

The Sufferings of Spiritual Adult

UNDESERVED SUFFERINGS FOR BLESSINGS

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The Sufferings of Spiritual Adulthood

The purposes of divine discipline are:

- For carnality (Psalm 38)
- For reversionism [self-induced misery] (Psalm 77)
- For divine discipline by association (1 Cor. 12:26, 15:33)
- For wrong priorities in life (1 John 2:15)
- For being part of a national discipline (Lev. 26:14-37)
- Failure to isolate sin (Heb. 12:15)
- For temporary loss of grace norms (Jer. 2:24, 28)
- For a guilt complex (1 Tim. 1:5-6, 19-20)
- From war, rebellion or social conflict
- For rejection of mix-marriage principles (Jer. 12:7, 15:7-22)

Divine discipline is the sum total of punitive measures by which God corrects and judges the believer in time (Heb. 12:5). Divine discipline is strictly confined in time. There is no suffering for the believer in eternity (Rev. 21:4). Divine discipline is the alternative to blessing. Every discipline is based on God's love for the believer, which comes from the justice of God. Every discipline is designed for each believer, suitable and exactly for his needs.

No discipline exceeds the capacity or limitation of the believer. The purpose of divine discipline is to correct the believer and bring him to the point of carnal or reversion recovery. Grace is the expression of divine integrity and divine discipline is a manifestation of grace. Everything (whether blessing or curse) that we have received comes through the grace of God from the justice of God.

The two areas of divine discipline are carnality and reversionism. Divine discipline for carnality is temporary and canceled by the rebound exercise (1 John 1:9). Discipline for reversionism is permanent in time and terminates in the sin into death, unless recovery occurs. Divine discipline no matter how severe, does not imply loss of salvation (Gal. 3:26, 2 Tim. 2:11-13).

Divine discipline is related to the grace principle of turning curses into blessing, which is accomplished through self-judgment or the act of obedience by rebound. If the believer rebound, suffering continues as a blessing rather than punishment (Job 5:17-18).

The triple-compound discipline combines self-induced misery with divine discipline. Mental attitude sins motivate sins of the tongue which is subject to divine discipline. Verbal sins (sins of the tongue) are the basis for further punitive discipline from God (Matt. 7:1). Whatever discipline for sins attributed to the victim of verbal sins is also added to the maligner (Matt. 7:3).

There are three stages of divine discipline for reversionism, namely warning, intensified and the dying stage.

- The warning stage (James 5:9, Rev. 3:20) is a general discipline that can be removed by the application of rebound.
- The intensified stage is the extreme types of discipline, the recovery which requires rebound plus persistent intake of Bible doctrine.
- The dying stage is the status of reversionism that results to sin unto death (1 John 5:16, Jer. 9:16, 34:12, Phil. 3:18, Rev. 3:16). Sin unto death is not the will of God for the believers.

God wanted His children to reach spiritual maturity and receive the maximum blessings of time and eternity. He did not design believers to become spiritual losers.

God never gives the believer more suffering than he can bear. "No temptation (undeserved suffering) has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted (able to bear) beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape (divine problem solving-devices) also, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

The Protocol Plan of God includes two systems of spiritual growth:

- The gradual growth comes through the perception, assimilation, metabolism and application of Bible doctrine. God commanded every believer to operate consistently under this system throughout his life on earth.
- The accelerated growth occurs when metabolized doctrine is tested under pressure. After attaining spiritual adulthood status, further growth requires periodic suffering.

This suffering for the purpose of blessing draws upon the believer's reservoir of doctrine, exercising and increasing his inner strength. Bible doctrine is spiritual nourishment; suffering for blessing is spiritual exercise. The amount of time a person is a Christian is "not" the determining factor that he is spiritually mature but rather, it is how much Christ-like character the Holy Spirit has developed in the believer.

Spiritual maturity is the maximum production of Christ-like character in the life of the believer refined by fire of adversity and through continuous intake of Bible doctrine that results to Christ-like character that involves 3 things:

- Thoughts
- Words
- Actions

Suffering for blessing is the undeserved pain, hardships or, difficulties that God periodically send into the life of the spiritually adult believer for the purpose of accelerating his spiritual growth and demonstrating the total sufficiency of His grace. Suffering for blessing by its very connotation is not intended to hurt the believer or to make him miserable but to advance him. For the adult believer undeserved suffering is strictly a matter of blessing.

Only God can bless with suffering; suffering caused by self (old sin nature) is not only unhelpful but causes additional discipline.

