

Doctrine of Suffering

Introduction

There are many reasons why believers suffer mentally and physically. The following list is given to help the hearts of God's people evaluate themselves when a meaning for tribulation is sought. Not all pain and suffering is meant to punish, though some is. Much suffering is designed to correct character, guide the heart or teach the lessons of life God would have known. This means it is safe to say that some pain and suffering could be avoided. You will find this taught in 1 Corinthians 11:31.

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.” But if, and when we are judged, there is another principle to keep in mind. Every form of discipline and every cursing is designed by God to be a source of blessing. This concept is found in 1 Corinthians 11:32 and Romans 8:28. *“But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world....And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* Therefore consider the following reasons why Christians suffer.

1. Christians suffer when they engage in a frantic search for happiness in an inappropriate way.

The book of *Ecclesiastes* establishes this principle through the life of Solomon. Solomon engaged in a frantic search for happiness and then concluded in sorrow *“all is vanity and a vexation of spirit”* (*Eccl. 1:14*). Many have said this before and it still remains true. Happiness is not found in money, sex, drugs, fame, fortune or total freedom. Young people often believe that if they could only be free from parental control or counsel they would be happy. And so the moment comes when they throw off all restraints and there is a sense of euphoria. They are free. But not really, for without the Lord *“all is vanity and a vexation of spirit”*. To rebellious young people I have this to say. Do not be surprised when the little blue bird of happiness flies away. You will only be happy when you obey your parents in acts of righteousness, for this is the will of the Lord.

2. Christians suffer from a guilty conscience.

- *1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: 6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling.*

A conscience is God's gift to the heart. Without a moral compass the end result is a Michael Jackson, a Mondona, a Sadam Hussein. A gash in the conscience can disfigure the soul forever. A good conscience is the looking glass of heaven. A sanctified conscience is the holy whisper of God in the soul. Thank God for suffering from a violated conscience for it is possible for the conscience to be first violated, then silenced, and then seared so that it is no longer sensitive to any form of moral restraint. In Galatians 2:14, when Paul came and rebuked Peter about the way the Gentiles were being treated, the conscience of Peter was smitten. He suffered from a guilty conscience and then changed his behavior to express grace.

3. Christians suffer from the suppression of sin in the self-consciousness of the soul.

When inappropriate attitude and actions are engaged in and then justified ecclesiastical judgment is a real possibility. The apostle Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan for physical and mental abuse to teach them to learn not to blaspheme. The story is told in 1 Timothy 1.

- *1 Timothy 1:19-20 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

God wants His children to keep the truth in a holy vessel and with a pure conscience.

- *1 Timothy 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

One a man called and asked me about women preachers. I told him I did not believe that women are authorized to be pastors over God's people. He agreed—and then confessed he was in a church that allowed women preachers. In fact, the associate pastor was a minister, and also the wife of the pastor. Some years ago I went to a Bible college in Manhattan, Kansas. I did not agree with the official position of the college on baptism. The school taught baptism regeneration. By *Scripture* and by reason I do not believe in it. Nevertheless, I suppressed the truth until it became sin in my soul. My conscience was defiled until I left that situation and I claimed the provision of 1 John 1: 9.

- *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

4. Christians suffer because the *Word of God* is rejected.

- *Ephesians 4:17-19 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

When the *Word of God* is rejected the Lord will allow individuals to engage in acts of “*uncleanness with greediness*” [*i.e.*, “*eagerness*”]—and then the nightmare of pain and suffering really begins.

In 2 Kings 17:13-14 the prophet of God explains why there was going to be war with the nation of Assyria and Israel is going to lose the contest.

“Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. 14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.”

Few things in life alarm me more than to find someone who is about to reject the *Word of God* for the traditions of men or for a system of believe that is logically contrary to sound Scriptural teaching.

As a pastor I know something of Paul’s heart when he wrote the church in Galatians 4:19 saying, *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.*

When I conduct a public ceremony beyond the Church, such as a wedding or a funeral, it is not uncommon to see in the audience individuals who have rejected the *Word of God*. It is my practice to use public occasions to warn and encourage individuals to listen to the voice of God and not reject His Word.

5. Christians suffer and inflict emotional and physical pain on others when particular acts of sin are not isolated and mortified or put to death.

- *Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*

Constant expressions of anger are a terrible burden to bear for self and for others.

Individuals who are angry for whatever reason become bitter and then vindictive.

The mental attitude sins of the soul bring nothing but division and distress for self and for others. And it is all so unnecessary.

A man called. He is going through a divorce and the papers have arrived in the mail. What is he to do?

Years and years of marital conflict is now in the public arena and the courts. And he is angry.

Had this couple come to me earlier I could have helped them.

But particular acts of sin were not isolated and put to death and now there is pain and suffering for themselves and many others—just as the *Bible* teaches.

6. Christians suffer when divinely established authority is rejected reflected in the story of Dathan and Abiram as recorded in *Num 16:1-35; Deut. 11:6; Psalm 106:17*).

