriptures, says, "In this verse the apostle establishes one of the most noble and important principles of morality, namely that our obligation to relative duties does not depend either on the character of the persons to whom they are to be performed or on their performance of the duties which they owe to us, but on the unalterable relations of things established by God."

3. It is well to note that on this 18th verse this submission is to be with "all respect and not to be done grudgingly or with a feeling of necessity, because of your relationship to Jesus Christ. If the commands of verse 17 are being followed, it will be easy to fulfill the responsibilities of verse 18, that is, honoring all men, be loving the brotherhood, be fearing God, be honoring the King.

**Verse Nineteen:** For this is approved, if through a spiritual awareness of God, he is enduring pain while suffering unjustly.

1. In this verse we get the reason for the previous command, "this is approved".

2. Paul, in challenging Timothy, II Tim. 2:15 said, "Study to show yourself approved unto



(A Continual Feast by Jan Karon) New York, NY: Viking / Penguin Group. Copyright – Jan Karon, 2005.

Suffering • 610-07 If we are going to be made into wine, we will have to be crushed; you cannot drink grapes.

Ibid., Sept. 30

The very cream of Chambers

Suffering 610-21 Our tendency is to run from the painful realities or try to change them as soon as possible. But cure without care makes us into rulers, controllers, manipulators.  
Henri J.M. Nouwen

Suffering 610-29 . . . There are tender-hearted people who . . . object to the whole scheme of creation; they would neither have force used nor pain suffered; they talk as if kindness could do everything even where it is not felt. Millions of human beings but for suffering would never develop an atom of affection. The man who would spare due suffering is not wise. It is folly to conclude a thing ought not to be done because it hurts. There are powers to be born, creations to be perfected, sinners to be redeemed, through the ministry of pain, that could be born, perfected, redeemed in no other way.

[George Macdonald]

(Laughter from Heaven by Barbara Johnson) Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group / Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Barbara Johnson, 2004.

Suffering • 615-06 As Joni wrote:

*Suffering hurries the heart homeward.*<sup>4</sup>

p. 10



(Walking Taylor Home: A Fatal Disease, a Father's Love, and a Son's Courageous Journey by Brian Schrauger) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – TSF Trust, 2001.

Suffering

394-05

For me it was this very thing, BAM-BAM, that brought me to the ring to fight it out with God. Just like he'd done with Jacob, this was his invitation to punch it out with him. To open up my anguished outraged heart. To hit and slug away while he held the pillows. While he absorbed the blows. While all the time he wept with empathy, loving me just as I loved my son. And just like he loved his.

There were no answers to my loud and angry questions. It's only when I paused to catch my breath I heard him softly whisper, *Welcome to my heart.*

pp. 128-9



(Walking Taylor Home: A Fatal Disease, a Father's Love, and a Son's Courageous Journey  
by Brian Schrauger) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – TSF Trust, 2001.

Suffering	394-07	A despairing man should have the devotion of his friends even if he forsakes the fear of the Almighty. (Job) p. 144
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(Promises: A Daily Guide to Supernatural Living by Bill Bright) Orlando, FL: NewLife Publications. Copyright – Bill Bright, 1993.

Suffering 415-06

Fanny Crosby, the hymnwriter, gave us more than eight thousand gospel songs. Although blinded at the age of six weeks, she never held any bitterness in her heart because of it.

"I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when He showered so many other gifts upon you," a friend once said to her.

"Do you know," she responded quickly, "that if at birth I had been able to make one petition, it would have been that I should be born blind."

"Why?" asked the astounded clergyman.

"Because," she replied, "when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior."

(Day 72)

(Making Peace With Reality: Ordering Your Life In a Chaotic World by Jerry White)  
Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress. Copyright – Jerry E. White, 2002.

