

WHY DO BELIEVERS SUFFER?

18 Principles on Suffering

Taken from
1 Peter 3:13-14



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1 Peter 3:13-17, "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers; they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. In verse 18 we have the example, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

The section that we just read is talking about suffering. One of the difficulties that I had when I first became a believer, and ran across the principle of suffering, was that I never found anybody around who knew why Christians suffered. It took me quite a long time to find out that there is something in suffering besides punishment. Every time that someone suffers, someone usually comes up and says, "Well, you've done something wrong," or "they've done something wrong and you're being punished." That's not necessarily true.

We're going to go through this passage and give you 18 reasons why Christians suffer. I didn't say one, I said 18. It took me a long time to get these. I couldn't even find one. My wife was dying of cancer and some good people told me that the reason that she was dying was because I was no good. Well, that helped me tremendously. They said because I had worked in clubs and so forth, that God was punishing her for me. Well, that didn't help. Then one guy told me that he would pray for me. That didn't help. A third guy said everything would be all right, and it got worse.

So, I introduce this class hoping that you'll get some of these principles so that

you'll be able to perpetuate them yourself. That not all suffering in punitive, not discipline is what I mean.

Verse 13, "And who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?" The interrogative word "who" is followed by the words, "will harm." The words, "who will harm," is the word that we had before for evil, KAKOO. The word "evil" is KAKOS. This is a cognate. We had the noun before, now we have the verb. KAKOO is translated "harm." It means to oppress under evil. Literally, verse 13 reads this way: "Who will oppress you under evil." Then it says, "if ye become imitators," the word followers is the word imitators, "of the good." The word "who" is an interrogative pronoun and it says, "who is he that will maltreat you or cause the principle of evil."

Then we have the word "if," which is important. We have one "if" in the English language and there are four "if's" in the Greek language. The first class condition in the Greek language for "if" is "if and it is true." The second class condition is, "if and it is not true." The third class condition of "if" is the one that we have, "maybe it is and maybe it isn't." And the fourth class condition is "I wish it was so but it is not." Those are four "if's" and they're all spelled differently in the Greek language. See, you can tell what it's talking about.

I wanted to show you this because it is very interesting how accurate the Word of God is. "If you become followers or imitators of God," that's the third class condition here. It looks like this: EAN, which means maybe you will and maybe you won't. The one we have for "if." It means that you have a choice. The word "be" is not "be." It means to become. The word for followers is the word ZELOTAI, and that's where we get the word "zealous" or "zeal" or "zealots" from. Imitators means that if you become imitators of good, and the word "good" is the word AGATHOS, which is Divine Good.

The verse reads this way, "Who is he who will maltreat or oppress or produce in you the principle of evil, or bring evil upon you, if, maybe you will, maybe you won't, become imitators of The Good." The imitators of The Good are those who are in fellowship, producing Divine Good, gold, silver, and precious stones. This is setting it up. This is a believer who has the potential of being in fellowship, producing Divine Good.

That brings us to verse 14, which is the subject of suffering for righteousness' sake. Verse 14, "But and if you suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are you: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." Immediately you can see a problem because you know there are reasons why we suffer and they have nothing to do with Divine Discipline. I want you to note that first so that we can head off a lot of things. You will suffer and it will not necessarily be Divine Discipline. This verse says you are happy when you suffer for righteousness' sake. You have to go back to what it really says here. It begins with a conjunction. The conjunction is "but" and it's a conjunction of contrast.

We begin with a contrast between the principle in verse 13, which we just studied, and the principle in verse 14. Verse 13 we had undeserved suffering. You're producing Divine Good, you're in fellowship. So, if you have suffering under these conditions, it's undeserved. But, in verse 14 we have Divine Discipline, or deserved suffering. The word "and" in verse 14 is not found in the original, so it reads, "But if." This "if" here is the fourth class condition. It's different than the one we had before. It's a rare one, as a fourth class condition. There are two of them in 1 Peter 3. One of them here in verse 14 and the other one is in verse 17. They're both fourth class conditions. This verse is saying, "If you suffer for righteousness' sake, I wish it were so but you are not." Righteousness' sake is being in fellowship and would then be undeserved suffering. But he says they are not. He wishes it, but they are not, so this is discipline. So, the fourth class condition sets up two general categories in suffering. This is talking about the Christian way of life. This is not talking about

unbelievers. We're talking about Christians. One is undeserved and two is deserved. In other words, there are times when you are going to deserve suffering, which would be discipline, and another way also. There will be other times when you don't deserve it. Our illustration coming up is in verse 18. Verse 18 is the key because Christ suffered for us, the Just for the unjust. That's undeserved suffering. See, that's the illustration.