Dathan whose name means “*strong*” was a chief of the tribe of Reuben who, along with Korah and others tried to overthrow Moses and Aaron. The earth swallowed up him and his conspirators and their households. While not all revolts against established authority have such a dramatic ending this event has been recorded to remind people that God takes seriously subtle and open assaults upon the name and character of leaders on any level. Children are not to revolt against their parents or to speak evil of them. Christian citizens are encouraged not to revolt against their leaders or to speak evil of them. And of course pastor are always pleased – and astonished – when people listen to their counsel and follow it in the will of the Lord.

7. Christians suffer pain and sorrow by marrying the wrong person.

- *Ezekiel 16:1-3 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2 Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite [i.e., people married outside a covenant relationship].*

One of the controversies God had with His covenant people is that they chose sensual pleasure and marital happiness over Him when they married people outside the covenant relationship. When Christian people are unequally yoked by marrying a person of no faith, or a person of a radically different faith, there will be only heartache and sorrow. The temptation comes to think that a person can be easily converted to a particular way of thinking. That is not true. The temptation comes to think that doctrine is not important. That is not true for false doctrine can lead to eternal judgment. Historically the Church is surrounded by “*a noble army, men and boys, the matron and the maid,*” who “*climbed the steep ascent to heaven*”, “*mid peril, toil, and pain.*” Shall Bible doctrine be dismissed or downplayed today through ignorance or for personal pleasure? God forbid. Some women spend more time in selecting their wedding gown than they do in selecting a husband. It is far better to wait upon the Lord or be single if such is God’s will, than to marry the wrong person. The sea of matrimony is filled with hardships unless there is doctrinal harmony in the home, for only then can a woman hope to find a man who will love her as Christ loved the Church.

8. Christians suffer because they are related to others in the body of Christ who also hurt.

- *1 Corinthians 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

There are several great metaphors of the Church in the *New Testament* and each one illustrates the essential unity of believers to one another and to Christ. Romans 14:7 explains. *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*

One of the reasons why I believe a formal church membership is healthy is because it helps to crystallize this concept.

Each person who joins can say in essence, *“I am not on the outside looking in. I am committed to a particular expression of the body of Christ. There is an essential spiritual unity that I recognize and partake of.”*

When someone shares their pain and suffering Christians do not dismiss them, roll their eyes in exasperation at their stories or wish they would go away. Christians enter into suffering with others in the body of Christ to some extent so that their burdens are lifted.

Galatians 6:2 say “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

It is easy to talk about the law of love. It is harder to fulfill it. And so Christians suffer because of association with others.

Sovereign Grace Baptist Church was born in part because others entered into my personal afflictions—and I do owe a debt of gratitude which I cannot ever fully repay. But I am grateful for it reminds me of Christ who entered into my sorrows and lifted my burdens at Calvary.

“Days are filled with sorrow and care,
Hearts are lonely and drear;
Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
Jesus is very near.

Cast your care on Jesus today,
Leave your worry and fear;
Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
Jesus is very near.

Troubled soul, the Saviour can see,
Ev'ry heartache and tear;
Burdens are lifted at Calvary
Jesus is very near.

Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
Calvary, Calvary,
Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
Jesus is very near.”

9. Christians suffer from divine discipline.

- *Proverbs 3:11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: 12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*

While this is the type of suffering most Christians fear the most, it is not to be despised for it is a sign of God's great love.

One question that arises is how to tell the difference between suffering and pain, which is part of life, and what is a direct result of God's judgment.

There is a very simple answer. It may not please everyone but I would suggest that the Holy Spirit will reveal to the heart whether or not pain and suffering in the life is the direct result of God's divine displeasure.

Moses knew that he could not go into the land of promise because he struck the rock, which was a type of Christ.

Saul knew that the kingdom was taken from him because he did not finish the task God assigned to him.

David knew that his child died because of his inappropriate relationship with Bathsheba.

The list is long of those who knew why God was judging them.

However, it must be kept in mind that God does not judge every transgression, or to the same degree, for He is full of mercy and long suffering.

God has been pleased to hide many of your sins if the truth were told and for good reason. Who could stand under total public revelation? No one.

To remember this truth is to understand that among the attributes of God, although they are all equal, mercy shines with even more brilliance than justice.

Therefore, when the Lord does move in judgment and tells you for what reason He is doing so, do not despise His corrections. He loves you.

10. Christians suffer as part of the angelic conflict.

- *Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. 4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.*

5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. 6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. 7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

Because of the constraints of time your attention is drawn to the story of Job as outlined in the opening chapters.

The angels are interested and involved in the affairs of men for a variety of reasons. And so men are caught up in an angelic conflict.

Remember how Jesus told Peter that Satan wanted him in particular. *“But I have prayed for you Peter.”* Christ prays for His own.

Meanwhile, the angelic conflict continues. Some Christians, like Paul, will be attacked by Satan. Others, like Daniel will have the answer to their prayers delayed. Satan has the ability to induce sickness and sorrow. And he has the ability to stir up trouble in the body of Christ by unleashing evil spirits of jealousy, gossip, bitterness, anger, and hatred. Therefore Christian, test the spirits. Test the emotion in your heart lest you be subject to demonic suggestion as Ananias. Acts 5:3 *“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?”*

11. Suffering is designed to demonstrate the power and grace of God.

- *John 9:2-3 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

With this point we come full circle, for the grace of God will be revealed in all that is done in the lives of individuals, be it evil or be it good.

