

FORWARD

by Gramps Curtis

That **WHY** word... it's dangerous, to be sure.

You'd never guess that a humble little three-letter word can cause deep trouble, if not handled properly. And it becomes paramount when used in a sentence or thought about God.

We hear of this situation often, in the negative way. A person's question, spoke to the heavens says, "God, WHY have you done this painful thing to a person that honors you?" This kind of question becomes our judgmental voice against God, as though He made a mistake.

The author searches for the WHY as to discover a deeper purpose, or love for her; or anyone God has privileged to serve His purpose with continuing tears. Somehow, our heart and mind prompts us to ask WHY, whether good or bad.

Each time my daily Bible feeding led me through the Old Testament book of Job, (rhymes with robe) I felt some of the pain and loneliness in Job's words. Each time I'd cautiously ask for a deeper knowledge of God's love for Job and for me, from the words. He showed me a glimpse of the heart of most youth, today, in Job's words. (Job 19:7+) Job's words, and the words of Ms. Senese prepare our hearts and minds, for ministering to those around us, of all ages.

God's calls to others through tears and pain, become a special key to unlock hearts and lives. God demonstrated this call, on Calvary's Cross, in His Only-begotten innocent Son, Jesus Christ. Follow Deborah's writing that leads you and I to our Savior and those that need His healing of mind and heart, through the following words, and scripture..

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The smallest chapter in the Bible is also the center chapter. Psalm 117 contains the directions for praise. What does it say to you?

O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD. Psalm 117 KJV

~ ~ ~

INTRODUCTION

I believe we're all familiar with the story of Mary and Martha...how Martha was busy preparing a meal for the Lord, but Mary chose to sit at His feet and listen to Him teach. If you're not familiar with this account, it is found in Luke 10. However, as I was reflecting upon this, while the human nature side of me, in the past, would be the "Martha" making sure the meal was prepared. Everything would be hot and ready to serve all at one time, the house neatly cleaned and kept and ready for company. But my heart longs to be like "Mary" and desire to spend more time with the Lord listening to Him.

What I desire for myself, is to have the heart for Jesus Christ that she had. She wanted nothing more than to know everything about Him, to hear all He had to say, and soak in each word that came from His mouth. We are told in Luke 10:42,

***"Mary hath chosen that good part,
which shall not be taken away from her."***

This is what I want to choose..something the world cannot take away...to draw closer to Jesus Christ and place Him in His proper place in my heart, and to place me where I belong, kneeling at His feet.

These following humble words invite you to the foot of the Cross, praising the One Who suffered beyond description the pain and death that was meant for me.

Deborah and Jerry Senese

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Luke 10:42

GOD CAN MINISTER TO AND THROUGH THOSE WHO SUFFER ~ 701

...and also those with disabilities. I know this to be true because there are so many examples given in both the Old and New Testaments. And the Lord would not say so, if it weren't true. Psalm 12:6 says, *The words of the LORD are pure words.* Psalm 119:140 tells us, *Thy word is very pure;*. Proverbs 30:5 assures us, *Every word of God is pure;* And comparing Scripture with Scripture, the New Testament also confirms to us, *Let God be true, but every man a liar;*. That being said, if the Lord says He can minister to and through the broken, the cast off, the unusable, the disabled, then I believe Him because His

words are pure!

How many times have we read of incidents where the Lord either ministered to or used disabilities like crippled feet, blindness, withered hands, speech impairments, mental or emotional issues, deafness, paralysis, disabling diseases... even satanic possession!

But the Lord had a plan & purpose for each one. Just one example in Exodus 4 is the life of a disabled man that the Lord used mightily. Moses was someone who apparently couldn't speak very well. Today, we are taught that you really shouldn't do public speaking or teach classes, young or old, as it is a distraction to the listener and people tend to pay more attention to the distraction than what is being taught. Yet God chose a man with this very same disability, and commanded him to be His

mouthpiece to help deliver the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. Moses, knowing his impediment, raised 3 main objections to the Lord in chapters 3 & 4 of Exodus.

