

**19**



**SUFFERING**



# 19



## How not to Suffer

**1**

Do not blame Satan for all suffering.

**2**

Do not be rash with your mouth.

**3**

Do not think your problem is unique.

**4**

Do not get irritated with people.

**5**

Do not go from preacher to preacher.

**6**

Do not expect instant deliverance always.

**7**

Do not forget God's help in the past.

**8**

Do not slacken devotional exercises.

**9**

Do not misquote Bible Promises.

**10**

Do not waste your sorrows.



## How not to Suffer

### Introduction

- Suffering goes with believing —
  - Phil 1:29 ... *not only to believe ... but also to suffer*
  - A correction is implied here.
  - The writer of this Epistle himself is a “model” for non-stop suffering (v30)
- Kingdom of God has two dimensions—
  - a) Spiritual Kingdom
    - Jesus: “*It’s within you!*” (Lk 17:21)
  - b) Literal Kingdom
    - Jesus: “*Pray ... Your Kingdom come!*” (Mt 6:10)
    - One is present; the other is future.
    - Gate** to the present Kingdom:
      - Rebirth (Jn 3)
    - Path** to the future Kingdom:
      - Suffering (Acts 14:22 ... *many tribulations ...*)
- Suffering: Various kinds—
  - physical, mental, spiritual, etc.
  - Whatever be the type, suffering is suffering!
  - No one can escape this.
- How we handle suffering speaks of our maturity —
  - The very call of Abraham
    - was in the scene of suffering (Gen 15:12)

- The choice of God's people  
was from a furnace of suffering (Dt 4:20)
- The last Book of the Bible  
was given in a setting of suffering (Rev 1:9)  
But we don't need to be scared  
because God holds our hand from beginning to end—  
Rev 1:17b ... *"Don't be afraid ...  
I'm the first and the last!"*
- Certain facts about suffering:
  - No one in the world is without suffering.
  - The Bible has so much to teach on suffering.

However,  
the mystery of suffering and pain cannot be  
fully explained/understood during this life.
- Man has started to suffer ever since he committed  
the first sin.  
This suffering is only on the **increase** as we come  
to end of the age
  - more incurable diseases
  - more tragic accidents
  - more psychological disorders
  - more natural disasters
  - more social complications

This is true of both good people and the bad —  
Eccl 9:2  
We cannot escape suffering;  
we must learn to endure it.
- The answer to the question, "Why do we suffer?"  
is not that simple.

If we search for an answer outside the Bible,  
our minds will become more complicated than clear.

The Bible does not give **all** the answers to suffering,  
but it has **enough** of teaching for us  
on how to handle suffering.

- Of those who choose to follow Christ, many backslide.

One of the main reasons is suffering.

They thought, Christian life is a bed of roses.

No, it's a plant of roses!

The Biblical understanding of Christian life:

Not thorns around roses,

but roses among thorns.

Earlier we learn this lesson,

the less the chances are for backsliding.

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## **How not to Suffer**

### **1. Do not blame Satan for all suffering.**

- In general,
  - all sufferings in the world are caused by Satan (Jn 10:10);
  - but he may not be **directly** responsible for each suffering.
- Some examples from the deliverance ministry of Jesus —
  - a) Deafness & Dumbness
    - Mk 9:22 ... *fire and water*
    - Not all deaf and dumb people do that!
    - Jesus rebuked this spirit (vv 25,26)

But He did not do so for another case of deafness and dumbness—

    - Mk 7:32-35,37 (same Gospel)
  - b) Infirmary
    - Caused by a “spirit” (a woman)
      - Lk 13:11,12,16 ... *18 years ... Satan bound*
    - Caused by “sin” (a man)
      - Jn 5:5,12 ... *38 years. ... sin no more (v14)*
- Sickness can be due to overwork also —
  - eg) Epaphraditus (Phil 2:25,30)
    - What was sought after was “God’s” *mercy* (v27);
    - there was no blaming of Satan here.
- There are old-age sicknesses also —
  - This is due to “wear and tear”

That's why we are to remember the Creator while young—

Eccl 12:1,6,7

Verses 2 to 5 speak of —

loss of sight,

loss of teeth,

loss of hearing, etc.

eg) Old-age sickness and death of Elisha (2 Ki 13:14a)

■ We must pray for **discernment**

a) Gift of discernment (1 Cor 12:10)

b) Art of discernment (Heb 5:14)

The “gift” is not for all;

but all should grow in the “art.”