If upon examination of the heart it is discovered there is no cause and effect relationship between sin and the suffering, then look for the glory of God to be revealed.

Paul discovered this principle in his life, for after he prayed and asked the Lord to take away his affliction the apostle was told, *“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”*

I trust that these points will not be soon dismissed, especially this last one, for God will be glorified in life or in death by those who love Him no matter what Cross He asks the soul to bear. And eventually He will ask all of us to bear the cross of departing from this earth to heaven.

John Wesley said of the early Methodists, “*We die well.*” Mr. Wesley could say that only because he had taught his people well to submit to the Father in all matters of life. Christians can live well, they can withstand pain well by God’s sufficient grace and they can die well with an eye to the glory that is yet to come. And so we shall. Amen.

11. Some suffering is designed to cause the believer to learn the value of the Word and will of God.

- *Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.*
- *Psalms 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*

12. Christians suffer in order to have patience produced in their life.

- *James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. 5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

14. Christians suffer from bad political decisions of rulers. Jesus predicted a period of great tribulation for the nation of Israel. In the summer of AD 66 Jewish leaders encouraged a revolt against Rome. Soldiers marched against the city. Many Christians were caught up in this national calamity.

- *Matt 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

15. Christians suffer when their own standards of morality are violated.

- *2 Tim 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

16. Christians suffer from the ravages of war.

- *Matthew 24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (cf. Deut. 21; 24).*

17. Christians suffer by not knowing or not remembering the promises of God.

- *John 20:9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. 11 But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher.*

18. Christians suffer in the process of dying as a result of the fall.

- *Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one-man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

19. Christians suffer when the Lord's Supper is taken in an inappropriate manner.

- *1 Corinthians 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

20. Christians suffer because they exercise their spiritual gift.

- *2 Corinthians 11:24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? 30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

21. Christians suffer due to religious jealousies.

- *Acts 8:1-2 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.*

22. Christians suffer because they love Christ more than family or friends.

- *Matt 10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

23. Christians may suffer in order to be kept from more sin.

- *Matthew 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

24. Christians suffer in order to empathize with others.

- *Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

25. Christians suffer in order to preserve the life of others.

- *Genesis 45:5 [And Joseph said unto his brethren] Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.*

26. Christians suffer to demonstrate the theological truth that God is the sovereign Ruler of the universe and can dispose of it as He pleases.

- *Exodus 4:11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the LORD?*

27. Christian can give thanks to God for the privilege of suffering.

- *Acts 5:41 And they [the apostles] departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

28. Christians are to thank God even in their sickness and sufferings, if not for their sickness and sufferings.

- *1 Thessalonians 5:18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

29. But the time might come when thanksgiving can come for the sickness and pain and sufferings of life.

- *Psalms 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.*
- *Romans 5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience.*

30. No suffering and no sickness can come into the life of the believe apart from the sovereign will of God for He works all things after the counsel of His own will.

- *Exodus 4:11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the LORD?*
- *Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

31. God ordained the following people to suffer and or to be sick.

- God ordained that Adam and Eve suffer sorrow in childbirth and death. *Genesis 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*
- God willed that Job suffer satanically induced sickness in order to test his faithfulness. *Job 2:4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. 6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. 7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. 8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.*

- God ordained that a man be born blind and suffer many years in life in order to demonstrate the power of His Son. *John 9:2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*
- God ordained that Jacob should be touched in his thigh so that he limped for many years in life in order to learn to lean upon the Lord. *Genesis 32:25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. 26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 8 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. 29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. 30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. 31 And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. 32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.*
- Christ ordained that His disciples be beaten and hurt knowing that disease and sickness would accompany these ordeals.
- God ordained that Paul should be sick and to suffer in order to humble him and demonstrate His own divine faithfulness. *2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*
- God ordained that *New Testament* Christians suffer in time. *Acts 9:16 For I will shew him [Saul of Tarsus] how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. Acts 14:22 [Paul went about] Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

32. In light of the place of pain and suffering in the plan of God what should be said in response to the Word of Faith movement that instructs its people to disbelieve or down play their sickness and sufferings in order to magnify faith with a view towards healing?

- First, our brothers and sisters must be challenged not to verbalize a non-truth in the name of spiritual truth thereby denying objective reality. Words become a mockery in the mouth of someone dying of cancer who declares he is healed in the name of Jesus. Words become a mockery in the mouth of someone who denies I have no need of glasses while putting them on to read the Bible. Such dualistic thinking is not healthy and breeds spiritual pride at its worse; non-sensible thoughts at its best.
- Second, our brothers and sisters must be invited to return to the *Bible* to see that God is sovereign over sickness and suffering not by its removal but by what He can accomplish in weakened vessels. The paradox of the Christian message is not that God uses the healthy and the wealthy but he uses the sick of this world to accomplish His purposes.

Isaiah 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. .

- Third, our brothers and sisters must be taught to consider the whole counsel of God in a given passage for spiritual balance and to avoid entering into heresy, which is extreme error.