

JOB SERIES EIGHT
HOW TO CULTIVATE WHO WE NEED TO SURVIVE IN THE MIDST OF LIFE'S TROUBLES
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JOB 42: 1-17; JAMES 5:10-11; GENESIS 6:5-6; JOHN 11:35; AND LUKE 10:21;
EPHESIANS 1:15-19; 3:14-19; PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11; COLOSSIANS 1:9-12; 2
CORINTHIANS 4:16-18; PSALM 78:18-19, 23-31; 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10; GENESIS
28:18-22; GENESIS 32:9-12; 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4
(SERMON 1587)

Remember that Job was involved in the cosmic struggle between God and Satan—between good and evil. I hope you have figured out that we are all involved in that battle—to varying degrees and levels. We all experience difficulty and suffering—and how we handle it makes all the difference in the world. I want us to handle it well.

Let's take a moment for a little bit of REVIEW on the lessons we have gleaned already from Job.

- The proper response to the emotionally hurt and distressed is to allow them to mourn and then comfort them (Romans 12:15b: *"Mourn with those who mourn."*). In Matthew 5:4: Jesus said: *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."* Notice what Jesus did not say:
 - "...For they shall be told why they shouldn't feel that way." No.
 - "...For they shall receive a pep talk." No.
 - "...For they shall be given logic and reasons." No.
 - "...For they shall be told how to do it better next time."
 - "...For they shall be told why it is really their fault."
 - "...For they shall be told how to fix it."
 - "...For they shall be led into an argument."
 - "...For they shall be told, "Don't cry. It really doesn't hurt. It is not as bad as you think it is. Buck up, Bucko."
 - "...For if you leave them alone it will all be OK."

- After mourning and comforting we continue our healing process by looking for purpose in our sufferings. We begin to ask the *Why* questions. The answers here can help promote our long term healing. I gave you a list of nine reasons to consider that cover most of the Biblical reasons for suffering:
 1. Am I paying a price for following Christ? (Acts 5:41; Philippians 1:29)
 2. Am I suffering for doing good? (1 Peter 3:17; 4:12-19)
 3. Is this discipline (punishment) for a sin I've committed? (Joshua 7:10-12; John 5:14; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32; James 5:13-16)
 4. Is this intended to keep me from future sin? (2 Corinthians 12:7)
 5. Is this designed to increase my faith and God dependence? (Matthew 8:23-27)
 6. Is this an instructive experience (discipline) designed for my personal growth and/or spiritual maturity? (Job 23:10; Romans 5:3-5; Hebrews 12:4-11)
 7. Is God using this so that His glory may be on display in my life? (John 9:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12).
 8. Is God using this to mold me into the image of Christ? (Romans 8:28-29)
 9. Is it time to die? (Psalm 90:10; John 11:4)
- During this time we are working through the five stages of loss and grief: Shock/Denial; Anger; Depression; Disorganization; and Acceptance/Adjustment.

Now, Let's Move To The More Relational And Emotional Side Of Healing Our Suffering: "NOW THAT THIS HAS HAPPENED TO ME, HOW AM I GOING TO RESPOND?"

The answer to this *How* question is best answered in terms of our relationships. God never intended for us to handle our sufferings alone.

Compare James 5:10-11 and Job 42:1-17. Notice that if we are going to thrive in the midst of our sufferings we will only succeed in terms of the depth of our sustained relationships.

1. Cultivate A Deep Relationship With God Through Jesus Christ In Order To Find Meaning, Compassion, Mercy And The Grace To Go On.

Christianity introduced the world to a God who suffers, alongside of the image of a God who creates and commands (Genesis 6:5-6; John 11:35; and Luke 10:21). What does it do to your heart to know that God is often weeping with you when you suffer? As we move deeper into God's heart in the realm of pain and suffering. It is time that we learn "to pray from the inside out."

The art of knowing God, of spiritual maturity, is learning to transition from the temporal to the eternal. God is much more concerned that we are praying for our spirit which is eternal than for our body which is decaying and will soon perish.

Read Paul's Prayers for our inner spirit: Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-19; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

God is more interested in the eternal than the temporary. He will sacrifice the temporary (body, situation, etc) every time if that is what it needed to develop and save and mature our inner, eternal spirit.

If we pray without being enlightened, without knowing His will, God sometimes gives us what we request—with devastating results (Psalm 78:18-19, 23-31).

God gives us the grace when we need it—often not a minute earlier: "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Notice the growth in maturity in Jacob's life as revealed by his prayers in suffering when he first began his walk with God (Genesis 28:18-22) and twenty years later (Genesis 32:9-12).

2. Cultivate A Cluster Of Close Friends In Order To Find Comfort, Companionship, Encouragement, Support And The Reasons To Go On.

Don't go through suffering alone. Now it is the time for time for encouragement, advice, lessons, logic and reasons, understanding, dealing responsibly with guilt—and more comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Job got right with his God and he got right with his friends. Read Job 42:10-11.

3. Cultivate A Deep-Seated Love For Yourself So That You Care Enough To Make Something Special With The Rest Of Your Life.

Remember the Great Commandment: Love God and love your neighbor "as you love yourself."

The book of Job has a good ending because Mr. and Mrs. Job picked up the pieces together and built a new family to replace the ones who died—and rebuilt their business—and restored their relationships.

Remember one of the most often recurring verses in the Bible: "And it came to pass..."