Suffering 419-04 The words of a song express it well:

*Why do new waves of trouble keep pounding around me  
before yesterday's waves ebb away?<sup>1</sup>*

## "There's a Reason," Dan Foster

1. "There's a Reason," words and music by Dan Foster. Copyright by Ron Harris Music. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



God a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

3. This submission to your masters with all respect, whether they are kind or harsh, is that which is approved in the sight of God. ① For the Lord's sake ② It is his will ③ It is approved
4. The rest of the nineteenth verse is a statement of the principle. If through a spiritual awareness of God, he is enduring pain while suffering unjustly. Victim of selfishness, been used, been hurt, love to set the record straight
5. That which is approved by God is the enduring of pain while suffering unjustly. A submit!! all teenager named Jerry Anderson of Huntington, Tennessee recently wrote, "Ha, ha, things are hard they laughed. He's at it again, the silly fool. Come see the show, come one and all, by him. Let watch the village idiot racing toward a fall. Out in the meadow the fool ran round, God take care of leaping and jumping and flapping his arms, trying to gain speed so as to get off the the situation if ground. Please don't laugh, said a little girl, he means no harm, he is trying to fly. He well He's insane, came the haughty reply. The villagers laughed till the sun was low. They were still laughing when sunset came. Tears filled their eyes, they had been laughing so. Then suddenly the laughter stopped. Men gapped, women fainted, the little girl was crying, for out there over the meadow, the fool was no longer running-- he was flying."

**Verse Twenty:** For what credit is it, if when you are sinning and if you are enduring being beaten? But if when you are doing good and suffering for it and this you are enduring, this is commendable in the sight of God.

1. Here at the outset of this verse in the statement of a question we get the reason for the condition in verse 19. For what credit is it, if when you are sinning and if you are enduring being beaten? The obvious answer to the question is, there is no credit for this, because you are only getting just payment for your sin. Just what you deserve.
2. "But" forms the contrast. If when you are doing good and suffering for it, and this you are enduring, this is commendable in the sight of God.
3. Once again, Peter has restated the same principle he gave in verse 19, that is, if you're doing good and suffering for it and you are enduring it rather than striking out or striking back, this is commendable in the sight of God. It was approved in 19, and commendable here in verse 20.

4. Dr. Edman in his book *The Disciplines of Life* has a little poem that expressed the thought here, called "If": If you can keep your head when all about are losing theirs; If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, but make allowance for their doubting too; If you can wait and not be tired by waiting, or being lied about, don't deal in lies, or being hated, don't give way to hating, and yet don't look too good nor talk too wise; If you can dream and not make dreams your master, if you can think and not make thoughts your aim, if you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two imposters just the same; If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken, twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools, or watch the things you gave your life to broken, and stoop and build them up with worn out tools; If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue, or walk with kings nor lose the common touch; If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you, if all men count with you, but none too much; If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run. Yours is the earth and everything that is in it, and what is more, you'll be a man, my son.

**Verse Twenty-One:** For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you a model to imitate in order that you might follow in His footprints.

1. Here is the key verse to pattern number five, "Follow the Coach." Here Peter gives the reason for the principle stated in verses 19 and 20. "For to this you have been called." ① In 1:15 we were called to be holy in all of our conduct, and in 2:9 we were called out of darkness into his marvelous light, and now in 2:21 we have been called to suffer.



Suffering 667-04 He whose life is rooted in God will have his full share of foiled plans and abortive hopes, and will often see the fruit nipped by frost or blown green from the boughs, but still the promise is true in its inmost meaning.  
p. 6

(God Is Closer Than You Think by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.  
Copyright – John Ortberg, 2005.

Suffering 674-18 So I thought I would start this chapter with words I associate with winter.  
Death. Ice. Hypothermia. Windchill.  
Snow. Shoveling snow. Shoveling more snow. Buying a snowblower.  
Salt trucks. Black ice. Dead batteries. Frostbite. Gangrene. Thermal underwear. My wife wearing long thermal underwear for months at a time.  
Ice fishing. Diminished mental capacity.  
Seasonal affective disorder. Happy days for electrical utility companies.  
Recreational eating.  
Death.  
I don't like winter.  
I know there are people in the world who claim to love winter. But it always makes me wonder: How many people spend their working careers in Florida, then retire and move to Minot, North Dakota?  
p. 151

Suffering 674-19 We generally associate well-being with the presence of God and assume that suffering means someone has done something wrong. No one writes a book called *Where Is God When It Feels Good?* No one wins the lottery and cries out, "Why me, God?" And of course, it is true that pain was not part of God's original plan, and the day is coming when he will wipe every tear from every eye.  
p. 158

Suffering 674-20 Somebody once said that the biggest difference between you and God is that God doesn't think he's you. In pain, we get very clear about not being God.  
p. 159



(Slaying the Giants in Your Life: You Can Win the Battle and Live Victoriously by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group / Thomas Nelson. Copyright – David Jeremiah, 2001.

