

SUFFERING

- there are four kinds of suffering in the Bible:

CORRECTIVE SUFFERING (HEB 12:4–11; REV 3:19)

- (1) deserved suffering, (2) results from divine discipline for personal sins, (3) follows an act of personal sin, (4) designed to discourage further acts of sin, (5) 'for our benefit' (*epi to sumpheron* in Heb 12:10)

EXEMPLARY SUFFERING (JOB 1:8–12; JOHN 9:1–3)

- (1) undeserved suffering, (2) given to glorify God, (3) believers are made an example to angels, Satan, demons, and men: Job was an example to angels, Satan and demons, and the blind man was an example to men ('in order that the works of God may be revealed in him' John 9:3), (4) not a result of personal sins (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3; John 9:3),

- (5) Job and the blind man did not know why they were suffering,

- (6) may end with blessing (the blind man received his sight) or double blessing (compare Job 1 with 42)

CONSTRUCTIVE SUFFERING (ROM 5:3–4; JAMES 1:2–4; REV 2:10; cf. DEUT 8:2–3, 16)

- (1) undeserved suffering, (2) given as a divine test of obedience, faith, and faithfulness,

- (3) designed to produce steadfastness and Christian character

PREVENTATIVE SUFFERING (2 COR 12:7–10)

- (1) undeserved suffering, (2) given to keep us from becoming proud

CONCLUSION

- only one of the four types of suffering is deserved—corrective suffering
- suffering is not always the result of personal sins (Exod 4:11; John 9:3)
 - believers can suffer in a lot of different ways (Heb 11:36–38)

PROPER ATTITUDE IN SUFFERING

BE CONTENT: *"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am" (Phil 4:11)*

DON'T COMPLAIN: *"do all things without complaining or arguing" (Phil 2:14)*

DON'T WORRY: *"Worry about nothing" (Phil 4:6)*

MAINTAIN PERSPECTIVE: *"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God...will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able; but...will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor 10:13)*

DON'T AVENGE YOURSELF:

"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone" (Rom 12:17); "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY, SAYS THE LORD" (Rom 12:19)

GIVE THANKS: *"In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess 5:18)*

REJOICE:

"sorrowing yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor 6:10)

"accepting joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have...a better possession and an abiding one" (Heb 10:34)

DIE TO SELF, THE FLESH, AND THE WORLD DAILY: *"The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal 6:14)*

PRAY: *"Pray at all times and do not lose heart" (Luke 18:1)*

HAVE FAITH: *"God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God" (Rom 8:28)*

WAIT:

"Wait for the LORD; Be strong, and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD" (Psalm 27:14)

"I waited patiently for the LORD, and He inclined to me, and heard my cry" (Psalm 40:1)