1. He was not worthy of such a call (Exodus 3:11-12)
2. No one would believe him. (Exodus 3:16-18)
3. He had a disability; A speech impediment. (Exodus 4:11)

To Moses's first objection, the Lord's reply to Him was, *Certainly I will be with thee;* (Exodus 3:12). To Moses's second objection, the Lord had an answer for that too. He told Moses to tell them, *...thus shalt thou say...I AM hath sent me unto you.* (Exodus 3:14). He also told Moses to say, *...I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you.* (Exodus 3:16) Then the Lord assures him even more by saying, *And they shall harken to thy voice...* (Exodus 3:18). The Lord has certainly given Moses a number of assurances. And yet, that last nagging objection is still there; His disability. However, the Lord's response to him was not a cliché or a "if you only prayed

harder and had more faith" type of an answer. That would be works on Moses' part as the end result would have been his fault because he didn't do something the right way, or hard enough or long enough or strong enough. The Lord's answer was simply this, *...who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?* Wow!

Sometimes fear and ignorance can often guide well-meaning Believers in forming their own perception of various disabilities when it comes to the Lord's ability to use and work through a disabled person. When speaking about the local assemblies, the issues may be accessibility or even assimilation as sometimes people feel uncomfortable around people with disabilities. Some are even of the impression that outreach to the disabled is futile because it would mean so much more extra work, extra man-power, maybe even extra expense to make a meeting place handicap accessible. Knowing all this, we need to realize and remember that God has never

been thwarted, slowed down, or put off by disabilities or suffering, and never will. We may have a long list of excuses (did I say that?)...I mean reasons, as to why, being disabled, we can no longer serve the Lord and He can no longer use us. But if truth be told, there is still so much a disabled person or a person suffering from emotional pain or distress can do to serve the Lord and be used by Him!

~ **1.PRAY** ~ it requires no speaking, no physical exertion, requires no help from a care taker and can be done any time of the night or day. On the flip side of that, YOU are also benefiting as you draw closer to the Lord in prayer, find yourself in His presence more often, and find yourself caring and loving more the person you are petitioning Him for.

~ **2. CALL** ~ Are you able to talk? There are many lonely people, not just the elderly or shut in, who would love for someone to call them and just have human interaction. Someone to just listen and let them talk. It would also mean

the world to them to know that someone cares enough to pick up the phone and see how they are doing. Speaking from experience, when a person is in a lot of pain, talking is not always convenient. But my husband takes my calls during my bad days, and the love, concern and outreach of that caller is so very appreciated and heart warming as if I would have taken the call myself...to know that someone cares enough to take time out of their day to check on you is priceless...it gives you such a feeling of worth, which most times, are lacking in such cases.

~ **3. ENCOURAGING** ~ Do you have use of your hands enough to sign a card? You can encourage other disabled, grieving, heartbroken, lonely, sick or hurting people with a pre-written card where all you have to do is sign your name to it.

Even pre-written thank you cards to people who go out of their way for you, do special things for you or help you out. It doesn't even have to be a thank you for things they've

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done for you...but things they do for the Lord that go unknown or many times unappreciated. I have a dear friend who started me out with some decorative note cards and stamps with the encouragement to “encourage others” while sitting in bed. I now keep a large selection of “praying for you” or ” thinking of you” or “Be encouraged” or “So Sorry” or “Thank You” and other all occasion cards in a basket under my night stand so that without needing

someone to hand me things, I can sit down and write out a card, even just sign my name if its a bad day...but encourage others the way so many have encouraged me. My friend still helps with the stamps...to help minister to me!

So yes, the Lord can and does still use those with disabilities to minister to others, and to be used as a precious vessel of the Lord. Remember also, sufferers can relate to other sufferers...which makes your ministry even greater. [~] [~]



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Luke 10:42

CAN OUR SUFFERING HAVE A PURPOSE? 702

DO YOU SUFFER FOR NO REASON AT ALL? ~

That sounds like an odd question to ask, but a legitimate one. Every person, at one time or another, has faced hard times. I'm sure you have too. And they aren't all physical- sometimes, we find them in the least expected areas. We expect them at work. We expect them in social situations such as dealing with PTA or school situations. However, we seem to get knocked off kilter when they hit us in our home, but especially at our church or for our faith. As the years go by, we're hearing more and more problematic suffering for being or

behaving as a true Christian should at the hands of the world, but also an increasing rate of Christian Brothers and Sisters towards other Christian Brothers and Sisters, which I'm sure, as a parent, upsets our Father. Peter wrote to some young Christians scattered around what is today the western part of Turkey. They were surprised that they were suffering for being Christians. They thought it was strange that their faith, which one would think should bring peace and comfort, would actually end up causing suffering, at least with some of their family and friends... for no other reason than for living what they believed... for their faith in Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:12-16 tells us,
*Beloved, think it not strange
concerning the fiery trial*

which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Obeying God was bringing these young Christians into suffering and this disoriented and discouraged them. But Peter said that it shouldn't have that effect on them. They needed to ask themselves very carefully why they were suffering, and then consider how a Christian should suffer. That's how they could reconsider their hard times and understand them more as God wanted

them to. First they had to ask themselves why they were suffering. We have to admit, that yes, there are times when the suffering we go through, be it physical, mental, or emotional, is brought on ourselves because of poor choices we've made.