Now, the implication in verse 14 is that in undeserved suffering you can be happy in it. Of course, you see immediately the problem again because so many times we have been under undeserved suffering but you we're happy at all. So you have the right to ask yourself a question: Why wasn't I happy when I was suffering undeservedly?

That requires a rather general understanding of the whole realm of the problem of suffering, which we'll get in just a moment. But, after this fourth class condition "if" here, like this, "if," I wish it were so but it isn't, then we have the words "ye suffer." The thing that's interesting about this is that's the word PASCHO. which was used for a sacrificial lamb.

It's a present tense. A present tense means this suffering has been continuing for awhile. The active voice, the subject produces the action, indicates that the sins of the individual believer produce this. And if the sins of the individual believer are producing this, then this is discipline. So, this "if," which is Peter, through the Holy Spirit, expresses a wish or a desire of the writer, which at this moment, is not a reality. He wishes that they were suffering for righteousness' sake, but they are not.

So, this means that they are out of fellowship, this means they are under Divine Discipline. In other words, this tense again should read this way, and you can see how this fourth class condition can change it: "If you suffer for righteousness' sake, I wish you were but you're not." So, we know the recipients of this epistle, in this section of 1 Peter 3, are suffering because of Divine Discipline. That comes under the principle of Hebrews 12:6, "whom the Lord loves, He chastens."

However, this is what is so good about this section. Here the recipients are out of fellowship, they're suffering because of their own failures. However, if they follow Peter's instructions of the previous verse, they'll get back in fellowship and they'll have the privilege of turning cursing into blessing.

In other words, the discipline, from which they're suffering, can be turned into righteousness' sake, because this fourth class condition indicates that you suffer because you deserve to suffer and you can suffer when you don't deserve it. If you don't deserve it, you can also be happy.

All of us have at least one time or another in our lives, had the experience of undeserved suffering and we weren't very happy at all. It wasn't your fault. You weren't wrong. You were not out of line in any way, yet you were suffering and you weren't even happy.

This verse says that you can be happy. This verse says that God has provided a way for us, in GRACE, to have perfect happiness in adversity as well as in prosperity. In fact, the word for happiness, happy usually indicates a type of happiness, which doesn't depend upon circumstances. We're talking about inner happiness, not happenings. When anybody talks about happiness they talk about things happening. But this is a type of happiness that depends on YOU transferring the Word into your soul.

So, a passage like this, brings us into the focus of the whole principle of suffering. This is a rather detailed explanation, so we'll begin the study of the principle of suffering, the whole realm. I think the easiest way to handle this is to start with reasons why we suffer. I'll try to give you a long enough list so that you can get the principle.

18 REASONS WHY BELIEVERS SUFFER

1. I don't know what you would come up with as far as taking a test on why people suffer. But the first reason why we suffer is because of the **details of life**. This is most paramount in this country. Details of life. I mean

by the details of life, things. When you do not have the mastery over the details of life, then you become slaves to the details. That's the whole book of Ecclesiastes. I'll try to give you passages on each one of these principles.

The whole book of Ecclesiastes is Solomon in a frantic search for happiness apart from the Lord. He's trying to have details make him happy and he's a slave to details. Slavery from the details of life actually comes from two sources. Here's what your soul looks like: Self-consciousness, mentality, volition, emotions, and a conscious, which is where you have your norms and standards. Usually slavery from the details of life comes from emotions. Your emotions taking over your soul and dictating to your soul.

The other way is through your norms and standards (your conscious). This happens when your conscious is seared, like with a hot iron. When this occurs inside of you, then everything you touch turns to misery. If your emotions are dictating to the mentality of your soul, then you're living by your emotions. If your norms and standards are shot down with those two facets, you see, either one of them, then anything that you touch will be miserable. Marriage could be miserable family. And you're not happy regardless of the cause of suffering.