Suffering

372-02

Erma Bombeck is sorely missed. For thirty years she wrote a popular syndicated newspaper column, published fifteen books, received numerous awards, appeared regularly on *Good Morning America*, and gave a great voice to millions of little people. I miss that voice, for it brought laughter and hope to all of us. But few of her admirers were aware of the sufferings she experienced. She had breast cancer, a mastectomy, and kidney failure. She worked through her trials, one by one, and maintained her grasp of the Big Picture. She once wrote,

I speak at college commencements, and I tell everyone I'm up there and they're down there—not because of my successes but my failures. Then I proceed to spin all of them off—a comedy record album that sold two copies in Beirut . . . a sitcom that lasted about as long as a doughnut in our house . . . a Broadway play that never saw Broadway . . . book signings where I attracted two people: one who wanted directions to the restroom and the other who wanted to buy the desk. What you have to tell yourself is this: "I'm not a failure. I failed at doing something." There's a big difference . . . Personally and career-wise, it's been a corduroy road. I've buried babies, lost parents, had cancer and worried over kids. The trick is to put it all in perspective . . . and that's what I do for a living.<sup>2</sup>

2. Andy Andrews, ed., "Erma Bombeck," in *Storms of Perfection 2* (Nashville: Lightning Crown Publishers, 1994), 51. Cited in John Maxwell's *Failing Forward: Turning Mistakes into Stepping Stones for Success* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 24-25.  
pp. 30-31

(Life is Tough But God is Faithful: How to See God's Love in Difficult Times by Sheila Walsh) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Sheila Walsh, 1999.

Suffering

376-02

*When the heat of problems and pain burns into our very souls, we can crawl away and hide when it gets too hot, or we can choose to be living sacrifices who stay on the altar for His sake.*  
p. 54



(Wild At Heart: Discovering The Secret of A Man's Soul by John Eldredge) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – John Eldredge, 2001.

Suffering

355-02

Yes. True strength does not come out of bravado. Until we are broken, our life will be self-centered, self-reliant; our strength will be our own. So long as you think you are really something in and of yourself, what will you need God for? I don't trust a man who hasn't suffered; I don't let a man get close to me who hasn't faced his wound. Think of the posers you know—are they the kind of man you would call at 2:00 A.M., when life is collapsing around you? Not me. I don't want clichés; I want deep, soulful truth, and that only comes when a man has walked the road I've been talking about. As Buechner says,

To do for yourself the best that you have it in you to do—to grit your teeth and clench your fists in order to survive the world at its harshest and worst—is, by that very act, to be unable to let something be done for you and in you that is more wonderful still. The trouble with steeling yourself against the harshness of reality is that the same steel that secures your life against being destroyed secures your life also against being opened and transformed. (*The Sacred Journey*)

p. 137

Suffering

355-03

As Rick Joyner says, "It is an honor to be wounded in the service of the Lord."

p. 176

(*God's Most Precious Jewels are Crystallized Tears: True Stories of Women Who Turned Their Misery Into Ministry* by Barbara Johnson) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Barbara Johnson, 2001.

Suffering

359-10

**Barb's gem:** *We talk about grief and hardship as time spent in the "the valley." But later, looking back from the hilltop, we see that it was there, in that valley, that we became better persons, selfless servants, stronger Christians. As my daughter-in-love, Shannon, says, we grow when we're down in the valley, because that's where the fertilizer is!*

p. 173



(Walking With Saints: Through the Best and Worst Times of Our Lives by Calvin Miller)  
Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright - Calvin Miller, 1995.

Suffering

01-19

The suffering of the Christian has special meaning. For the Christian it is a "de-clutterer" of the throne room of the heart. It mortifies all pointless appetites. It teaches us that materialism is a flabby pursuit, offering nothing in our time of need. Mortification fastens the heart to things eternal. Still, mortification is so against our nature that few can manage it. It is an ability to celebrate even pain if it will draw us to that attachment which breaks Satan's control of our lives.  
p. 39

Suffering

01-40

The Buddhists have a story of a man who, in fleeing from a lion, fell headlong into a deep well. He would have been killed in the fall except that on the way down, his tunic was snagged by a root sticking out from the wall. There he hung over the bottom of the pit where he might soon fall, be crushed, and destroyed. Above him was that small circle of light which framed the head of a roaring lion. Panic could not help. Worry would not deliver him. So he reached out to a leaf growing out from the side of the well and saw on the leaf a drop of honey. Caught between unavoidable terrors he could not change, he licked the honey from the leaf and blessed God. God may be blessed in every crisis, for he inhabits every crisis. Hebrews 13:5 says that he will never leave us, so when life spins out of control, look not for him in any sense of desperation, lick the honey from the leaf, and bless his name.  
pp. 204-5

Suffering                      027-298                      One ship drives east and another  
   drives west  
   With the selfsame winds that  
   blow.  
   'Tis the set of the sails and not  
   the gales  
   Which tells us the way to go.