Some, we could see it coming like a train coming towards us, but don't really care about the consequences to come, at that time. Other times, its not knowing, but impulsively jumping into something we should have taken the time to pray about. And other times, we've prayed about it, wasn't sure, but made the decision before receiving a peace from the Lord about it or even listening to the Holy Spirit that was TRYING to speak to us. No matter what the circumstance, the outcome is the same; Self-inflicted suffering. This is NOT the kind of suffering Peter was talking about. These are consequences....results of our indiscretion...sometimes, out-right sin. What Peter was talking about, is the suffering that we may endure due to our faith, living as a true 9

Follower of Jesus Christ, not participating in the things that can tempt or entangle us in Satan's snare. This is suffering for the cause of Christ, which is totally different. It seems that the first Christians were told this again and again. And perhaps we need to hear more of this ourselves. Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth about how *the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance* (2 Cor. 1:5). Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi about his own desire to know this participation in Christ's sufferings (Phil. 3:10). These early Christians knew that they were called to share with Christ, to participate with Him. Just as He had shared in their humanity (Heb. 2:14), so they were to share in His sufferings.

Peter also wrote to these Christians about how they should suffer. And the answer is not as simple as we would like it to be, but the answer is certainly made quite clear. We're to suffer not with

surprise and shame, embarrassment that we follow Jesus Christ, hide our faith behind acting like the rest of the world, but with rejoicing and praise just like Christ accepted His suffering. He was able to rejoice and praise His Father in the midst of all He was enduring because He knew He was doing the will of His Father and pleasing Him. The trials we undergo for being Christians are part of what Peter refers to here in 1 Peter 4:13 as sharing in the sufferings of Christ. That's WHY we can rejoice in them. That's not to say that we're giddy with joy and excitement that we are going through this type of suffering, however it is actually evidence that we are united with Christ. How amazing! These young Christians were scared that the insults and trials they were experiencing meant they had done something wrong...but Peter tells them that they were evidences that they were doing something right!

So as we contemplate this, let's also remember what we're told in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18: ~

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

What we go through here on Earth is so very temporary compared to eternity.

Whether our suffering is due to our faith, or is physical, mental, emotional or spiritual, we who have trusted Jesus Christ as our only source of salvation can take comfort in the fact that this life is only a blip in time... but eternity is what matters! Let's all examine our hearts, make sure we know 100% where we stand with the Lord, and then look forward to His coming to take us Home, or our Home going when our time on earth is over. Amen.[~] [~]



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Luke 10:42

CALM DURING TURBULENT TIMES

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Everyone knows what it feels like to be faced with a decision, or to be caught in a situation where you don't know what to do or where to turn. That unsettled feeling of despair, discontent, upsetness... just the uncertainty of which way to go when you come to a "Y" in the road of life, but it feels more like a "W". A choice, a decision that can not only effect your life but the life of others around you needs to be made, and the inability to make this decision on your own is causing you distress. It doesn't have to. There are

answers, there is help, but are we looking for it in the right place? I'd like to share an article with you, that will encourage you, if you're going through this type of "suffering" right now.

"We all know God is always with us whether we feel Him or not. But there's something words can't describe when we do feel His holy presence.

I count on the Holy Spirit constantly for so many things — comfort, help, wisdom, and direction — to name a few. I'll briefly focus on the last two... wisdom and direction. The Holy Spirit needs to be known intimately as our best friend. Then we can more easily catch the nuances of what the Spirit wants to tell us. We don't ignore a friend. We

care enough to listen to their joys and as well as their concerns and sorrows. Our friend the Holy Spirit is constantly speaking to us to help direct us and correct us.

I knew early on as a believer that if I wanted to live the Spirit-Led Life I'd heard about, I needed to stop being afraid of what I might be asked to do, or asked not to do. I fail often. But I am getting better at it. For me, grieving God is painful...



either in the moment or for years, after choosing something too lightly. I trust God to let me know when I hurt Him or hurt someone else, which is basically the same thing. Said something I shouldn't have. Missed a cue from Him. Hit a boundary line I didn't see or

ignored. But it's not a legal thing. It's more like realizing I hurt someone I love and feeling wounded because I was so capable of doing it. I thank God for His mercy and forgiveness!

