

# Daily Family Devotions

The thought begins in the Bible verse;  
please take the time to read it first.

FRIDAY

## "SUFFERING BROUGHT ON BY OTHERS"

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 2:9-11, 14-18;  
Acts 8:32, 33

We always think of Christ's dying as a physical thing, corporal suffering. But there was another, more significant suffering involved here -- the death of pride, the suffering of undeserved punishment, humiliation.

Scripture often mentions this fact, yet how casually we skip over it, never really understanding! "Jesus, who for a little while, was made lower than the angels -- "Think: the Son of God, hanging like a common criminal, as the lowest of men, beneath even those creatures who served him. Why? So that The Son would *know* the humiliation of being misjudged, that ache that comes with rejection.

Yet he willingly accepted this -not counting himself above such experience. Is this how you are responding to your latest hurt and injustice? With humility, waiting for the tears in your throat to pass, remembering with a conscious effort the way our Lord stood -knowing that he understands, that God will sweeten the bitterness and once more lift you up to your place before men?

Gossip, false accusations, divorce and other kinds of human betrayal all cause deep suffering because every one of them strikes at our pride, our ego, our dignity.

Yet *this* is the suffering which has the potential to make us Christ-like -- if we are like Christ in our response to it.

*Prayer: Lord, we remember your powerful silence, your faith in God's will; let it be ours. AMEN*

SATURDAY

## "THE COMFORT OF HIS PRESENCE"

SCRIPTURE:  
Psalm 116:1-14

A small boy, who had been painfully burned in an accident, was asked by his father if he was suffering.

Grasping his father's hand tightly, the boy said, "No, it only hurts. Now that you're here, the suffering's gone --"

This is how it can be with God. Somehow, when we are assured of his presence, his awareness of our pain, the suffering is lessened.

Suffering often accompanies pain because anything which strikes us in a physical way seems to bring fear with it. We suffer more from apprehension, a feeling of abandonment by God, loneliness, bewilderment, tension and despair.

The searing pain which consumes a life . . . the slow overwhelming pain that steals life bit by bit . . . the recurrent pain which seems to rob us of the precious hours and days, each bring suffering, too, of course; yet all of this if it is yielded, accepted, sanctified by a conscious effort of love toward God, can be lessened.

Whatever suffering we endure here with patience, makes us more understanding of others; prepares us better to serve; and gives us an appreciation of what Christ willingly undertook -- as a man and as God.

*Prayer: Lord, because you suffered, I come to you for comfort. Share with me the secret of your strength and your love in spite of it all. AMEN*

MONDAY, MAY 20, 2024

## "IS SUFFERING A PREREQUISITE?"

SCRIPTURE:  
Hebrews 5:7-10  
1 Peter 4:12-16

"Christianity is always talking about suffering!"

"Christianity is masochism. Why be miserable?"

"Who wants to be a suffering servant?"

What is this "suffering" we read so much about? Is it a necessary part of our life with Christ?

Suffering is a special anguish that comes from the deepest part of us. It isn't pain -- for we can have pain and not suffer. It isn't trouble -- for we can be in trouble and not suffer. It is the language of the heart or soul that tries to express compassion, loneliness, sorrow, weariness, understanding. Suffering is often too deep for words. Even actions do not really express what we feel.

Suffering is the most intense sign of living -- a sign that we are able to respond, to feel, to be more than animated machines. Suffering, perhaps, is the undeniable proof that we are made in the image of God, sensitive to whatever lies a thwart his plan for perfection in life.

In this sense, then, yes -- a Christian will often suffer . . . with another person, for the world, because of his own mistakes, at the hands of other people. Living means walking the gamut of life -- from joy to suffering and Christ thrusts us into the midst of it. How alive, then, are you?

