

Here are five important biblical truths about suffering every Christian should have ready:

### **1. Suffering is multifaceted.**

Suffering has many faces. The Bible doesn't whitewash our experience of suffering by saying that it's all of one stripe. Rather, it recognizes the multifaceted ways that suffering can come upon us. The apostle Paul wrote, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" ([2 Corinthians 4:8–9](#)).

In these two verses, Paul lists several types of suffering — mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. Each of these are different ways that we can suffer, and when suffering comes, often several of these types of suffering are involved.

### **2. Suffering happens in community.**

Christians still suffer as we wait for Jesus to return, but none of our suffering is random or without purpose.

The church is not meant to be a loosely bound association of functional Lone Rangers. Paul confronts that type of thinking when he writes, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" ([Galatians 6:2](#)).

The church is meant to be a refuge for those suffering. When a member is hurting, the church applies the bandages; when a member is down, the church encourages; when a member is in need, the church comes alongside to help.

### **3. Suffering equips us for ministry.**

Firsthand experience in suffering is essential in equipping us for ministry. Paul writes in [2 Corinthians 1:4](#) that God "comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

But how? And what is the link between experiencing suffering and equipping for ministry? David Powlison answers this way:

When you've passed through your own fiery trials, and found God to be true to what he says, you have real help to offer. You have firsthand experience of both his

sustaining grace and his purposeful design. He has kept you through pain; he has reshaped you more into his image. . . . What you are experiencing from God, you can give away in increasing measure to others. You are learning both the tenderness and the clarity necessary to help sanctify another person's deepest distress. ([\*Suffering and the Sovereignty of God\*](#), 166)

#### **4. Suffering is a battleground.**

Wherever there is suffering, there is a battle — a battle for your soul. The book of Job shows us there can be two ways to respond to suffering: one that curses God because of suffering and one that praises God, even in the midst of suffering ([Job 2:9–10](#)).

#### **5. Suffering prepares us for more glory.**

God says a lot about suffering in Scripture so that you know where to look when the pain comes to you.

One of the counterintuitive truths about suffering is that it prepares Christians for more glory. Paul writes in [2 Corinthians 4:17–18](#), “This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

These verses are like sandpaper on our modern sentiments about suffering. We naturally try to avoid suffering at all costs. But God brings suffering in our lives for the sake of our eternal joy — yes, even glory.