Paul had a plan to take some guys and head to Bithynia to preach, but God changed it. Luke tells us "the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them." Once they obeyed, this happened: "And a vision appeared to Paul in the

night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly

gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them." Acts 16:9-10. If Paul had not known the Holy Spirit so intimately he might have dismissed it. If prideful, Paul may not have wanted to tell the guys. After all, his other plans were a flop. But

God showed up and totally redirected.

Today many await their “Macedonian Call” to firmly guide them — to the right place, people, or thing. But the way God did it with Paul might not be the way God does it with us. The Holy Spirit customizes [to each individual, and each individual intimate relationship with Him.]

So we need to be familiar with God’s Word and His Spirit — to hear and discern. Again, intimacy is the key. The Holy Spirit is not only for us, but leads us to others... like those in Macedonia or those around us today — which also becomes a blessing to us. So it’s win-win in any case. God’s ways are higher than ours. He is smarter and wiser. It’s only a fool who wants to lean on — depend on — his own understanding. (Is 55:9, Prov. 3:5) We need to ask for His wisdom on how to please Him. Like asking a

friend the best way to help. He will lead us in amazing ways that serve His priorities and purposes — instead of our own. Wisdom from on high gives us the ability to see things from a perspective other than our own. It also gives us the desire to choose the highest goal — according to God’s purposes. The Holy Spirit gives us divine insights. He sharpens our discernment and instincts. He lines up our will with His, so pleasing God is more automatic... with lots of practice.”
(article by M. Green)

James 3:17 promises us, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

Lord, I pray for this kind of wisdom... Your wisdom, not of this world, but Holy Spirit directed wisdom. Amen!.[~] [~]



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FAITH IN PAINFUL TROUBLING TIMES

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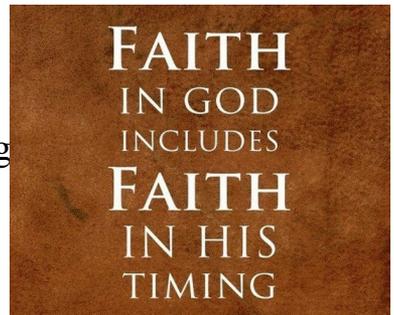
Faith! That's probably the hardest part about suffering and going through difficult times. And yet, the Lord has promised that He would take care of us...especially during those difficult times. So why do we still worry, fret, stress and put ourselves through such torture? Faith! Hebrews 11 talks a lot about faith. vs 1. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." vs 6. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." vs 7. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." vs 24-27. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not

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fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.” You see, when push comes to shove, and times get difficult, and things happen to us that we don’t understand, we aren’t alone. So many examples in the Bible talk about people who had to rely upon their faith to get them through difficult circumstances.

Our faith, is a test of sorts, as to who we really are when the going gets nearly impossible. No, that doesn’t mean we remain stoic and unfeeling...it means that our trust that the Lord knows what

He’s doing EVEN during these times of suffering... ESPECIALLY during these times of suffering...that the Lord uses to get us through.



[A portion of a light-hearted song by
M. Green, touching on Hebrews 11]

HE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST

You know it ain't no use, banging your head,
up against that cold stone wall,
Cause nobody's perfect, except for the Lord,
and even the best bound to fall,

Remember He is divine, and you are de branch,
He'd love to get you through it
if you'd give Him a chance,
Just keep doing your best,
And pray that it's blessed,
And Jesus takes care of the rest.

Yes the Lord said that He'd take care of the rest,
He's gonna do it,
He'll take care of the rest, He'll see you through it,
He'll take care of the rest, the devil blew it,
He'll take care of the rest, He'll take care of the rest.

Just think about Moses, in front of the burning bush,
barefoot on the Holy ground,
You know, he must have been thinking,
what's an old dude like me,
Gonna tell em all when I go down,

The Lord said, hey Moses, don't you worry about
going down south,
I'll be saying every word that comes out of your mouth,

Just keep doing your best, and pray that it's blessed,
I'll take care of the rest.
Yes the Lord said that He'd take care of the rest,
he's gonna do it,

He'll take care of the rest, He'll see you through it,
He'll take care of the rest, oh, Pharaoh blew it,
He'll take care of the, He'll take care of the rest.