But obviously this is a type of suffering you have coming to you. Because as a believer, with the emotions ruling and your conscious being past feeling, obviously you're going to be a slave to the details of life. Once you're a slave to the details of life, then the lack of those details makes you miserable. You know, if you had a car, you'd be happy. If you had a good job, you'd be happy. If you had this, you'd be happy. When you lose them, then there goes your happiness. That's just the antithesis of this word, "happy are ye."

So, the book of Ecclesiastes gives us our first general cause for suffering. The first general cause for suffering is **slavery to the details of life**, caused by a conscious that is past feeling, or seared, or your emotions are dictating to your soul. Solomon, in that book of Ecclesiastes, had more things than anybody, and

the capability of going after the details and he did. He tried everything and nothing worked for him.

2. The second reason for suffering is **guilt reaction**. You suffer when there is a guilt reaction. Usually it is a guilt reaction to sin. Whenever you have a guilt reaction and you suppress it in your subconscious, that's when you have some suffering in your life. This is brought out in 1 Timothy 1:5, 6, 1 Timothy 1:19, 20, 1 Timothy 4:1, 2 and 3:9. 1 Timothy covers that pretty good.

What I'm talking about when I'm talking about guilt reaction is a guilt reaction to some sin you have committed. When you do that, you have punitive suffering. Of course, when you confess it, when you get back into fellowship, that wipes it out. So, the guilt reaction that you have, after you confess that sin, is the fact that you've rejected the GRACE in being restored back to fellowship. God forgives you and cleanses you from all sin and yet you are forgiven and cleansed by God but you go right on with a guilt reaction and you add suffering to suffering.

In other words, you commit a sin, and there's suffering and discipline designed for that. You confess it, you're back in fellowship, so you perpetuate it by having a guilt reaction. You're adding sin to sin. That's adding misery to misery. It involves the principle that you can't build your happiness on someone else's unhappiness, in this case it's yours.

So, if you're suffering from a guilt reaction to sin, inevitably it's going to effect those that are around you. See, if you're involved in the details of life for your happiness, you don't have them, or you're in a frantic search for them, that effects your relationships with other people also. If you have a guilt reaction because of some past sin that you haven't isolated, that will effect people around you also. Loved ones. Parents. Friends.

And in the name of guilt reaction, the most awful crimes have been committed. In other words, people get up, stand up, and they sound off in the name of Christianity. You know, they get up and they say, "I have wronged So-'n-so." They name their sins in

public. The reason why they do it is to alleviate this guilt complex at the expense of other people. You get up and say, "Well, there's Mary over there. What I did the other day was malign Mary." Mary didn't know that you maligned her but now she knows. Now, she's got a problem. Now she's maligning you. So much for public confession.

Of course, that's a violation of every principle of GRACE. I've met people who have heavy guilt complexes and want to publicly get up and tell people about their sins. No good ever comes from that sort of thing. They're just trying to build their happiness on someone else's unhappiness. But it won't work. They think that they can stand up and tell all to the congregation, or whoever, and somehow God will take away this feeling of guilt and somehow they will be cleansed and purged.

Greeks had a style. They called it "KATHARSIS." In other words, whenever they did something wrong they would mutilate part of their bodies. This is the same thing. This is ridiculous. It happens with husbands, wives, parents, children and it falls into the same category. I think it was Roosevelt who told Owen Wister that "a sinner's stool is the only public, egotistical pulpit."

In other words, public confession is out. In other words, if you have laundry, keep your own dirty laundry in your own washing machine. I don't suppose you wash clothes in everybody else's washing machine. You don't go down the street and ring every doorbell and leave a basket of clothes at each neighbor's house. And yet, you want to do the same thing with your sins. But, it won't work. That's how dangerous it is. Now, maybe there is someone here tonight-with a guilt reaction that is sin. It's a worse sin than the one that you started it with.

How does a person get a guilt reaction? They shock themselves. You do something that shocks you. One of the worst sins in the world is **guilt reaction**. You're not only sinning in the mental attitude, but at the same time you're perpetuating misery in your life, you're suffering and you're torturing yourself.

But it always overflows to other people. You will hit someone else with it. A lot of people say, "Well, if you just go and make a clean breast of it, then everything will be fine." No it won't be fine. You'll just stir up more trouble for a longer time.