■ Even if we know for sure that a particular suffering is from Satan,  
we are not to “accuse” or “blaspheme” him.

□ Job: It was Satan who hit him (Job 2:7).

But Job was more conscious of the power beyond it

and above it (Job 1:21; 2:10)

The story of Job is actually

about the fight between God and Satan —

Job's body was the battlefield!

When two elephants fight with each other,

it's the grass underneath that's crushed!

□ Similarly, Paul's thorn: “*messenger of Satan*” (2 Cor 12:7)  
but Paul did not rebuke Satan —

instead, he “*sought the **Lord***” (v8)

- A clearcut exhortation from Christ for the endtime:  
Rev 2:10 ... Not to go about rebuking Satan  
but stay faithful till **death**—  
which means, you may be killed!

- Suffering can be caused by
  - a) Trials & Tribulations
  - or b) Temptations

**Temptations** are always from Satan — Js 1:13

- Jesus in the wilderness:  
(Tempted to go against the will of God)  
“*Get behind Me, Satan!*” (Mt 4:10)

- James in his Epistle:  
“*Submit to God ... Resist the devil*” (Js 4:7)  
Context: “*sin ... cleansing ... etc*” (vv 8-10)

(See also Pages 89-91, 338-340)

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## How not to Suffer

### **2. Do not be rash with your mouth.**

- Speech is a gift from God.

God takes a serious view of our “words” — Mt 12:36  
*... every idle word ... judgment ...*

That’s why the Psalmist David prayed — Psa 19:14  
*... let the words of my mouth be acceptable ...*

- God is even more serious about what we speak  
in times of suffering —

eg) the story of Job

Look at God’s final judgment on Job’s friends—

Job 42:7b, 8b ... *not spoken of Me what’s right ...*

God has been watching the words of Job

even from the beginning — (2:10c)

*... In all this Job did not sin with his lips ...*

You may ask, Did not Job curse his birthday?

3:1-3 (In the entire chapter he deplores his birth!)

His pain was unbearable —

2:7,8 ... *“painful boils ... head to foot”*

7:5 ... *“caked and cracked”*

(worse than 4th degree burns)

God understands these words of agony and groaning —

Rom 8:22,23 ... *“groaning within ourselves”*

:26 ... *“The Spirit also ... groaning ...”*

But Job was careful about his words about “God” —  
Job 1:22; 42:7b, 8b ... “*about Me*”

■ Other than Job, we have two more classic examples —

□ Joseph

He stayed silent ...

— when thrown into the pit ...

— when thrown into the prison ...

(no defence before Potiphar)

Folks would have said,

“No smoke without fire!”

We must not cause fire;

but if folks create fire,

we need not do anything about it!

Joseph was perfectly relaxed

because his security was in God (Gen 50:20)

Similarly,

□ Jesus (1 Pet 2:21-23) ... *no guile in His **mouth**...*

People’s remarks may —

pierce like arrows

cut like swords

wound like stones

Observe the feelings of Jesus — Psa 41:8,9

Here’s a warning to us:

Do not speak against any servant of God

who is in a crisis — Rom 14:4

... *who are you to judge another’s servant?*

The wind of adversity may suddenly turn its direction  
towards you.  
*With what judgment ... you judge, you will be judged ...*  
Mt 7:1,2

