

The Pathway to Peace . . .

People in pain need peace.¹ Most people who suffer from chronic pain assume, *If I could just get rid of this illness, I would have peace.* But peace is not dependent on wellness. Although Jesus, the Prince of Peace, was to drink from a different cup of suffering, He yielded His will to the will of the heavenly Father. He modeled how people in pain should pray . . .

“Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”
(Mark 14:36)

Q: “Why would a loving God want me to suffer?”

God does not delight in your suffering, but He allows suffering in order to refine your faith, to develop Christ’s character in you, and to bring glory to Himself.

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
(1 Peter 1:6–7)

Q: “If I truly follow Christ and pray with total faith, doesn’t the Bible say I will be blessed with health, wealth, and problem-free living?”

No. The Bible clearly reveals that Jesus and the apostles, who truly gave their lives to Christ, did not experience health, wealth, and problem-free living. But Scripture does state that when you “share in the sufferings of Christ,” you are blessed by God.

“Rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”
(1 Peter 4:13–14)

Are There Blessings from Afflictions?

When blasted by the winds of adversity, the heart that is sheltered in the hands of God still produces a life that is full of meaning and purpose.²

Suffering softens your heart toward obeying God's Word. (Psalm 119:67)

Suffering opens your heart to make you more teachable. (Psalm 119:71)

Suffering mellows your heart to make you more compassionate. (2 Corinthians 1:3–4)

Suffering strengthens your heart to make you more mature. (James 1:2–4)

Suffering humbles your heart to keep you from being conceited. (2 Corinthians 12:7)

Suffering uncovers your heart's weakness so that you recognize Christ as your strength. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Suffering gives your heart a desire for eternal values. (Romans 8:18)

*"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."
(James 1:12)*

The Five Stages of Sorrow

1. Denial

avoiding the pain of reality

*"God will not reject a blameless man, nor take the hand of evildoers."
(Job 8:20)*

2. Anger

opening up honest emotions

*"I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul."
(Job 10:1)*

3. Bargaining³

attempting to change reality

*"Only grant me two things, then I will not hide myself from your face: withdraw your hand far from me, and let not dread of you terrify me."
(Job 13:20–21)*

4. Depression

feeling despair over the grief and loss

*"I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are a breath."
(Job 7:16)*

5. Acceptance

gaining a positive outlook on life

*"I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you."
(Job 42:5)*

Key Verse to Memorize

*"He [Jesus] said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I [Paul] will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."
(2 Corinthians 12:9)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

2 Corinthians 12:7–10

Learning to Live

- Learn to cry. (Psalm 56:8)
- Learn to let go. (Proverbs 3:5–6)
- Learn to rest. (Psalm 46:10)
- Learn to defer. (Isaiah 40:29)
- Learn to laugh. (Proverbs 17:22)
- Learn to be disciplined. (Proverbs 15:22)
- Learn to give thanks. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Accepting God's Truths . . . the Key to Coping with Limitations

- Your troubles are temporary—your glory is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16–18)
- Your physical body is designed to decay. (Genesis 3:19)
- Your afflictions are allowed by God in order to teach you. (Psalm 119:71)
- Your temptations are made bearable by God. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- Your crushed spirit will be sustained when you are indwelt by the Spirit of God. (Proverbs 18:14)
- Your suffering enables you to see God. (Job 42:5)
- Your life is being conformed to the image of Christ through your suffering. (Romans 8:28–29)

*"My soul melts away for sorrow;
strengthen me according to your word!"
(Psalm 119:28)*

Related Topics . . .

- Aging:
Wisdom for the Winter Years
- Caregiving:
A Privilege, Not a Prison
- Death:
The Doorway to Your Eternal Destiny
- Euthanasia:
The Myth of Mercy Killing
- Terminal Illness:
How Can I Ever Let Go?
- Trials:
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1. See Tim Hansel, *You Gotta Keep Dancin'* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1985), 113–29.
2. For this section see Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, rev. ed. (Dallas: Word, 1988), 329–30.
3. See Ruth Kopp and Stephen Sorenson. *When Someone You Love Is Dying: A Handbook for Counselors and Those Who Care* (Grand Rapids: Ministry Resources, 1980), 190–97.



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