3. The third point is suffering from a **seared conscious**. Ephesians 4:17-19. The conscious is where your norms and standards are and in Ephesians it says they are past feeling, insensitive. When a person is a believer and is negative to the Word of God, then what happens is a vacuum is formed and then five or six things come in to that soul because of that vacuum.

The first thing is like mental attitude sins, then you have sometimes dope addiction, adultery, all sorts of things. When your relationship with the Lord is negative, you shut him off on one side of your soul. Then it affects your relationships in life with people.

So, one side of your soul, God's side, is seared, you've shut Him off, and then the other side of your soul is also seared because of your lack of relationship with the Lord. This is the type of suffering I'm sure that the recipients here in 1 Peter were involved with. So, Peter has to say to them in verse 14, "But if you suffer for righteousness' sake, I wish you were, but you aren't."

4. This point is related to the last two. It is suffering for **failure to isolate sin**. That's found in Hebrews 12:15. Isolate it! Once you confess a sin to God, the sin is forgiven and blotted out. God forgives and God forgets. There's no way that God will penalize you for that sin again.

Generally you get involved with what I call "chain sinning." You know what chain smoking is: you light one on another. "Chain sinning" always involves someone else. You get involved with some kind of a sin that involves another person. Then you confess it and that sin is forgiven. You may be miserable and have a hard time and you may be bitter. Bitterness is a great way to perpetuate it. So you're bitter. You look at the other person and see that they seem to be getting along fine. They've been restored and they move

right along. But, you're bitter. They just seem to be as happy as a lark. They're moving right along and you don't like that.

So, bitterness perpetuates from that sin. Out of bitterness you may malign that person. You may be guilty of sins of the tongue. You may do something to hurt that person. Operation retaliation. Looking for some opportunity. And if you do, you're actually doing what we call, "chain sinning." You light one on the other. See, mental attitude sin perpetuates until the sin in which someone else is involved.

If someone has hurt you, you think that they have hurt you, or someone has wronged you in some way, you have all of these mental attitude reactions. Hebrews 12:15 deals with this. Of course, GRACE goes out the window, as it says in Hebrews 12:15. In other words, mental attitude sins overflow and defile the many.

5. Most of these principles are mental. Principle 5 is a principle of authority. Suffering from **rejection of authority**. There are many kinds of authority in life. When these authorities are rejected, the individual or the individuals suffer, always suffer. Judges 19-21, are a couple of chapters on it. In Jeremiah, the whole chapter 7.

In other words, this is the rejection of authority. In Matthew 7:29-8:13 we have all different types of authority in life, parents, boss on the job, establishment, local law, athletics, coaches, teachers, a lot of different things are authorities. These are three different areas where authority is rejected and the result is intense suffering in these three passages.

The first five are more or less negative. Now, we'll get to the positive side in point 6.

6. Point 6 is interesting because a lot of people want to grow up fast as far as Christianity is concerned. Therefore, point 6 is suffering from **rapid and accelerated growth heading towards maturity**. In other words, you'd like to grow up fast as a Christian.

Some people are in a hurry to become mature. You know you start out as a baby be-

liever and then you are a “young person,” or adolescent and then you become mature, or as the Scripture says, “a father.” That’s really maturity.

So, if you’re in too much of a hurry, then you have to go through certain pressure periods and a part of rapid maturity is connected with pressure. So we have a pressure situation, or two, that’s absolutely necessary.

Of course, if you’re anxious to grow, then you must expect a certain amount of undeserved suffering as pressure. That’s taught in James 1:1-6. If you’re interested in growing up fast as a Christian, you can bet your life you’re going to get some undeserved suffering to keep your nose in the Book. It’s inevitable, before you reach maturity, before you have any type of a spiritual structure in your soul, obviously you’re going to have a certain amount of undeserved suffering.

7. It’s very hard for people to understand until they realize that they are related to other people in one way or another. That there is suffering from **interrelationships in life**. Nobody is an island. Nobody lives to themselves. Nobody dies to themselves. This is suffering from interrelations with those who suffer.