- What we are to speak when darkness and  
despair surround us —
  - a) Say, “*God knows!*” Job 23:8-10
  - b) Confess the promises concerning eternity:
    - Suppose a killing (deadly) disease ...  
Job 19:25-27... *My Redeemer lives... skin destroyed...*  
1 Cor 15:53,54 ... *corruptible ... incorruptible ...*  
*mortality ... immortality ...*
    - Suppose someone dear is dead ...  
eg) David comforted himself when the child died ...  
2 Sam 12:22,23

Similarly Paul’s teaching:

1 Thess 4:16c ... *Dead in Christ first ... then the living ...*  
This is real “*comfort*” (v18)

Even if you cannot speak any of these words,  
“*stay silent*” — Lam 3:27,28

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Whatever be the source/cause of inflicting suffering ...  
“*Jews or Gentiles*”

- If a “*green tree*” suffered so much,  
how about us the “*dry wood*”? (Lk 23:31)  
If we consider how much Christ suffered,  
we will not be discouraged — Heb 12:3  
... *consider Him ... hostility ...*  
— Jesus sought no sympathy from people.

He knew that their problems would be greater than His —  
Lk 23:27-31 ... *Daughters of Jerusalem!*  
“*Blessed are the barren!*”  
What a condition!

eg) “I was murmuring for a new pair of shoes  
until I came across a man without feet.”

- Heb 11 — Heroes of Faith  
The very next chapter —  
Heb 12 — Blessing of Suffering  
i.e. Heb 12 is not on how to receive blessing thro’ faith,  
but on how to handle suffering thro’ patience!

No one exempted —  
Heb 12:6,7 ... “*every*” son ... “*what*” son?

- Tsunami of 26 Dec 2004  
One couple, Mr. & Mrs. Parameswaran,  
lost all their three children into the sea.

We visited them a couple of days after —  
They took us to the same shore where the kids got  
washed away!  
The question: “Why this tragedy?”

My answer: 2 Cor 1:3-5

... *God comforts us that we may comfort others ...*

This couple adopted 20 children who lost their parents;  
in a few years she gave birth to two more children;  
they rejoice in the Lord that  
they now have 22 children in their home!

Wanted wounded healers!

Only to the extent we suffer, we can help others (v5).

■ My personal testimony —

Daughter's injury at right hand at birth due to instrumentation.

I was quietened when I saw so many babies born  
without limbs and with deformities.

■ Visit these places —

Polio Homes ...

Homes for the mentally retarded ...

Leprosariums ...

Do Hospital ministry ...

■ Most of us are suffering from diseases caused by overeating...

We are more worried about that than the millions  
living below the Poverty Line —  
i.e. Not even a single full meal a day!

■ Associate with the underprivileged

eg) Jesus identified with the have-nots:

*foodless, clotheless, imprisoned, etc.* (Mt 25:34-44)

Start praying for the problems of others: Job 42:10

Don't be overoccupied with your own problems!

■ **Conclusion**

1 Cor 10:13 ... *No temptation/trial that's uncommon to man*  
*"God is Faithful!"*

## How not to Suffer

### 4. Do not get irritated with people.

- What hurts us most when we suffer:

People's indifference towards our suffering—

eg) Job 19:13-19 ... *friends and family*

This was the experience of David also —

Psa 38:11 ... *my loved ones stand aloof ...*

69:8 ... *a stranger to my brothers*

David makes this confession several times in Psalms.

See verse 20 also ... *comforters ... none ...*

- A question:

Did not Job have his friends around him?

Yes, but what were they?

— “*worthless physicians*” (Job 13:4)

— “*miserable comforters*” (Job 16:2)

— “*empty counsellors*” (Job 21:34)

- God has given us friends and family members for supporting us in trouble only —

Prov 17:17 ... *brother born for the day of adversity*

But many times it is **God Himself** who withdraws these human supporters —

Job: “*He*” has removed (Job 19:13)

David: “*You*” have put away (Psa 88:8,18)

What is the purpose?