   Like the winds of the sea are the  
   ways of fate,  
   As we voyage along though life:  
   'Tis the set of the soul that  
   decides its goal,  
   And not the calm or the strife.  
   —Ella Wheeler Wilcox  
   pp. 193-4

Suffering                      027-299                      Suffering does two things for the Christian that could  
   not otherwise be so well accomplished: It cultivates  
   humility and develops strength.  
   p. 194



- +2. Phil; 1:29, Paul tells the Philippian church, "For unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."
  - +3. Heb. 5:8, "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which we suffered."
  - 4. Psalm 119:67, 71, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes."
  - 5. The reason given in the latter part of the verse is because Christ also suffered for you, leaving a model to imitate in order that you might follow in his footprints.
  - 6. The purpose behind the model is in order that you might follow in his footprints.
  7. Smith points out, "The example of the Lord Jesus is set before us as the ground on which the submission should be practiced. 'To afflictions we are all appointed,' 1 Thess. 3:4, and through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God. Nor is this true of servants only but of all Christians and therefore to all Christians does the apostle here speak holding up before them the example of their Lord. Now it is true that we cannot imitate and come up to the perfect sinlessness of our Lord, yet his patience may be our patience, his submission our submission, his meekness our meekness. For the Holy Spirit can implant in us his mind and can give us so much of it that we shall never murmur or repine, neither yield to resentful passions, never be under the dominion of an acrimonious temper, but be filled always with charity and love."
  - 8. Heb. 12:5,6, "Yes, to keep from growing weary and faint hearted, just think of the example set by him who has endured so great opposition aimed at him by sinful men. You have not yet, as you have struggled on against sin, resisted to the point of pouring out your blood. And you have forgotten the encouragement which is addressed to you as sons, My son refrain from thinking lightly of the discipline the Lord inflicts and giving up when you are corrected by Him, for he disciplines everyone he loves and chastises every son whom he heartily receives. You must submit to discipline. God is dealing with you as his sons, for who is the son that his father never disciplines?"
  - 9. Pattern Number Five says "Follow the Coach" and we cannot go wrong by following him because he has gone the way before us and he knows the way which is best for us.
- \* Verse Twenty-Two: He committed no sin, nothing false was found in His mouth.
1. There are five things that are said about the model that we are following, in these next verses.
  2. First of all, he committed no sin. II Cor. 5:21, "For God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins and in exchange he poured God's goodness to us."
  3. Heb. 4:15, "This high priest of ours understand our weaknesses since he had the same temptations we do, though he never once gave way to them and sinned."
  4. The second thing we see in this verse about our model is that nothing false was found in his mouth.
  5. To bear a false witness, or to lie, was considered a breaking of the law, and since this would be sin, and he committed no sin, it is quite obvious that nothing false would be found in his mouth.
- \* Verse Twenty-Three: When he was being reviled He was not reviling in return, and while suffering was not threatening, but was committing Himself to the one who is judging righteously.
1. The third thing we see about our model is that when he was being reviled, he was not reviling in return.
  2. In Acts 8 Phillip finds the Ethiopian eunuch reading in Isaiah 53, "As a sheep led to slaughter or a lamb before a shearer is dumb, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation, for his life



was taken up from the earth? Then Phillip opened his mouth and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news of Jesus.

3. The fourth thing we see is who while suffering was not threatening, but was committing himself to the one who is judging righteously.

\* \* 4. Here we have the illustration of Jesus Christ, the model, fulfilling the principle that has been stated earlier in the study, that if through a spiritual awareness of God he is enduring pain while suffering unjustly, this is approved.

5. We have a negative and a positive again here in this fourth statement about the Christ whom we are following. First of all, he while suffering is not threatening, but positively was committing himself to the one who is judging righteously.