There are certain people with whom you are related and their suffering overflows to you. There are certain verses that deal with this. One chapter is 1 Samuel 21. Another one is 1 Chronicles 21. 1 Corinthians 12:26, Romans 14:7. The principle is really a very simple one. Your body, for example, has a lot of interrelationships. If, for example, you’re hanging a picture, and you’re not accustomed to using a hammer and you try to nail something into the wall and you hit your thumb a good whack, you simply don’t put the hammer down and say, “Well, now the end of my thumb really hurts.” People think that if you don’t act that way, that you’re not a Christian. You hit the end of your thumb and you see what happens. “Well, no. The end of my thumb really hurts and the rest of me just feels fine.”

I know some people who spend all night chasing all over town. Then, they get up in the morning and they like to say, “My head

hurts,” or “I’m hung over. So, I’ll just unscrew it and leave it on the dresser before I go to work in the morning.” We’d have a lot of headless people driving down the freeways in the morning. You see, you can’t say that because whatever goes on in the head affects the whole body. A nerve on the end of a finger, if you hit it, effects the entire person. There are people with whom you are related in many ways. These people, when they hurt, you hurt, too.

Some of you ladies may have gotten up this morning and had breakfast and the bear got out of bed, screaming and hollering. You just woke up happy, sunny, and just so relaxed and pleasant, but it didn’t last long because his attitude overflowed to you. It may have been over the toast.

So, we suffer with those who suffer. There are many principles involved in this, but there’s a concept of suffering. You don’t have to be out of line in any way, you can feel fine, and actually you’re not suffering from anything other than your relationship with those who do. So, you suffer with them.

That happens in churches. It happens in families. For example, parents may feel fine on some given day and then something happens to one of the children so they suffer because of relationships. Something may happen to someone else’s child and that doesn’t bother you at all because that’s down the next block and there’s no relationship whatsoever.

Someone in a category three relationship, like friend, it affects you. Some of you are suffering right now because of this particular principle. The question in our verse is happy are you, right or wrong? Wrong! You’re not happy. You might be. You should be and you could be. But we haven’t gotten to the happiness part in this verse yet so we’ll just have to hold up on it.

8. I don’t know if I-should even say this one. We’ll never get to the end. It always seems to come up. There’s a certain amount of suffering in life which is marrying outside of the one that the Lord has designed for you. Suffering from **failure to marry the right person**. This suffering is described in two chapters, two entire chapters. One of them is Ezekiel 16

and the other is Ezekiel 23. Again, we're not covering these passages exegetically. We're simply presenting the principle in summary.

You might marry someone who is the wrong man or the wrong woman. This does not mean that you're living in sin. I have to say it again. You get questions like that occasionally. Marriage is still a Divine Institution. It's not a sin to be confessed when you have a relationship with your husband. People are just unbelievable.

I can say this next thing because it appeared in the paper. The Pope just came out with an edict from his chair. He said if you're a Catholic and you're divorced and you marry someone, you can't take the sacraments. But, if you don't have any sexual relationships with them, then you can.

Well, marriage is still a Divine Institution and it's not a sin whereby you have to confess it. This principle is just saying that there is suffering when you don't marry the person that the Lord has designed for you.

9. The most familiar. Suffering because of **Divine discipline**. Hebrews 12:6. The first eight categories are either undeserved or something we cause. We bring suffering on ourselves. But, there is also a suffering which comes from God. We call it punitive measures. Suffering from Divine discipline, Hebrews 12:6, "Whom the Lord loves, He chastens."

Let's go back to point one for a moment and I'll show you how this works. If you suffer because you're a slave to the **details of life**, that is not God punishing you, that's you punishing you. You feel that you'll be happy if you have a Mercedes, or whatever, or a blonde, or a red head. That's not God punishing you. This is you causing you to suffer. You become a slave to the details of life and you bring about your own suffering. You can't even say that God is punishing me, because He is not. You're punishing yourself, which is, of course, rather stupid, to punish yourself.

Then point 2, suffering from **guilt reaction to sin**. That isn't God punishing you. That's you punishing you. You have the guilt reaction. God didn't say have a guilt reaction.

God didn't say I'm going to make you feel bad. You had it all by yourself.

Then suffering from a **conscious that is seared, past feeling**, that comes from your own free will. That's the emotions dictating to your soul. It comes from your own volition. You bring it on yourself.

The fourth one is suffering from **failure to isolate sins**. If you fail to isolate sins because you enter into mental attitude sins, because of prior sins, therefore you bring it upon yourself and God doesn't punish YOU. You bring it on yourself.

