

Understanding & Embracing Suffering
#3: God's Purpose for Suffering: Spiritual Growth
Romans 5:3-4

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. (Rom 5:3-4 NLT)

Primary point: A purpose for our suffering is to become better. But if we do not respond to it properly, it will make us bitter.

Hard fact #1: God's purpose for this life is to be changed, not comfortable

(Phil 1:6; Matt 28:18-20)

Hard fact #2: Spiritual growth requires learning from our suffering

(Ps 119:67, 71; James 1:2-4).

There is such a thing as useless, unproductive suffering in the Christian life.

What makes the difference between just uselessly suffering or productively enduring? A decision to learn to trust and love God in your pain.

What does it mean to properly endure suffering in order to grow?

Hebrews 12 is the best place to answer that question.

Discussion ?'s

- 1) Why do we need to suffer in order to grow?
- 2) What are things we must do to ensure our suffering produces character?
- 3) Do you have an example of when God used suffering to help you grow? In what way did you grow?
- 4) Do you know people who have suffered and it made them bitter instead of better? No need to name them, but how did suffering affect them?
- 5) What was most meaningful to you about the Sunday message?