— 6. It is recorded at the cross of calvary as the spikes were being driven into his hands and feet and the cross was lifted between heaven and earth that the Savior was in prayer saying, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." The final words from the cross were likewise a prayer to the Father, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

- 7. He was committing himself to the one who is judging righteously, the one who never makes a wrong judgment, the one who is always just, right and fair in that which he does.

\* \* Twenty-Four: Who Himself carried our sins to the cross in His body, in order that we having died to sins, might live to righteousness by His wound you have been healed.

- 1. The fifth thing that we see about our Savior is that, who Himself carried our sins to the cross in His body.

— 2. He became our sin bearer. He suffered in our stead, he saved his people thus; The curse that fell upon his head was due by right to us; The storm that bowed his blessed head is hushed forever now, and rest divine is mine instead while glory crowns his brow.

3. The purpose in carrying our sins to the cross in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness. Paul speaks of this truth in Romans 6:4-8, "Your old sin-loving nature was buried with him by baptism when he died and when God the Father in his glorious power brought him back to life again you were given his wonderful new life to enjoy for you have become a part of him, and so you died with him, so to speak, when he died. Now you share his new life for you have risen with him when he rose, your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with him. That part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin. For when you are dead to sin you are freed from all its allurements, and its power over you. Since your old sin-loving nature died with Christ, we believe that you are now sharing his new life."

4. Gal. 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I am living, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

5. The last statement in this 24th verse, "By his wound you have been healed." This is taken from Isa. 53 where we read of the suffering servant, "Surely he hath born our grief and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted, but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed."



6. Eerdman points out, "The marks of the cruel scourge upon his quivering flesh were but signs of that suffering which for our sakes he endured when submitting to the death of a slave. Surely we, for his sake, should endure patiently the severest wrongs."
7. Reese points out, "It has been guessed that a majority of Peter's readers would be slaves, they would grasp the meaning of his words 'stripes'. Actually it is singular in the Greek and the word used nowhere else in the New Testament means wound.--the huge welt raised on the back of the slave who is given the lash. Yes, they would know what it meant in physical torture at any rate, for Jesus to be subjected to a Roman scourging. So, Peter, fully aware of the fitness of his quotation, borrows from Isa. 53:5 and assures them that by Christ's wounding the sin-diseased souls of men are healed. The paradox is well caught and an explanation by Theodoret, 'A new and strange method of healing--the doctor suffered the cost and the sick received the healing.' By thine agonizing pain and sweat of blood, we pray. By thy dying love to man, take all our sins away. Burst our bonds and set us free from all iniquity release. Oh remember Calvary and bid us go in peace."

*How devastating while going through it for Peter*

*Peter's denial A part of the Plan!*  
 Verse Twenty-Five: For you were as sheep going astray but now have been turned back to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

*Feed my sheep! John 21!*

1. Here Peter used the reason for Jesus Christ being made sin for us. We were in the past, as sheep going astray. Isa. 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray and turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "You were" speaks of the past "now" speaks of the present. "Have been turned back to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls."
2. One of Peter's favorite subjects was the subject of redemption, and Christ's death on the cross for us. He certainly could call to remembrance at least the early events leading up to the crucifixion and also the horrible time he experienced of denial at the critical moment. As someone has said, "Verses 24 and 25, we see the purpose for redemption, in order that we having died to sins might live to righteousness. The price of redemption--by his wounds you have been healed. The provision of redemption--now we have been turned back to the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls."
3. In a real sense this was Peter's personal experience, and I'm sure he was thinking of the all the way to the cross shores of Galilee, and the great Shepherd of the sheep asking him whether or not he loved him. Then hearing the admonition to be feeding his sheep. *How far should my submission go? Father if it be possible*

**CONCLUSION:** What a challenge Peter has given us in this fifth pattern to practice. *nevertheless* "For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you leaving you a model to imitate in order that you might follow in His footprints."

How willing are we really to follow where He leads? And to go even the path of suffering which He has trod?

