

Inspirational Nuggets

(Archived posts from www.discipleshipcenter.org)

ADVERSITY & SUFFERING:

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are learning how to follow His example in many areas of life. Think about how to follow His example when it comes to dealing with adversity and suffering.

"In spite of experiencing misunderstanding, ingratitude and rejection, our Lord never became bitter, discouraged or overcome. Every obstacle was an opportunity:

- Broken-heartedness? An opportunity to **comfort**.
- Disease? An opportunity to **heal**.
- Hatred? An opportunity to **love**.
- Temptation? An opportunity to **overcome**.
- Sin? An opportunity to **forgive**."

-John Maxwell, *Becoming a Person of Influence*
(P.S. not financial influence, but influencing other people positively)

When facing adversity, will I get floored or act like my Lord?

SUFFERING:

"The child of God is often called to suffer because there is nothing that will convince onlookers of the reality and power of true religion as suffering will do, when it is borne with Christian fortitude." -- F.B. Meyer

During my times of suffering, does the world around me see genuine Christianity reflected?

SUFFERING - solid advice for helping others:

This nugget is based on a brief article that appeared in the November/December 2005 *Holiness Today* magazine. Contained in the article were several tips for helping people cope with suffering, due to a loss they had experienced:

Clarify the loss - Grief specialist Richard Obershaw suggests three questions that will help us hear the loss of another:

What have you lost?

How do you feel about what you have lost?

Who are you now without what you have lost?

Listen. Listen some more - In a society that expects us to always have "something to say," we miss opportunities to listen. Listening, all the way to the end of each sentence, can be so helpful to one who has experienced loss. (*It might interest you, also, to know that 80% of counseling is listening - so says my counseling professor at Seminary, James Hamilton.*)

Take the lament of loss seriously - Too often it is easy to offer the equivalent of "There. There. Everything will be all right." Everything may, in time, be all right - but it will seem impossible for the person grappling with loss to hear that now. They may be feeling too much pain and sorrowful separation at this time.

Ask: How can I pray for you? - A person dealing with loss often hears the words, "I'll be praying for you." Those are good words, but it might be more helpful for you to ask, "How can I pray specifically for you at this time?" Hear what they say, and let them know you will be praying for them along those lines. If they say, "I don't know," then one response you can make is: "I will pray that the God who loves you will give you strength sufficient for the demands of this day." (*Think about praying for them briefly, right then and there, too.*)

Place the loss in escrow - In some cases, we will eventually face this loss firsthand ourselves. What might you learn from another's loss that can help you in the future?

Be there. Give a hug. Listen. Pray. Learn.

SUFFERING:

Seeing how God helps others during their times of trouble can be a big help to us when we go through our own times of SUFFERING.

From the book entitled *I Believe: Now Tell Me Why*, edited by Everett Leadingham, comes the story of Joanne Spencer and her husband, Dean.

In February 1981, Dean called Joanne from the airplane he was flying and said that he would be home soon. Unfortunately, he would never make it home. Dean and two other businessmen died when their plane crashed on a fog-covered runway of the Pontiac, MI, airport. Dean & Joanne had been married for 17 years, and they had one 12-year-old girl and two 9-year-old girls.

"The second morning after the accident it finally settled in on me that it was all true," Joanne said. "I went into Dean's office at the house and had a fit of anger with God." Once she finished, she said an overwhelming peace came into the room, with an assurance that said, "I understand, and I will take care of you."

She said she was still frightened about the future of her family, but the assurance continued and seemed to say, "Don't look forward years or days - just 5 minutes at a time."

It has not been an easy life for Joanne and the girls since the tragedy. But the presence of God in their lives has been constant. "I keep going back to that time when God assured me," Joanne said.

When faced with difficult decisions and circumstances after Dean's death, Joanne said she depended on her knowledge of God's promises.

"I just believed Him," she said.

During times of suffering, it means everything to hear the voice of the Lord and have His promises to depend on. **Will you listen for the promises He has for you in your time of suffering? Will you point others, who are suffering, toward Him as well?**