The fifth one, suffering from **rejection of authority**. You reject authority. You didn't get any orders from God on this, so God doesn't punish you. You punish yourself.

The sixth one does not apply to this principle. The seventh one may or may not apply. The eighth one, if you get the wrong person, you made the decision. You married the person. You can only blame yourself. Some people will spend a lifetime trying to collect reasons why you made a mistake. You may think about it by the hours. You'll rationalize. You'll try to work around it, but there's no way you can. You made the decision. You can't blame it on your parents. You can't blame it on the fact that all your friends are getting married. You can't blame it on any situation. You can't blame it even on pregnancy. You make your own decisions. Period. So, when you suffer under those conditions, obviously you've brought them on yourself. It is not Divine discipline.

There are a lot of ways in which you can suffer. Most of our suffering comes from ourselves and not from God. God very rarely has to punish us because we punish ourselves. God is very gracious, He doesn't add to it. Many of the sins which we commit carry with them self-induced misery and self-induced suffering. Even if you confess it, when you've brought it on yourself, like mental attitude sins, they produce self-induced misery. So you confess the mental attitude sin, like pride, jealousy, bitterness, hatred, whatever, then you turn right around and do it again and then you have misery again. Then you confess

it. It's almost like a perpetual misery. So, there's a break in this chain of mental attitude sins. You have to learn to distinguish between Divine discipline and what you bring upon yourself.

I know most of you are not so foolish as to hit yourself over the head with a hammer because that would be just stupid. But, we all bring troubles upon ourselves. When it says in Scripture, that man's days are few and full of trouble, the trouble is the trouble that man brings on himself. That's one of the biggest sources of suffering. I suppose we could cut out three quarters of our deserved suffering if we could stay out of our own way.

You've all heard the phrase, "You are your own worst enemy." Well, someone could tell all of us that, because we are all our own worst enemies, It's true of all of us. The only way that you can stop being your own worst enemy is to get out of this bracket where you bring your own suffering on yourself. So, you say, "what can I do about it?" Well, **grow in GRACE by the knowledge of your Saviour Jesus Christ.**

Point 9 is Divine Discipline suffering from **Divine discipline**, which is different from all the others. There's one closely related to it and that's the tenth one.

10. Suffering from rejection of the Word. There's a definite suffering problem when you **reject the Word of God.** This one is for believers only. It is taught in Jeremiah 13. We've also seen one of the other results of **rejection of the Word** in point 3, which is a seared conscience and being past feeling. This is a more general type of suffering.

11. This is undeserved suffering. This **undeserved suffering** is from the unseen conflict. You're in a conflict that is not visible. We suffer as believers because we are an extension involved in this spiritual conflict in the human race.

This is one that you're probably not even aware of, 1 Peter 3:17, 1 Peter 1:12 and Ephesians 3:9-12. There's a world around us that is unseen. This is undeserved suffering. You're just in it. When Jesus Christ was on the Earth, He was a target. Now that Jesus Christ is sit-

ting at the right hand of the Father, He no longer is the target, but now we, as believers in Christ, are representing Him. So, we come under this undeserved suffering through this unseen conflict.

12. This is suffering to demonstrate the power of God and the provision of God's GRACE. In other words, you're going to suffer undeservedly in order to demonstrate God's power in your life. And also to be able to demonstrate the provision of God's GRACE. That's found in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, where Paul says, "His GRACE is sufficient for thee."

13. This point is a very closely related one, to point 11. This is suffering to **learn the Divine Viewpoint of life.** Sometimes we do not appreciate the Word, so we go through certain types of suffering. This is what we call learning the hard way.

This is taught in many passages. Psalm 119:67, 68, 71. I ran across these and really put them to tote in myself. In these verses it says that it is good for me to suffer affliction because before I did, I went astray, but now that I have, I have learned more of Thy precepts. So, suffering can be undeserved and we **learn the value of the Word of God.** We have appreciation for it.

14. There is a general type of suffering which is both deserved and undeserved, **depending on where you are.** In other words, if you're the president of the United States, it's deserved suffering. If you're a citizen of the United States, then it's undeserved. You may oppose different policies and then that's suffering from national disaster.