On a May Day in 1555, Bishop Hugh Lattimer, soon to burn at the stake for his anti-papal reformed convictions, composed an open letter, "To all unfeigned lovers of God's truth, die once we must. How and where we know not. Here is not our home, let us therefore, accordingly, consider things, having always before our eyes that heavenly Jerusalem and the way thereto in persecution. And let us consider all the dear friends of God, how they have gone after the example of our Savior, Jesus Christ, whose footsteps let us also follow, even to the gallows if God's will be so, not doubting, but as he rose again the third day, even so shall we do at the time appointed of God, that is, when the trump shall blow and the angels shall shout, and the Son of Man shall appear." Later that year when the dignity of Oxford Town was demoted to that of a persecuter's den, they fed both Lattimer and his friend Ridly to the devouring flames. But not until Lattimer astonishingly composed said to his colleague in martyrdom, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridly, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out."



believers is born not only out of ignorance, but out of spiritual pride and arrogance, devoid of understanding and compassion. The stigmatized Christian is wounded in the house of his friends.

I have counseled countless believers who deny their pain and forego any treatment, hiding their suffering lest they be labeled as unspiritual, lacking in faith and harboring some secret sin. As Sheila Walsh said, "No intelligent person would condemn someone for having a brain tumor, so why do so many people discount or distance themselves from a different form of trouble?" (14).

I may sound impassioned about this, but I have listened to too many people who wear on their faces the harsh graffiti of silent suffering. The Christian community's lack of understanding and support doesn't allow these dear people to voice their pain—and if suffering must be hidden in the basement of the heart, it doubles the pain.

pp. 58-59

Suffering

074-5

The health-and-wealth teachers are successful because their message appeals to these "hidden" motives. They promise to satisfy the deep-seated longings that we all carry within us—the longing to be free from pain and misery, to escape death and disaster, the longing to have happiness guaranteed, assured, nailed down, in the bag. Larry Crabb gives us insight with these words: "The gospel of health and wealth speaks to our legitimate longing for relief by skipping over the call to endure suffering... Yet there is no escape from an aching soul, only denial of it" (emphasis added). (8)

p. 73

Suffering

074-10

Madame Guyon meant when she said, "Ah, if you knew what peace there is in accepted sorrow." Sometimes God uses the sickness of the body to heal the sickness of the soul.

p. 150

Ron Dunn

Suffering

074-11

Not long ago I visited with a delightful Christian who, when we said our good-byes, fired this parting shot: "Love God! Hate sin! And watch out for trucks!"

p. 157

Suffering

074-12

In other words, these things that we seek to be rid of in the here and now will not be taken away until the then and there.

p. 161



(Shade of His Hand by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House. Copyright  
- Oswald Chambers Publications Association, 1936. 171 pp.

Suffering

127-06

"... Life is not as idle ore,  
But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd by the shocks of doom  
To shape and use."

—Tennyson

p. 128

(When God Interrupts: Finding New Life Through Unwanted Change by M. Craig Barnes)  
Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Copyright - M. Craig Barnes, 1996.

Suffering

129-07

We do not live by faith in God's intervention. We live by faith  
in God's grace when there is no intervention.  
p. 100



- Suffering 027-293 The security we crave would teach us to rest our hearts in this world and pose an obstacle to our return to God. . . Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home.  
—C. S. Lewis  
p. 193
- Suffering 027-294 The problem of reconciling human suffering with the existence of a God who loves, is only insoluble so long as we attach a trivial meaning to the word "love."  
—C. S. Lewis  
p. 193
- Suffering 027-295 Teach me, dear God, the glory of my cross; teach me the value of my "thorn." Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow.  
—George Matheson  
p. 193
- Suffering 027-296 There are four things you can do with the hurts that come into your life, nurse them; curse them; rehearse them; or reverse them.  
—Patrick Shaughnessy  
p. 193
- Suffering 027-297 The presence of Christ puts pain in perspective.  
—David L. Thompson
- It is by those who have suffered that the world has been advanced.  
—Leo Tolstoy  
p. 193



(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications Association, 1992.

Suffering 767-13

We are super-victors with a joy that comes from experiencing the very things which look as if they are going to overwhelm us.

Huge waves that would frighten an ordinary swimmer produce a tremendous thrill for the surfer who has ridden them. Let's apply that to our own circumstances. The things we try to avoid and fight against—tribulation, suffering, and persecution—are the very things that produce abundant joy in us. "We are more than conquerors through Him" "in all these things"; not in spite of them, but in the midst of them. A saint doesn't know the joy of the Lord in spite of tribulation, but because of it. Paul said, "I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Corinthians 7:4).