— God desires to **strengthen** our spiritual muscles

Prov 24:10 ... *your strength is small* ...

Isa 59:16 ... *His own arm* ...

□ This happened to Jesus in Gethsemane ... Mt 26:45,56b

... *disciples* ... *sleeping* ... *forsook and fled*

He did not get upset with them!

This is what's called the "Discipline of Loneliness."

Strengthen yourself —

Heb 12:12,13 ... *hands* (work) ... *knees* (worship)... *feet* (walk)

□ Another example:

Joseph's prison inmate forgot his request —

The Chief Butler: Gen 40:13,14, 23

Joseph had to wait for "*two full years*" (41:1)

Then the Butler remembered (41:9)

God brings us to a point where we have to depend

on Him only.

■ Learn to ignore people's condemnation

eg) Mt 27:39-44

Quoting what Jesus *preached* (v40a)

Quoting what He *claimed* (v40b)

Questioning God's *anointing* (v42b)

Questioning His *faith* (v43b)

Stay sweet like Stephen — Acts 6:15 (Angel)

7:54-56 (Heaven's glory)

■ How to stay silent and sweet when people don't help us

enough in trouble —



□ Remember we didn't do enough for those who were suffering.

*"What you want others to do to you ..."* (Mt 7:12)

So many names given to Christ and the Holy Spirit;  
but the only name common to both —

*"Comforter" "Helper"* (Jn 14:16)

This is our basic calling: To help and comfort people!

If Christ indwells us and the Holy Spirit fills us,  
this is what we would do.

□ Realize that everyone has his own problems to worry about!

□ Turn again and again to the Lord —

Mic 7:5,6 ... *Friends ... companion ... son ...  
daughter ... daughter-in-law ...  
mother-in-law ... own family ...  
:7 ... I will look to the "Lord"*

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## How not to Suffer

### 5. Do not go from preacher to preacher.

- It's common that we seek quick-fix remedies rather than long-term solutions to our problems and suffering. In this quest, we run from preacher to preacher. We normally go to preachers for three reasons —

#### a) To seek their prayers

There's nothing wrong in this.

But the right prescription is given in Js 5:13-16

First — “personal” prayer (v13)

... let **him** pray ...

Second — “elders” prayer (v14)

i.e. *the Church*

Third — “one another” prayer (v16)

In the OT, Moses prayed for the people.

Aaron prayed for the people.

Moses — a prophet

Aaron — a priest

But there's no record that they ever asked people to pray for them;

but in the NT, Paul frequently requested believers to pray for him —

“Pray FOR me ... WITH me” Rom 15:30 (**Mutual** prayers)

“Pray FOR me ... WITH me” Eph 6:19

Prayers of visiting preachers can be occasional, not regular.

Violation of this rule will invariably  
lead to commercialisation of religion —

Lk 20:46,47

*... devour widows' houses ... long prayers ...*

Never forget that the preachers have their own problems  
unsolved and sicknesses unhealed!

**b) To seek counselling**

There are two extremes to be avoided:

Too much or too little of counselling.

Prov 11:14; 15:22 ... “no” counsellor vs. “numerous”  
*“multitude” of counsellors*

This is just to emphasize the need for counselling.

Overconsultation will confuse you—

Too many views and explanations!

— Beware of preachers who may manipulate you: 2 Cor 7:2,3

You can *open your hearts* to “faithful” men only.

— Most of the “why” questions in life cannot be answered —

Take time to quietly ponder

Lam 3:27,28,40,41

Confusion *“until” you go into the Sanctuary*

Psa 73:16,17

“Wait” on the Lord — Don’t be in a hurry

Psa 27:14; Phil 4:6,7

**c) To seek help**

Those who promise help normally disappoint us  
in times of trouble!