In other words, the president is making decisions, and they're incompatible with the Word of God, and he's making those decisions, so it's deserved. Now, we're in this country. We may be opposed to those decisions, but we can't do anything about them because they have come on us. It's a national disaster, so it's undeserved for us. That's why I say, it **depends on whether you're the president, or in leadership, or making decisions,**

This is national disaster. That's in Isaiah 59:15-21. Our nation is going through a trauma now, because of certain decisions.

Those who make the policies, it's deserved suffering. Those of us, who are in the national entity, are suffering undeservedly because of decisions made in the White House.

15. This is suffering from **temporary loss of norms**. I don't know whether you know it or not, but you can walk around Houston, or any other city, and there are people who have **lost their norms and standards**.

All of you have norms and standards in your minds, that's your conscious. You have a frame of reference where you remember certain things. You have a memory center and you have norms and standards. When the emotions begin to dictate, it shuts that valve off. Once the valve is closed, you are now operating on, not Divine Viewpoint at all. You revert to human standards, which are without any strength of soul. It's illustrated in Daniel 4.

You can be negative to the Word and start taking in Satanic viewpoint or human viewpoint and then destroy your norms and standards. There are other ways that you can do it, too. You can do it through drugs. That's one of the chemical destructions of the soul. Some people deal with "Pot" and amphetamines. They will do it. They are just as dangerous as these other hard narcotics.

There are a couple of ways that you can do it. You can do it chemically. And you can do it about your attitude towards the Word. You can do it two different ways. So, it's suffering from **temporary loss of norms and standards**. Some of the things that are being used today are so dangerous, that they destroy chemically the soul. Therefore, the norms and standards are permanently destroyed.

You can do it other ways, other than chemically, like being negative to the Word of God. If you've seen a guy who's been a boxer for years, he can lose his norms and standards. He walks around the streets saying, "I'll take him in the fifth." You know he's gone. He's hearing bells.

Adultery also destroys the soul. Heavy drinking. Excessive amounts of alcohol attack the brain as well as the liver. People always talk about the liver, but it attacks the brain

also. So, there are a lot of different ways in which you suffer by **destroying your norms and standards**, and you're not even aware of how that happens.

16. This is a normal type of suffering. It comes from **war**. There is a tremendous amount of suffering in **war**. Those who are in the military suffer under combat conditions. Civilians also suffer, as they become involved with the fighting in their area. It's been a long time since it has been recognized in the United States, the suffering on the part of the civilian population, because not since the War between the States has this been a principle in our history. Apparently it will be shortly. So, there is suffering from **war**, whether you have to go somewhere or it's right here.

17. Suffering from the **emotions being in rebellion in the soul in the time of tragedy or disaster**. This is found in John 20:11-18. In other words, when there is a disaster or a tragedy, and your **emotions take over** and begin to dictate policy in your soul. That is suffering also.

18. I don't want to make you too depressed. This one is unusual. This is suffering when the Right-Man rejects the Right-Woman or when the Right-Woman rejects the Right-Man. They actually come to the one they know is right for them and then reject them. That's taught in Jeremiah 12:7, 15:7-12, Ezekiel 23.

This gives us some general concepts of suffering. We can classify them into three categories. The first category is self-induced suffering. This is we suffer because we bring it upon ourselves. The second category is punitive. That's Divine discipline. The third category is undeserved suffering. If someone mentions suffering to you now, I want you to think in your mind that there are three types, Divine discipline, self-induced suffering (the one that we bring about ourselves), and also undeserved suffering. Not every time that someone suffers, is God disciplining them. They may be doing it themselves or it may be undeserved.

In our passage, we have a fourth class condition: if you are suffering for righteousness' sake. 'Righteousness' sake is a title for unde-

served suffering. Peter puts it in the fourth class condition, I wish you were, but you're not. So, we know that there are two categories right there.

The word "happy," here is in the plural. It's always in the plural. MAKAROI. That "OI" on the end is a plural suffix. It's interesting because in the Hebrew you have GOD and it's ELOHIM The "IM" makes it plural.

See, these Hebrew and Greek languages are just great because they can easily tell you certain things. This plural suffix here makes this read, instead of "happy," it reads, "happinesses." You can't read just "happy," because there is no such thing as just "happy." It's "happinesses." In this verse there is no phrase like "are ye" in the original language.

So, this verse reads. "If you suffer for righteousness' sake, I wish you were (fourth class condition), but you're not, happinesses." In other words, you can be happy if your suffering was category three.

