

## Conclusion

- Discipling people who are hurting starts when times are good by building a solid foundation for difficult times that WILL come.
- Dealing with difficulty and crisis takes discernment, lots of prayer, gentleness and comfort, and a willingness to help.
- Praise God for the privilege we have to point others who are suffering to the goodness and mercy of God.

## *Core Seminars—Discipling* **Class 11: Discipling People who Are Hurting**



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### **Introduction**

In studying a theology of suffering, we forced to ask a few questions:

- How do I understand suffering?
- How does my view of suffering shape my faith?
- Are any of my thoughts on suffering unbiblical?
- How does my views on suffering shape the way I care for others?

### **What does the Bible say about suffering?**

- The Bible is realistic and honest about suffering in a fallen world (Gen 3:16-19; 2 Peter 3:8-22; 4:12-19).
- God is totally sovereign and totally good (Isa 40: Luke 18:19).
- At the same time, man is sinful and responsible for his actions (Phil 2:12-13).
- God uses everything for His good purposes. (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28).
- God builds good things into the lives of His children, even through difficult circumstances (Hebrews 12:5-11).
- How should we respond to suffering as Christians: Turn to God, not away from Him (Ps 42:5,11; 56:3).

## What are God's Purposes in Suffering?

- Suffering gives us an opportunity to stand out as Christians in a world that does not honor God (1 Peter 4:16).
- Suffering teaches us to rely on God, not on ourselves (2 Corinthians 1:8-9).
- Suffering teaches us God's decrees (Psalm 119:71).
- Suffering matures us into godly people the Lord is molding for himself (James 1:2-4).
- The Savior receives glory through our suffering (1 Peter 4:13).
- Suffering even allows us to share in the Son's glory (Romans 8:17).

## How do we prepare our discipling friends for suffering?

- Take some time to talk about suffering.
- Help them to deconstruct worldly assumptions about suffering (2 Cor 12: 9).
- Study God's purposes for suffering as revealed in his Word.
- Study suffering using good Christian articles and books.
- Build the relationship(s) before suffering comes.
- Focus on faith (John 16:33).
- Help build a foundation on the goodness and sovereignty of God. (Luke 6:47-48).
- Teach them to meditate on the gospel (Ps 42-43).

## How can we help our discipling friends when times are difficult?

- Accept your *covenant* responsibility to partake in their suffering (1 Cor 12:25-26).
- Be present when suffering comes (Job 2:13).
- Be an ambassador of comfort (2 Cor 1:3-4).
- Be willing to make sacrifices for others (Gal 6:10).
- Gently instruct in difficulty but mainly comfort in crisis.
- Reaffirm God's character: Talk about God's mercy and goodness (2 Sam 24:14; Ps 34:8).
- Don't try to explain what you do not know. Explain what you do know: The gospel!
- Truth is always true and sin is always sin (Jer 10:10-11; Rom 6:23).
- Pray with them and/or for them (Eph 1:15-23).
- Think practically how to serve them, esp in the midst of a crisis (Gal 6:13).
- Don't be scared to ask for outside help.