The undiminished radiance, which is the result of abundant joy, is not built on anything passing, but on the love of God that nothing can change. And the experiences of life, whether they are everyday events or terrifying ones, are powerless to "separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39).

(March 7)

(What in the World is Going On?: 10 Prophetic Clues You Cannot Afford to Ignore by Dr. David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright– David Jeremiah, 2008.

Suffering 770-01

No doubt you remember the poor Jewish milkman Tevye in the classic movie *Fiddler on the Roof*. Burdened with poverty and trying to maintain traditions while coping with oppression from the Jew-hating Russians, he cries out to God, "I know, I know, we are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't You choose someone else?"<sup>14</sup> Tevye is a picture of the quintessential displaced Jew.

14. Joseph Stein, *Fiddler on the Roof* Screenplay, 1971. p. 12

(The Beautiful Fight: Surrendering to the Transforming Presence of God Every Day of Your Life by Gary Thomas) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Gary L. Thomas, 2007.

Suffering 772-21

Pain in this world is a foregone conclusion. The only question is whether we choose to live a life of redemptive pain or of self-destructive pain. I pray you'll choose redemptive pain. p. 200



(A Lifetime of Wisdom: Embracing the Way God Heals You by Joni Eareckson Tada)  
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Joni Eareckson Tada, 2009.

Suffering

778-12

I'm reminded of a little poem from one of my favorite books.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
the falling of a tear;  
the upward glancing of an eye,  
when none but God is near

My friend Margaret Clarkson, now with the Lord, penned those words. And that bit of verse summarizes so much of what I learned from this godly woman

Margaret was a missionary in Canada who wrote many wonderful poems—and virtually each one was born out of her life of severe and chronic physical pain. The last time I was with Margaret was at Ontario Bible College. We spent lunchtime together talking, me in my wheelchair, and she lying on her side on a cot. She was in so much pain she simply could not stand up for any length of time. As a result, Margaret taught me many lessons about praying through pain.

p. 106

Suffering

778-13

When God denies your dearest desire, get ready to open up your heart even wider, for He will become that desire Himself.  
p. 122



(Hope Again: When Life Hurts and Dreams Fade by Charles R. Swindoll) Dallas, TX: Word. Copyright - Charles R. Swindoll, 1996.

Suffering 041-01 Joseph Parker, a great preacher of yesteryear, once said to a group of aspiring young ministers, "Preach to the suffering and you will never lack a congregation. There is a broken heart in every pew."  
pp. 11-12

Suffering 041-02 "Who can mind the journey," asks the late, great Bible teacher James M. Gray, "when the road leads home?"  
p. 15

(A Man to Match the Mountain: Overcoming the Obstacles of Life by David Roper) Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House. Copyright - David Roper, 1996. 286 pp.

Suffering 042-29 "Where grows the golden grain?" Maltbie Babcock asks. "In a furrow cut by pain."  
p. 163

(The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics by Fenelon) Auburn, MA: The SeedSowers Christian Book Publishing House. Copyright - Christian Books Publishing House, MCMXCII.

Trials 060-06 Suffering is necessary for all of us. You will be purified by dying to your own desires and will. Let yourself die! You have excellent opportunities for this to happen—don't waste them!  
p. 18

Suffering 060-14 God never makes you suffer unnecessarily. He intends for your suffering to heal and purify you. The hand of God hurts you as little as it can.  
Anxiety brings suffering. Sometimes you are simply unwilling to suffer, and you end up resisting God's work. If you put away all your restless longings and your anxiety, you will experience the peace and freedom that God gives to His children. The yoke that God gives is easy to bear if you accept it without struggling to escape. You make life more painful for yourself when you resist God in the least way.  
p. 30



(In Quietness and Confidence: The Making of a Man of God by David Roper) Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House. Copyright - David Roper, 1999. 185 pp.

Suffering 220-10 Suffering is not an evil to be avoided, but a call to be embraced: "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him" (Philippians 1:29).  
A difficult marriage, a meaningless job, a broken body, a disturbed mind—all are means by which Christlikeness is born in us and begins to grow. Pain moderates our unfaithfulness, irritability, intolerance, greed, and self-centeredness. It rids us of our preoccupation with earth so that we take less interest in it and turn our thoughts to the eternal and invisible.  
Though he was a full-fledged Son of God, Jesus, we're told, was made perfect by suffering. We too learn from our suffering, far more than from any other source of learning. "Affliction is the best book in my library," Luther said. Pain completes us. Without it we could never amount to anything. pp. 56-57

(Though I Walk Through the Valley by Vance Havner) Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co. Copyright - Fleming H. Revell Co., 1864. 128 pp.