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Luke 10:42

SUFFERING COMPARED TO TAPESTRY ~ 705

Have you ever considered looking at the suffering and pain, be it emotional or physical, along with the joyful, happy times you may have, as part of an “unfinished tapestry”?

Just think about it...the Lord has compared Himself already to us as a Potter is to clay. It says in Jeremiah 18:6, ” ...cannot I do with you as the Potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the Potter’s hand, so are ye in Mine hand...”. We are also told in Isaiah 64:8, “But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and we all are the work of thy hand.”. What a mental picture this paints for us I can visualize a potter, taking a lump of unmolded clay, placing it on the spinning wheel, and digging his hands into the clay, taking it from it’s present form, and literally splitting it, bending it, wetting it, and again molding it. After the beating that clay took, it then is placed into a fiery furnace so the heat can dry out the molded object that the potter made to finish it in such a way that he could use it most effectively. I had also heard an illustration referring to ones life as a tapestry...being carefully woven; Using dull and dark threads (the painful times in our lives) as well as



bright and brilliant colored threads (the happy times of our lives). After the the dark and bright threads are woven to completion, there is a beautiful tapestry to display. The intricacy of its beauty is beyond description.

There is a very appropriate poem I had read entitled,

My Life by John Bannister Tabb:

“My life is but a weaving
between my Lord and me.
I may not choose the colors;
He knows what they should be.

For He can view the pattern
upon the upper side,
Which, from beneath, a tangle
of mysteries may hide.

Sometimes He weaves my sorrow
far as the eye can see,
But I will trust His judgment
and work on faithfully.

‘Tis He who fills the shuttle;
He knows just what is best;
So I shall weave in earnest
and leave with Him the rest.

Not till the loom is silent
the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas,
disclosing reasons why,,,

The dark threads are as needful
in Weaver's skillful hand
As threads of gold and silver
to patterns He has planned.

He knows. He cares. He loves me.
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives His best to those
who entrust designs to Him.”

In closing, with this same thought it is Isaiah 41:10, “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”.

As you look at the beautiful tapestry above, try to remember, each good thing, each bad thing, each painful thing is just one single thread in a beautiful creation the Lord will one day unfold ...and be able to gasp at the beauty of His work in our lives....one thread at a time. = = =



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Luke 10:42

SUFFERING THRU DISABILITIES 706

~ As many of you can vouch for, there are many different facets to the word “disability”. This word is used for such a wide range of areas such as physical, mental, emotional, cognitive, even forms of destructive recreational habits such as drug abuse... fall under the category of disability. However, I’m primarily addressing the emotional, mental and physical aspects of disability and the suffering and tribulations that seem to go hand in hand. I don’t know of any other group of

individuals that need our love, support, prayer, kindness, understanding and help more than those who suffer with disabilities. But on the other hand, I don’t know of too many other people who not only trust with a passion, but anxiously and impatiently desire the fulfillment of the eternal promises of God, then those who suffer as I mentioned above, but have accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of their life and yielded their entire being over to Him... disabilities and all!

Not only do they trust with a complete and total expectation that the Lord will ultimately keep every promise He’s ever made, but prayer is a constant, on – going discussion with the Lord in such a way that it

becomes as natural as conversation with the person next to them. If there is ever a group of individuals who seek to have God's purposes demonstrated in and through their lives, to be strong enough through God's strength and grace alone, to prove to a skeptical, unsaved world that you can be physically, mentally or emotionally broken, yet still of some use to the Lord of all creation...it is the Believing disabled and their care-takers.

This topic is a difficult one for me to work on as I now realize I just gave MYSELF a title; A description that having a head knowledge of is one thing, but realizing it, is another matter altogether. I am part of the "Believing Disabled" and I am far from alone. When we think of the disabled person, may I suggest from experience, that you think equally of the caretaker(s) of the disabled as they are many times MORE neglected than the

disabled themselves. I am so very thankful and praise the Lord that I have a very loving, faithful caretaker in my husband, and an extremely supportive family who stands behind me, supports me, listens to me vent or cry when I need to do so, and still loves me just as much. Only the Lord knows how very thankful I am for each one of them...but I am the exception...not the norm.

That being said, though disability may prevent some of u from being used the way we'd been accustomed to being used, that doesn't mean He's still not using us! It also doesn't mean we can't still serve Him! We just have to be more creative and find a different way... which isn't always easy, but not impossible. I want to encourage any person and every person who feels discouraged because you feel the Lord can't use you any more to really think about it. Should we, as

Believers in Jesus Christ
EVER be surprised to see
God work through human
weakness?