Preachers are not our “resource” persons;  
our source is God —

- Psa 121:1,2 ... *“My help ... from God ...”*
- Heb 4:14-16 ... *“Throne of Grace ... any time ... help!”*  
ATM ... Any Time Money  
ATM ... Any Time Mercy

God sends us help from unexpected persons —

- Prophet Elijah —  
Lk 4:25,26 ... *so many widows in Israel, but ...*
- Good Samaritan (Lk10:30-37)  
Priest failed  
Levite failed  
but a non-Jew helped!  
An untouchable Samaritan!

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## How not to Suffer

### 6. Do not expect instant deliverance always.

- The healings in the ministry of Christ were mostly instant. But God never manifested His power so much through anyone else —

Possible reasons:

- a) The inadequacy of submission

Jesus while entering the world—

*“To do Your will, O God”* (Heb 10:7)

Jesus before the Tomb of Lazarus —

*“Father, I know You always hear Me ...”* (Jn 11:41,42)

Because Jesus was 100% under the Father’s authority, He could exercise 100% authority over Satan and nature.

- b) The inability to handle glory

Mt 9:8 ... *“glorified God who gave such power to man”*

God does not share His glory with anyone.

His very Name is *“Jealous”* (Ex 34:14)

Our prayer should be:

— *“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us!”* (Psa 115:1)

— *“Lord, let me never ever touch Your glory!”*

- But it is natural and human to expect **instant** deliverance — We can pray so, but we must also learn to be patient —

2 Cor 4:16 to 5:1 ... *“light affliction”* ...

*“day by day”* ... *“moment”*

Looking for the **ultimate** deliverance!

We learn patience only in the School of Suffering —

Js 5:10,11 ... *example ... suffering...patience...*

*perseverance*

- Tears clear our eyes to understand God's ways better —

God keeps us in suffering **until** we learn

whatever He wants us to learn —

Isa 30:20,21 ... Teaching & Correction

*... bread of adversity ... water of affliction*

Psalmist: *"It's good I suffered so I may learn ..."*

Not just read! (Psa 119:71)

Even Jesus in His humanity had to go thro'

the School of Suffering (Heb 5:8)

*... learnt ... suffered ...*

Days of adversity **until** taught by the Lord! (Psa 94:12,13)

*... instruct ... teach ... rest ...*

eg) A journey of 11 days took 40 years in the wilderness—

Why?

To teach two lessons: Dt 8:2-5

a) *Man shall not live by bread alone* (v3)

b) *As a father chastens his son ...* (v5)

- Many times,

it is not deliverance "from" an affliction,  
but victory "in" it!

eg) Paul's thorn: Three seasons of prayer

What's victory?

a) Boasting and no discouragement (2 Cor 12:9)

b) Rejoicing and no worry (v10)

- Even if there's deliverance,  
no deliverance is complete/permanent today—  
eg) Lazarus died again!
  - Our *bodily redemption* still in the future (Rom 8:22.23)
  - “*No more*” tears only in the New Heaven and New Earth  
Rev 21:3-5 (only **some** of the tears wiped away now)
- Our God is a God of miracles;  
but He chooses whether or when to do a miracle —  
He is Sovereign!
- In the School of Suffering,  
God wants us to learn  
the “Discipline of Darkness” (Isa 50:10)  
*... obeys ... darkness ... no light ... trust ... rely ...*  
Don't try to create light by yourself! (v11)  
— It will only be “*torment.*”

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## How not to Suffer

### 7. Do not forget God's help in the past.

- What God did for the people of Israel in delivering them from Egypt and keeping them in the wilderness is unparalleled in history.

But they soon forgot everything —

Psa 106:10-14 ... first they *sang* (Ex 15:21)  
... then they *tested* God (v24)

- We must recollect how God has led our forefathers —
  - Jacob remembers the “*God of Abraham and Isaac*” —  
Gen 32:9,10

We must today say,

“*God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*”

That's how He has primarily revealed Himself — Ex 3:13-15  
The God of Yesterday

is the God of Today,  
and will be the God of Tomorrow!