We had three categories out of 18 types of suffering. This is where you can have inner happiness, or God's happiness. It takes the Word of God or Divine Viewpoint under undeserved suffering. Two of the three are not designed for happiness. You bring your own misery and God brings misery. You bring suffering on yourself and God brings suffering on you. Under those two classifications, obviously, there is no happiness. But, under the third one, there is. You can be happy under conditions of undeserved suffering.

The only trouble here is that Peter is addressing this to believers who were bringing about their own misery, in either category one or two. They were bringing about their own misery through self-induced misery. Or they were under punitive discipline and as a result, obviously there is no happiness involved in that. You can count on that. Any time that God punishes you, you're not going to be happy. Any time that you bring about your own misery, you brought it on yourself, you never recognize it, but you'll never be happy either. When God spans, you're not happy. When you bring about your own suffering, through your own decisions on yourself,

you're not happy. It's only under undeserved suffering that you can fall into category "happinesses," in the plural.

Under the conditions of undeserved suffering, which is not pertinent to these people, but it may be pertinent to us now, it says, "Be not afraid of their terror." Literally, "Do not fear their fear." Be not afraid is the word PHOBEO, which is followed by the noun, PHOBOS. It says, do not PHOBEO PHOBOS. The word terror is really fear. Do not fear their fear. What fear? Undeserved suffering.

See, someone's putting it on you and you don't deserve it. You can't be happy and afraid at the same time. Obviously, if you're in undeserved suffering, don't be afraid of it. Don't be afraid of suffering undeservedly. There is happinesses in it for you. Remember the people to whom Peter addresses this are not in that category. But, here is the GRACE of God, even though they are not, Peter is now giving a message to us on how to do it.

We will say that you are in undeserved suffering at this time. We'll assume that for the moment. Fourth class condition. The people to whom this originally was addressed deserved suffering. Either they brought it upon themselves, self-induced or Divine discipline. Peter wants to make a point about undeserved suffering. He knows that his recipients have it coming, that they deserve it. So, how is he going to do it? That's why God the Holy Spirit uses the fourth class condition in the Greek. Because the fourth class condition deals with the principle of undeserved suffering while recognizing that this is addressed to those who deserve suffering.

Peter, if he wrote to this people who had it coming to them, wouldn't even be fair to them and give them the impression that they were under undeserved suffering, when they're not. So, the fourth class condition is addressed to these people. "If you suffer for righteousness' sake, undeservedly, happinesses." But, you're not in that category, Peter says. I wish you were, but you're not. You're under self-induced suffering or Divine discipline. But Peter says, I am going on with the principle in spite of your situation, so that

when you do get into that category, you'll know what to do. Do not fear their fear. Don't be afraid, in other words, when you're under undeserved suffering.

Then, there's a second negative, Don't be troubled. Troubled means to be worried. See, fear and worry are very closely related. If you are in the sphere of undeserved suffering, you should not be afraid of the suffering and you should not be disturbed about it. Both fear and worry are mental attitudes. There's a second principle here. Mental attitude sins cancel the blessing and the happiness of undeserved suffering.

Here you can be in a situation where you are suffering. You don't deserve it. But if you worry or are frightened about the situation, you throw out the blessing and the happiness just by that. Yet, you're in a position to be blessed. So, mental attitude sins really cancel out blessings of undeserved suffering. Mental attitude sins crop up and cause all kinds of trouble. You are designed, through being born again, through the intake of the Word, to have God's happinesses, plural. Inner and outer. Under conditions of undeserved suffering. But, when you're under conditions of undeserved suffering, you can cancel it out. No-

tice, you bring on the mental attitude sins. God doesn't tell you to have them. He says, "Fear not. Be anxious for nothing." God never solicits to temptation or any kind of sin.

So, mental attitude sins come from our own free will. When they come into your life, it might be under undeserved suffering, you destroy not only the blessing of undeserved suffering, but you move right into deserved suffering. Now, get that! Here you are being treated unjustly. God has blessing and happiness for you. If you worry or have a mental attitude sin, you immediately put yourself under Divine discipline. People will do that to you. Here you are walking along fine. Someone says something to you and criticizes you or maligns you and BOOM, you buy it, go out after if and now you come from blessing to cursing. Don't let them do it to you.

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