Suffering 228-04 "God makes no mistakes and all He does is right. He has no stereotyped way of doing what He does. He delivered Peter from prison but left John the Baptist in a dungeon to die. I accept whatever He does, however He does it." p. 66

(The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions edited by Arthur Bennett) Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright – Banner of Truth Trust, 1975.

Suffering 229-12 Grant that I may be salted with suffering,  
with every exactment tempered to my soul,  
every rod excellently fitted to my back,  
  
to chastise, humble, break me.  
  
Let me not overlook the hand that holds the rod,  
as thou didst not let me forget the rod that fell on  
Christ,  
and drew me to him.  
p. 50



(A Bend in the Road: Experiencing God When Your World Caves In by David Jeremiah)  
Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Word Publishing, 2000.

Suffering

313-03

British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge wisely explained this concept to William F. Buckley: "As an old man, Bill, looking back on one's life, it's one of the things that strikes you most forcibly—that the only thing that's taught one anything is suffering. Not success, not happiness, not anything like that. The only thing that really teaches one what life's about—the joy of understanding, the joy of coming in contact with what life really signifies—is suffering, affliction."<sup>4</sup>

4. MacDonald, *The Life God Blesses*, 25-26.  
p. 17

Suffering

313-04

Some years ago I was given a copy of a letter that I can imagine being written by God to someone going through a disruptive moment. It remains as poignant and pertinent now as it did then.

My child, I have a message for you today, let Me whisper it in your ear, that it may gild with glory any storm clouds which may arise, and smooth the rough places upon which you may have to tread. It is short—only five words—but let them sink into your inmost soul, use them as a pillow upon which to rest your weary head:

this thing is from me  
p. 19

(The One Year Book of Poetry by Philip Comfort & Daniel Partner) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – Philip Comfort & Daniel Partner, 1999.

Suffering

330-04

### I Shall Know Why

*I shall know why—when Time is over—  
And I have ceased to wonder why—  
Christ will explain each separate anguish  
In the fair schoolroom of the sky—*

*He will tell me what "Peter" promised—  
And I—for wonder at his woe—  
I shall forget the drop of Anguish  
That scalds me now—that scalds me now!*

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)  
(February 5)



(Shepherding the Church into the 21st Century by Joseph M. Stowell) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. Copyright - Victor Books/SP Publications, Inc., 1994. 274 pp.

Suffering

032-09

Does Jesus Care?  
Page 574  
Verses 1, 3, 4

Recently I stood on that bend in the river where in 1956 five brilliant, savvy, committed men gave their lives to the spears of Auca warriors who dumped their bodies into the Curaray River. I thought of the kind of faith that it took for Nate Saint, Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Roger Youderian, and Ed McCully to walk into the jaws of danger, knowing full well that it might be their last trip down that river but knowing as well that their God was the kind of God who could take suffering and loss and transition them to great gain. After all, isn't that what God did through the cross and death of His Son? And, sure enough, those five men died in faith. But like trick candles on a birthday cake, the extinguished torches of their lives soon began to spark, flutter, and flame as hundreds of young people across America gave their lives to missionary work, to go and take their place. And then the killing tribe opened its doors to welcome Nate Saint's sister and Jim Elliot's wife and daughter Valerie into the village to learn the language and tell them of Jesus Christ.

When we landed in the Auca Village on our way down to that historical site in the jungle, our plane was met by Indians who came not with spears but smiles on their faces. Most of the villagers today are believers in Jesus Christ. The head of the killing party, now old and a believer himself, was asked what he would do when he gets to heaven and sees Nate Saint, the missionary that he had killed on that day. He responded that when he gets to heaven he will look for Nate Saint, throw his arms around him, and thank him for bringing the good news of the Gospel to his village. And then he said, "... and Nate Saint will throw his arms around me and welcome me home."

pp. 176-77

(How A Man Faces Adversity by Robert Hicks) Minn., Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers. Copyright -Robert Hicks, 1996. 142 pp.

Suffering

038-005

Perhaps Shakespeare had it right: "Draw from the heart of suffering a means of inspiration and survival."  
p. 134