Rev 1:8 — “*who was ... who is ... who is to come!*”

- Song of Moses: Dt 32:1-43  
“*Remember the days of old ... fathers*” (v7)
- Similarly, Elisha remembers the “*God of Elijah!*”  
*Jordan ... crossover ...* 2 Ki 2:14

- Psa 103 is one of the most favourite Psalms for Christians.  
Often we repeat vv 1,2 at the close of prayers —  
“*Bless the Lord*” — We have no problem in saying this.  
“*Forget not **all** His benefits*” — We fail here.



“all” *His benefits* — i.e. what all He has done in the past—

- + “*forgives*” (v3a) ... spiritual blessing
- + “*heals*” (v3b) ... physiological blessing
- + “*life*” (v4a) ... physical blessing
- + “*love ... mercies*” (v4a) ... emotional blessing
- + “*mouth ... good*” (v5a) ... financial/material blessing

To remember these things especially when the situation is adverse — “*His anger*” (v9)

■ Is it an economic crisis?

Mk 8:17-21 ... “*How many baskets? ...? ...?*”

Not how many ate, but how much was left over!

(See how many questions in this passage!)

“**Count** your blessings!”

■ Is it a threatening enemy?

1 Sam 17:34-37 ... *lion ... bear ... lamb ...*

“*The Lord ... He ... the Lord*”

■ Is it a confusing situation with questions? Psa 77:7-11

Solution: “*Remember*” (v11)

“*Talk*” (*confess/meditate*) (v12)

“*Go into His presence*” (v13)

Result: You will come out confessing —

“*Who is so great a God as our God?*” (v13b)

eg) My wife and I lost our passports in 1979 in Bombay enroute the Gulf.

God spoke to us through Psa 66:8-14

Now our minds are prepared to face

any travel difficulty!

■ Read Biographies and Autobiographies —

Financial need ... George Muller

Sickness ... Amy Carmichael/Joni Ericson

Family problems ... William Carey, John Wesley

Persecution ... Watchman Nee

... *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*

■ A correction:

No **dependence** on past victories,

but **remembrance** of them

to renew our faith for the present.

Here's where Samson failed —                      Judg 16:20

He depended on his past victories

rather than on the Lord who granted him victories.

■ **Conclusion**

An apostolic confession:

2 Cor 1:8-10 ... *"He delivered ... delivers ... shall deliver"*

Because, *Jesus Christ is the same*

*Yesterday*

*Today*

*and Forever!*

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## How not to Suffer

### 8. Do not slacken devotional exercises.

- When we go thro' unexplainable suffering,  
and if the suffering lasts for long,  
we get vexed in our spirits —  
Our focus is on our suffering  
rather than on spiritual activities —

This is portrayed in Heb 12:10-12

*“not joyful ... grievous ... hands ... knees ... feet”*

- There are three important exercises  
we must never give up or slacken —

#### a) Wordstudy

□ Job 23:10-12 ... *holding fast ... not turning ...  
more than my necessary food ...*

□ Joseph (Psa 105:17-19)  
*fetters ... irons ... the Word tried him ... (Ruminating!)*

Whatever God has told you in the light,  
don't doubt in the dark!

□ Psalmist

His repeated confession about God's Word—

Psa 119:50 ... *comfort in affliction*

:52 ... *remember ... comfort myself*

:54 ... *songs ... pilgrimage*

:92,93 ... *unless ... delight ... give **life***

- It's natural to sink in our spirits while suffering —

The Psalmist repeats a prayer thrice:

**“Revive me according to Your Word!”** (119:25,107,154)

Even if you don't feel like reading or meditating the Bible,  
keep doing it!

There are several psychological prescriptions  
to overcome depression;  
but nothing as effective and as lasting as Bible meditation—  
because Jn 6:63 ... **flesh** (all human methods)  
*profits nothing*  
*... but My words ... spirit and life ...*

#### **b) Worship**

We must not stop praying and worshipping,  
but increase prayer and praise.