*Prayer: Lord, so much of my time seems to be spent in avoiding suffering, shying away from difficulties. Give me your courage, Lord, AMEN*

Web: <https://dailyfamilydevotions.org>

Email: [info@dailyfamilydevotions.org](mailto:info@dailyfamilydevotions.org)

Voice Message: (818) 457-1798

## TUESDAY

### "SUFFERING BECAUSE OTHERS SUFFER"

SCRIPTURE: John 11:32-37  
Luke 19:41-44

The word "compassion" means to "suffer with". This kind of suffering can only come with love. It is more than sympathy; it is empathy. Compassion is what a mother feels when her child is rejected; what a father feels should his son lie battered by life; what a lover feels when the loved one weeps -- the aching, often helpless *sharing* of another's grief and sorrow.

So many people today claim such a compassion. Yet what makes Christian compassion (that expressed by Jesus) so different from much of ours today?

Too often we make ourselves into little gods, passing judgment, handing out indictments, accusing, berating, making pronouncements. And all the while . . . those we are allegedly defending still lie bleeding, without either our presence or our love.

Compassion is often no more than a sharing of humility, the passing on of our strength, the encouragement to endure, to wait for light, to look unto God, even through the tears.

Compassion is sharing those things which build toward life, rather than death.

How long since you have had the patience, the love to suffer like this?

*Prayer: Lord, sometimes it is easier to blame, than to bind up – to speak words from a stage rather than simply to be where I am needed. Help me now to step down from my arrogance, take up the towel of your tenderness and service, so that I may minister to men as you did, I pray. AMEN*

## WEDNESDAY

### "SUFFERING BROUGHT ON BY A WORLDDLIKE OURS"

SCRIPTURE:  
Habakkuk 1:2-4; 2:2-4

This kind of suffering can be the most dangerous, for we can rationalize our anger, let our suffering become hatred toward those who cause it – like a festering abscess.

We see this wrongly directed suffering everywhere today. People "suffering" for those whom the world has wronged – yet becoming hostile because of their hatred, rather than compassionate in their co-suffering. Will they be blessed for their "suffering" – or cursed for their hatred? Better men – or destroyed?

Christ suffered more than any man ever will for what the world was doing to his Father's people – yet his grief never soured, never turned to poison. He knew anger – yes; he told the people of their sins – yes; but he never *withdrew*. He never turned his back. He never gave up until he had given all he had -- his life.

What kept him going? He looked beyond man's impotence to God's omnipotence: "The vision still awaits its time!" God had not forgotten. And in spite of all we will do to foul his plans, destroy his world, and create chaos, he will have his way. Christ will come again -- this time as Ruler. There will be peace -- when he comes. Men will set war aside. There will be happiness. But not just now. Not until the time is ripe.

*Prayer: O God, give me strength to endure through this particular suffering because of the faith I have in your power to keep those who love you. AMEN*

## THURSDAY

### "SUFFERING WE BRING ON OURSELVES"

SCRIPTURE: Job 5: 6-9  
(Supplemental adult reading: Romans 1:18-32)

Job is speaking here of the kind of suffering we bring on ourselves – "Man is born to trouble as sparks fly upward –" We actually seem to *gravitate* toward trouble if we are left to our own devices.

While it is true that there is some suffering that is brought on by others which we cannot always escape - war, greed, divorce, murder, betrayal, indifference all cause suffering, yet this kind of suffering will eventually pass if it is allowed to heal, to be cleansed by God.

But there is the other "suffering" with which we are all too familiar – that which we bring on ourselves by our own disobedience, our own rebellion, our own selfishness, ambition, disloyalty and indecision. This kind of suffering *must* be resolved quickly, by God, for it is destructive – never-ending.

Many people cling to this kind of "suffering", refusing God's forgiveness, preferring to be miserable and making others around them miserable.

This is not Christ-like suffering. This is why God has made forgiveness so available to everyone. We are not meant to endure *this* kind of suffering. This is satanic, indulgent, useless . . .

*Prayer: Dear Father, you have offered us forgiveness for just such suffering. Please help us to reach out for it and know release from remorse. May we never forget your grace. AMEN*