In 2 Cor. 12:9, the Lord God
Himself told us,

“And He said unto
me, My grace is
sufficient for thee:
for My strength is
made perfect in
weakness...” and
then, after realizing
this, my heart wants
to be able, with
Paul, to say, “...most
therefore will I rather
in my infirmities, the
power of Christ may
rest upon me.”. Our flesh

weary and tired of pain,
heartache, burdens, testings,
and suffering. But our
heart’s desire is to be able to
say those very words to our
Savior, ” most gladly
therefore will I rather glory
in my infirmaries, that the
power of Christ may rest
upon me.”

You see, its during this very
time of our weakest
moments and human frailty
that the Lord is able to
unfold His plan for our life
and accomplish His purpose



to begin this journey, stay
the course, and keep going
until we finish the race He
has set before us! Be
encouraged by 1 Cor 9:34,
“Know ye not that they
which run in a race run all,
but one receiveth the prize?
So RUN that ye may
obtain.” !

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Luke 10:42

**CAN WE CAUSE
OUR OWN
SUFFERING? 707**

**~ Do We Bring
Suffering Upon
Ourselves Because
We Refuse To Listen?**

~ I was listening to a message today which speaks about “self inflicted destruction and suffering. At first, I thought it was talking about “physical” self infliction...but it wasn’t. It was talking about the suffering we go through because we refuse to listen to what the Lord has to say to us. Hosea 4 gives a perfect example of this self inflicted suffering. While we understand that this particular passage was

speaking to God’s chosen people, that doesn’t mean there isn’t application there for us today...especially after reading what was going on then, and what goes on now! If there wasn’t something for us to be gained by reading such passages, the Lord wouldn’t have included it in the Bible for us to read.

Hosea 4: 1-6 ~ *“Hear the word of the LORD... for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore*

shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away... Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and... shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee... seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

I don't know about you, but this sounds very much like the times we live in. I'm not speaking only about those who don't know Jesus Christ as their Savior, but those who do as well. There are many a professing Christian that just refuses to adhere to the wisdom and guidance the Lord wants to give us...that could save us from so

much suffering we bring upon ourselves. Decisions we made in haste that we didn't seek the Lord concerning, knowing that we're doing something that doesn't please the Lord, but because we enjoy doing it, we do it anyway...so many things that this could apply to.

Many things happened to the children of Israel that they brought upon themselves that they suffered needlessly as we do. Why? Jeremiah 29:19 tells us, “

Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them...”.

This very easily could apply to us today as well. Let's take the time to examine our hearts before the Lord and see if there be any wicked way in us, things that perhaps the Lord has been trying to tell us, but we weren't listening! =

STIFFNECKED

As it is figuratively used, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, the word means "stubborn," "untractable," "not to be led."

The derivation of the idea was entirely familiar to the Jews, with whom the ox was the most useful and common of domestic animals. It was especially used for such agricultural purposes as harrowing and plowing.

The plow was usually drawn by two oxen. As the plowman required but one hand to guide the plow, he carried in the other an "ox-goad." This was a light pole, shod with an iron

spike. With this he would prick the oxen upon the hind legs to increase their speed, and upon the neck to turn, or to keep a straight course when deviating. If an ox was hard to control or stubborn, it was "hard of



neck," or stiff-necked. Hence, the figure was used in the Scriptures to express the stubborn, untractable spirit of a people not responsive to the guiding of their God.

(portions from International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)



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wsprog.com/mh/ Luke 10:42

CAN GOD USE OUR SUFFERING FOR HIS GOOD? 708

YES! GOD CAN
MINISTER TO AND
THROUGH THOSE
WHO SUFFER ~

...and also those with disabilities. I know this to be true because there are so many examples given in both the Old and New Testaments. And the Lord would not say so, if it weren't true. Psalm 12:6 says, "***The words of the LORD are pure words;***". Psalm 119:140 tells us,

"***Thy word is very pure;***". Proverbs 30:5 assures us, "***Every word of God is pure;***" And comparing Scripture with Scripture, the New Testament also confirms to us, "***Let God be true, but every man a liar;***". That being said, if the Lord says He can minister to and through the broken, the cast off, the unusable, the disabled, then I believe Him because His words are pure!
How many times have we read of incidents where the Lord either ministered to or used disabilities like crippled feet, blindness,

withered hands, speech impairments, mental or emotional issues, deafness, paralysis, disabling diseases...even satanic possession!