Otherwise we will sink in sorrow —

Phil 4:6,7 ... *Be anxious ... prayer ... thanksgiving*

The problem may or may not be solved;  
but the **peace** will be retained.

Certain examples —

- Prophet Habakkuk (Hab 3:17,18)

*Though the fig tree ... rejoice*

He had many puzzling questions (1:2,13b)

- Jesus (Lk 22:39-41)

The “usual” prayer resort ... *Garden*

- Paul & Silas (Acts 16:23-25)

*... many stripes ... prison .... praying ... singing*

Peter's admonition who had watched  
the suffering of Jesus at close quarters —

1 Pet 4:12,13 ... Sing as much as you suffer!

*... strange trial ... rejoice to the “extent”*

Praise God when you feel like praising Him  
Praise God when you don't feel like praising Him  
Praise God until you feel like praising Him

**c) Work**

— especially the work of the Lord

There will be a tendency to slow down the ministry.

Discouragement is the most powerful weapon  
in the devil's hand!

Several questions will surface:

“Why has God allowed this in my life?”

“Am I not serving Him faithfully?”

— A paralysing effect

Apostle Paul is the most challenging example in this area —

- 2 Cor 4:1,7,16 ... **ministry** ... *mercy ... lose heart ... outward man ... perishing ...*
- 7:4,5 ... *Conflicts and fears ... but boldness in **speech***
- 10:10 ... *Weak in body but weighty in **writing***
- 12:7 ... *thorn ... forcible in apostolic ministry with “perseverance” (v12)*

He writes so to the Galatian believers also —

Gal 4:13,14 ... *physical infirmity ... preaching*

My personal testimony —

Heart ailment (Surgery 1996), Chronic backpain (Spinal surgery 2007), Vertigo, Piles, Renal stone (Colic), Malaria, Jaundice, Typhoid, Throat problem (preaching ministry against medical advice)

But *God's strength is made perfect in my weakness* (2 Cor 12:9).

(See also Pages 68-70, 259-262, 385-388, 651-656, 691-695)

## How not to Suffer

### 9. Do not misquote Bible Promises.

- It's natural to look for some promises of God  
when we go thro' suffering.

Yes, God's promises are for our *comfort and hope* —

Heb 6:11,12

But unless we know the “suitableness” and “applicability”  
of various Bible promises, we will be disillusioned —

#### **A few examples**

- One of the earliest promises God gave His people  
concerning healing — Ex 15:26

*“none of the **Egyptian** diseases”*

*i.e. locusts ... frogs ... Egyptian deities*

The Israelites of course had other diseases like leprosy!

- One of the commonest promises quoted by  
healing and deliverance Evangelists —

*“God shall wipe away all our tears.”*

This promise occurs **thrice** in the Bible —

All of them refer to “eternity” —

Isa 25:8 ... Only when *death is swallowed up*

Rev 7:16,17 ... Only when there will be

*no more hunger or thirst*

Rev 21:4 ... *No more death or pain*

Today, only “some” of our tears will go!

- Accidents are too common these days;  
both for the godly and the ungodly.

*“None of **His** bones shall be broken”*

Psa 34:19,20

This is exclusively a “Messianic” promise.

vv 18 & 21: *“those”* — general

vv 19 & 20: *“His”* — personal

Even the “saved” thief’s bones were broken! (Jn 19:32,33,36)

- Barrenness/childlessness

God can heal barrenness

as He did for Hannah and Elizabeth;

but it may not be the case always with everyone—

God gave other prescriptions —

eg) Dt 25:5,6 ... brother’s widow

Similarly, today, we can **adopt** children.

If God gives a child to yourself,

it will be a double blessing!

