



# Word Study on "Suffering"

**Suffering** – the state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship.

Please read the following passages and answer the associated questions.

- (1) John 9:1-3 The man's blindness was the consequence of whose sin? \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Job 1:8 Did God consider Job and example of righteousness? \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) James 5:10-11 Did Job endure suffering? \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Job 40:1-4 Did Job think his righteousness made him significant? \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Hebrews 12:1 How are we run the race set before us? \_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Hebrews 12:2 Who starts and completes our faith? \_\_\_\_\_
- (7) Hebrews 12:3 Who had it more difficult than we do? \_\_\_\_\_
- (8) Hebrews 12:6 What happens to those who the Lord loves? \_\_\_\_\_
- (9) Hebrews 12:8 What are we if God never chastens us? \_\_\_\_\_
- (10) Hebrews 12:10 Who profits from God disciplining us? \_\_\_\_\_
- (11) Psalm 119:75 What is the source of the psalmist's affliction? \_\_\_\_\_
- (12) Job 42:1-2 Who can do all things? \_\_\_\_\_
- (13) Job 42:3-6 What did Job repent in? \_\_\_\_\_
- (14) 1st Timothy 1:12-17 Who is the foremost of all sinners? \_\_\_\_\_
- (15) Compare Job 42:1-6 with 1st Timothy 1:12-17. What do we learn by making this comparison?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
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(16) So when something bad happens how do you tell the difference? Sometimes bad things happen so that God's glory is manifest as happened with the man born blind and with Job. Other times it is the discipline of the Lord because of our own wrong doing. How do we tell the difference? Is it chastening from God or is it so "the works of God should be made manifest in" you"?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
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----- "SUFFERING" POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

**(1)** No one's sin **(2)** Yes **(3)** Yes **(4)** No **(5)** With patience **(6)** Jesus Christ **(7)** Jesus Christ **(8)** They are disciplined and scourged **(9)** Not His children **(10)** We do **(11)** Faithful and righteous judgement of God **(12)** The Lord **(13)** Dust and ashes **(14)** The Apostle Paul

**(15)** Job is not released from his bondage to suffering until he falls on his face and proclaims all of his righteousness filthy rags and surrender to God. It was similar for the Apostle Paul. Is it any different for us?

**(16)** I believe that we get a lot more chances to show the works of God in us than we do chastening from God. Let's think about that for a minute. First is the something bad that happened a consequence of sin?

When I was raising children, we had a rule of not running in the house. It was for their safety mostly and for the preservation of our breakables. If they bumped into a piece of furniture and skinned their shin, I did not discipline them, I only reminded them it was the reason for the rule. I believe God does the same.

If you lie until no one believes you that is not chastening, that's just the consequence of your sin. How many of the so called "bad" things that happened to you are the simple and direct result of your own sin? If you gossip until your friends no longer have any confidence in you, is that chastening? No. If you steal and get thrown in jail for it? No. If you murder and are executed. No. Just consequences.

God never promised you a better life than His son Jesus. God never promised your friends would never betray you as Judas did Jesus. God never promised your friends would never desert you as the apostles fled when Jesus was arrested. God never promised you would have no pain, no hunger, and no sickness. He certainly never promised that you would never be bored, or tired, or inconvenienced.

So before you start examining whether you are being chastened first consider whether it really is all that bad. If you get in the wrong line at the store and the other one you could have gotten in moves faster it is not that bad. If your car has a flat tire and you are late for an appointment, it is just an inconvenience. And if several of these kinds of things happen in one day it is still not that bad, and is almost certainly not the chastening of God. However, it is an opportunity to show yourself and anyone that may be looking to you for a Christian example how a Christian lives life. This will give glory to God. This is why I believe we get more chances to glorify God in our lives than we do chastening from Him. We live in a lost and dying world and many bad things happen. What if something really grievous does happen to us? Clearly whether it is chastening or not we still have that chance to demonstrate how a Christian lives life in the face of adversity.

But we still have not answered the question, how do we tell if we are being chastened or not? Ask yourself if you have done anything wrong? If you have, it may be God is chastening you. When things are not going well it may be a good idea to examine your life. Compare your behavior with the commands of God. Compare your life with the life of Christ. If you don't measure up, and you won't, it might be a good time to work on what you are doing wrong.

So what do most of us do when we examine ourselves. We think about our little vices. We ate too much, we exercised too little, we had that secret cigarette, we took a nip from our hip flask, or whatever. I do not condone gluttony, drunkenness or any of these things but since our vices and intemperance carry heavy consequences, I do not believe the Lord usually spends much time chastening anyone about them. None of these things are in the 10 commandments, the 2 great commandments, or the Golden rule. I believe God is more interested in weightier matters. How are you treating the people that live near you and the ones you share the road with, shop with, work with, play with, etc. How do you treat the people near you?

How do you treat God? Does he get the 1<sup>st</sup> of your life or the left overs? Does he get any of your life at all? How do you treat this Jesus who died in your place? Have you given your life to Him or do you still live it for yourself? I would suggest that if we are more concerned with our vices and intemperance than in how we are treating our neighbors and maintaining our relationship with God that we are practicing a self centered, self worship, almost as much as if we were given over to those vices we claim to be struggling to overcome. I believe that if we were more focused on Jesus and living our life for Him that most of the things we now believe are bad about our circumstances would go by almost unnoticed.

I think that it really doesn't matter whether the bad thing that happens to us is chastening, the consequence of sin, or an opportunity to glorify God. Regardless of which of the three it is our reaction should be the same. We should face it with courage, overcome it with love, worship God with thankfulness, (i.e. count our blessings), and examine our lives for ways to do better.