But the Lord had a plan & purpose for each one. Just one example in Exodus 4 is the life of a disabled man that the Lord used mightily. Moses was someone who apparently couldn't speak very well.

Today, we are taught that you really shouldn't do public speaking or teach classes, young or old, as it is a distraction to the listener and people tend to pay more attention to the

distraction than what is being taught. Yet God chose a man with this very same disability, and commanded him to be His mouthpiece to help deliver the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage.



Moses, knowing his impediment, raised 3 main objections to the Lord in chapters 3 & 4 of Exodus.

1. He was not worthy of such a call (Exodus 3:11-12)
2. No one would believe

him. (Exodus 3:16-18)

3. He had a disability; A speech impediment.

(Exodus 4:11)

To Moses's first objection, the Lord's reply to Him was, "***Certainly I will be with thee;***" (Exodus 3:12).

To Moses's second objection, the Lord had an answer for that too. He told Moses to tell them, "***...thus shalt thou say...I AM hath sent me unto you.***" (Exodus 3:14). He also told Moses to say, "***...I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you.***" (Exodus 3:16) Then the Lord assures him even more by saying, "***And they shall harken to thy voice...***" (Exodus 3:18).

The Lord has certainly given Moses a number of assurances. And yet, that last nagging objection is still there; His disability. However, the Lord's response to him was not a cliché or a "if you only prayed harder and had more faith" type of an answer as that would be works on Moses's part as the end result would have been his fault because he didn't do something the right way, or hard enough or long enough or strong enough. The Lord's answer was simply this,

"...who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?" Wow!

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Luke 10:42

GOD REDEEMS SUFFERING! ~ 709

How can this be? We look at the Lord only in the light of the “positive things” and what He is “capable of doing” and “if only He really wanted to... but He must not want to”; At least in the perspective of suffering...of any kind. What we neglect to look at, to see, to understand and comprehend is that only the One who created life can

conquer death! This is where, for the Believer, death has lost its victory...and so has suffering.

Just looking at the previous post and all the suffering that Christ suffered through while here on Earth, the physical suffering, the emotional suffering, even stress, anguish, abandonment & frustration we can see that Christ truly did experience everything we do. And in light of this, God the Father who knew the evil that lurked

int he hearts of each one whom Christ encountered while here on Earth, “ALLOWED” them to “do their thing”...the evil desires in their hearts...in order to bring about our salvation, to glorify Himself in the process, and to provide for Christ to return to His Father’s right hand preparing a place for each of us who



believe on Him. We are told in John 14:2-3 ~

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a

place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

While some horrible things happen because of suffering, this is 1 wonderful thing, for us, that we can thank and praise the Lord for every day,

that came about as the result of suffering.

Not to mention, if all that did occur, had not occurred, and Christ had not returned to be with the Father, we wouldn’t have the gift of the Holy Spirit – The Comforter_ here

with us today. John 14:16-18 tells us,

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless...”

God will allow suffering. God will permit that broken heart. God will even allow a broken home; However, as Joni Eareckson Tada points out, “Suffering [of any kind] then is like a sheepdog, snapping at [our] heels, driving[us]

down the road to Calvary, where otherwise, [we] might not naturally be inclined to go. God is the One who takes suffering like a jackhammer and breaks apart the rocks of resistance. He takes the chisel of pain and the bite of hardship and chops away at ones pride. And then sufferers are driven to the cross by the over whelming conviction that they have no where else to go...no one else to run to.

No one is naturally drawn to the cross. Human instincts do not naturally lead people there.” And this, my dear friends, is how our pain, our heartaches, our brokenness & suffering IS REDEEMED

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DOES MARK 16:15 APPLY TO US? 710

Are we being truly obedient to the Lord? The last words of Jesus Christ, while He was here on Earth were instructions that He gave His Apostles, which were very specific, yet confined to them only. Beginning in Acts 1:2-4, He said,

Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after

his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

However, in verse 7-8, Jesus picks up again saying, *And he said unto them...*

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall

be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

At first, they were told to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit... which they did.

However, after receiving the Holy Spirit, they were no longer to stay in the confines of that one little area, but to branch out and take the Gospel of Jesus Christ all over the world. Why? Because without the Holy Spirit in their lives to guide them, to give them the right words to say, to go before them and prepare hearts, they were not ready.