- Some sufferings stay for long —

What’s the meaning of *“but for a moment?”* (2 Cor 4:17)

*“day by day”* (v16)

*“eternal”* (v18)

i.e. in comparison with eternity,

the 80-year period is just a *“moment!”*

- Has not Christ saved us from the curse?

Gal 3:13 ... It’s only the *curse of the “Law.”*

i.e. *no condemnation* (v11)

Not from “birthpain” or “hard labour” ...

These are curses of the “**fall**” (Gen 3:16)

i.e. **before** the Law was given!

- Be anxious for nothing ...

Phil 4:6,7

What’s promised is not the “solution” to problems,  
but “*peace*” that’s *ununderstandable*.

- Suffering may be due to persecution.

Promise to Abraham:

*“I will curse him who curses you”* (Gen 12:3b)

But Jesus:

*“Bless those who curse you”* (Mt 5:44)

Sadhu Sundersingh:

*“The Cross bears those who bear it!”*

- It’s normally said, “What He did for **others**,  
He will do for you!”

Will He? May or may not!

- God released Peter from prison;  
but delivered James to be beheaded!
- God protected Paul from a mob in Jerusalem;  
but let Stephen be stoned to death!
- God used Paul for healing of so many sick people;  
but He did not remove the thorn from his flesh,  
or heal Timothy’s stomach!

- The NT promises are mostly for “*spiritual*” blessings —

2 Pet 1:3,4 ... *exceedingly great promises* ...

*godliness ... divine nature*

Rom 8:35-39 ... *no separation from the love of Christ*



## How not to Suffer

### 10. Do not waste your sorrows.

- Tears wash our eyes so we can see God's ways better.  
We can see God's rainbow through our tears.  
Tears have a sanctifying value —  
Eccl 7:3 ... *sad face ... heart made better ...*  
Turn **Baca** into Berachah (Psa 84:5-7)  
*Baca* = A valley of bushes and thorns which could not be  
passed without labour and tears  
... *from weeping to blessing ...*
- God will **ultimately** turn our mourning into dancing —  
□ Psa 126:4-6 ... *captivity ... tears ... sheaves!*  
i.e. fruitfulness!  
Even if it's an unbearable suffering —  
eg) Rachel ... Jer 31:15,16,17  
*lamentations ... children ... end ... hope ...*
- Think of the glorious **outcome** of suffering —  
Rom 5:3,4 ... *patience ... character*  
Js 1:2-4 ... *patience ... perfection*  
Rev 7:13,14 ... *tribulation ... washed ... white*
- Remind yourself of these maxims:
  - Every difficulty is an opportunity.
  - Man's disappointments are God's appointments.
  - Stumbling blocks become stepping stones.
  - No success is permanent; no failure is final.
  - The passage may be turbulent, but the landing will be safe!

Psa 66:10-12 ... *fire ... net ... waters ... rich fulfillment*

- Present sufferings vs. **future** glory
  - Rom 8:18 ... “*in us*”  
referring to *the redemption of our **bodies*** (v23)
  - 2 Cor 5:1-3 ... *sufferings in this body ...  
clothed with the Heavenly ...  
(vv 6-8) “confidence ... faith ... confidence”*
- Resist the temptation to withdraw from people ... **seclusion...**  
You will lose your warmth! (Eccl 4:11)
  - How much Jesus appreciated the fellowship  
of His disciples —  
Lk 22:28-30 ... *My trials ... My Throne!*  
even though He knew they would deny Him  
and desert Him!
  - Dan 3:25 ... 3 young men walking together **in fire!**
  - If one organ suffers, other organs suffer with it*  
(1 Cor 12:26)
- In your suffering, **minister** to others —  
2 Cor 1:3,4 ... *comfort others with the same comfort...*  
This way,  
Sorrows will become Songs!  
Worries will become Worship!
- Relax !
  - Do not take life too seriously;  
do not take it too casually either.
  - Do not expect too much from life;  
do not expect too little from it.
  - Do not waste your sorrows!