Why do we not follow these same instructions today? And what is stopping us from taking the Gospel to every area we have accessible to us?

We received the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation...so nothing is stopping us from spreading the Gospel...accept us and our obedience to the Lord!

Here are just a few very good reasons why we should:

Mark 16:15 – And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Matthew 28:19 – Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

1 Thess. 1: 5,6,8 –

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance... And ye became followers...of the Lord,

having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.

In order to be in obedience to the Lord, we need to be spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ; The Biblical account of His death, burial and resurrection to pay the sin debt that we could not pay on our own, to accept this free gift that came with such a high price according to John 3:16 and Acts 16:31.

You need not be a missionary and travel to far away countries. I do realize that there are many out there who are in the same position as myself; confined to the house, or even to bed. However, that

doesn't have to hold us back...the Lord still gives us many opportunities. Because of such technology, we have no excuse as to why we cannot be obedient to the Lord and "***preach the Gospel***". We also encounter doctors, nurses, receptionists and pharmacists that as the Lord allows opportunity, we can share with them as well. I am enclosing a link to a message that is not only edifying to us, but if we simply share this link either through email, a blog page, or even a Face Book page, we are doing our part in spreading the Gospel. May we all be cheerful, obedient servants to our King as we await His arrival to take us Home to be with Him!

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Addendum

answers to puzzle
are at: BibleFun.org

Our view of life is

often like a puzzle, like the jumble of letters in the nearby search duo-puzzle. We can't see any picture, or a path, or even a **START HERE**, where we can take our first step. It's as though there is no **THIS WAY UP**, or **THIS WAY OUT**, in our life's puzzle.

And seems like our first step is to ask a friend or neighbor, how we should handle our hurdles for today. When others try to give us advice, there are gaps in that advice, that keeps us from having any confidence or comfort down deep in our hearts. That advice of others is like the word list that has gaps that have to be filled in to grow and be good leaders to others who are watching us, for direction.

Before you even look at the puzzle, read the page of scripture slowly during some quiet moments. Notice especially the first three words. **IN THE BEGINNING**, almost makes me think of the words **START HERE**. Now the next three words are just as powerful. **WAS THE WORD**. That "WORD" means far more than just ink on paper, it is actually beginning to tell us about a **PERSON**. He's the very person that will lead you along the path you're looking for. Read the other scripture, even the second time. Let it sink in. Actually we should more than **READ** the scripture ... we should **FEED** on its truths.

As you work the puzzle, notice the path God has set before you. In quiet moments, talk to Him. Begin by praising Him for all the beauty He has placed around you. Tell Him you love Him deeply, because He first loved you, in His sacrifice on the Cross for your sins.

Next, tell Him your hurts and hopes. **BUT MOST IMPORTANT**, tell God that you want Him to answer your prayers, in **HIS OWN TIME**, and in **HIS OWN WAY**.

Hint: The puzzle will be more fun, if you invite a friend to work on it with you. Then help them to open their heart to God in love.

On to the puzzle...

John 1: 1-20

1 ¶ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 ¶ And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15 ¶ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. 16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

19 ¶ And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? 20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

end}

Digging Heaven's Diamonds

BE _ _ _ _ NG LI _ HT WORD
BE _ _ _ EN LI _ _ _ TH WO _ LD
BE _ _ _ VE MADE
CH _ _ ST MO _ ES
CO _ _ _ _ ED NAME
DA _ _ _ _ SS PO _ ER
FA _ _ ER PR _ _ _ _ ED
FL _ SH RE _ _ _ ED
GOD RE _ _ RD
JE _ _ _ _ EM TH _ _ GS
JOHN WI _ _ _ UT
LE _ _ _ ES WI _ _ _ SS

John

1:1-20

Words are hidden
in all directions.
Answers and more
puzzles are at:

HeavensDiamonds.blogspot.com

W W X C S S E N T I W M K A Z
A X O H F V P Q R J D O B R A
S A O R E C O N F E S S E D T
K H J I D F N I R R T E G L E
F S L S R H J R R U S S I X B
N E T T O G E B O S F U N A P
B L Q J C F P H S A X D N G Y
I F F M E T T E T L S K I H F
T D P R R I N H R E E X N X E
R L P E W K E D A M T J G B T
G R W B R R K S G N I H T H G
G O N A M E W H I W V V G Q D
P W D E V I E C E R E I H I R
Y J R O K H V Z G Z L V E U L
E I B S E Z E T N C D Y M N C

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