God does not administer suffering for blessing until the believer reaches spiritual adulthood which is the primary criteria for suffering for blessing. Divine discipline is punitive and deserved while the sufferings of momentum are undeserved designed for blessing.

God cannot send suffering for blessing until the believer has the capacity to appreciate God as its source and to be grateful for the problem-solving devices that God has provided in the divine dynasphere. This is the reason why suffering for blessing is exclusive for the spiritually matured believer.

In God's protocol plan, strength precedes suffering for blessing. God provides the means of dealing with a situation before He applies the pressure so that suffering for blessing never overloads any believer. The believer by his own bad decisions can create more suffering than he can bear. The believer himself can decide to live outside the divine power system. Only the believer can refuse and reject Bible doctrine so that he has no spiritual resources to draw upon.

This is the human volition in action which holds the believer accountable for his own action, decision or thought. When pressure crushes a believer, the cause of defeat is always his own free will volition, never the sovereignty of God. Suffering for blessing is always bearable, and it is designed for victory by using the divine resources prepared by God and available to the mature believer.

Defeat is not an option for the adult believer because undeserved suffering is designed for victory. Defeat occurs outside the plan of God for suffering for blessing.

PREVENTIVE SUFFERING: There are three major categories of sufferings for blessing for spiritually adult believer, and each suffering for blessing is consequent and inseparable from specific spiritual stage.

Suffering for blessing is exclusive for the spiritually advancing and mature believer. Spiritual maturity is the stage of spiritual life where the believer possesses maximum doctrine in the soul with spiritual capacity for application.

Spiritual adulthood is just the beginning of the normal Christian life under the divine operating system.

The normal Christian life is the stage where all the available spiritual assets, resources and problem-solving devices of the divine dynasphere become operational and functional. The believer has reached the full capacity to utilize the power system provided by God.

Each suffering for blessing is designed for accelerating the spiritual advance of the believer inside the divine power system. Each suffering for blessing has its own intensity, emphasis, and level of blessings. Spiritual maturity is the door that unlocks the maximum blessings which God has prepared before the foundation of the world.

Preventive suffering is the first category of suffering for blessing that carry out two important purposes. In the offensive role, preventive suffering accelerates the believer's spiritual advance beyond spiritual self-esteem into spiritual autonomy. In defensive role, preventive suffering prevents the advancing believer from becoming victim of arrogance.

Spiritual self-esteem is probably the most vulnerable stage of the Christian life because the believer begins to think for himself and live by the Bible doctrine resident in his soul. The advancing believer is always in danger of distorting his newfound spiritual liberty. He may assume that his strength comes from self rather than from God's Word and the divine power system.

As he warms up his new spiritual muscles and enjoys the results of spiritual growth, he may forget that God is the source of growth and advancement. Preventive sufferings are the spiritual warm-up exercises designed to build up the momentum energy of the new spiritual adult. It provides the new spiritual adult the necessary "training barracks" for the momentum testing that will soon follow.

God in His grace does not wait for the believer to fail. Rather than picking up the pieces, God provides the means of keeping the believer from falling apart. God takes the preventive action by sending suffering for blessing.

The Preventive suffering reminds the adult believer of his dependence on the Plan of God and forces him to use divine assets under circumstances that human ability cannot resolve. Naturally, human dynamics enabled man to advance rapidly within an evil system, but only through divine resources and assets inside the divine power system can a believer advance in the spiritual life.

Since suffering for blessing is designed to accelerate the momentum of the believer, Satan seizes the opportunity to destroy the believer through the same suffering that God uses to bless the believer (2 Cor. 12:7). God permits Satan to send his demons to torment, harass, and disturb the adult believer under suffering for blessing. God is totally able to care for His children because His divine provisions are far superior to any suffering Satan may afflict the believer.

In grace God is able to make even our enemies benefit from us. He uses them to accelerate our spiritual advance and channel of blessings (Psalm 76:10). Inside the divine sphere, the mature believers are not untouchable (since God allows Satan and the cosmic believer to ambush them), yet they are unbreakable. Nothing can destroy the spiritually mature believer except his negative volition.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? (Rom. 8:31)

The term “us” in Romans 8:31 refers only to the spiritually matured believer who by the grace of God and the consistent intake of Bible doctrine maybe able to crack the immaturity barrier and reach spiritual adulthood. Reaching spiritual adulthood is not the end but just the beginning of the normal Christian functions leading to the greater things of the super and surpassing grace status.

Satan by all means will delay or distract the growth of every believer in the Plan of God. He will interrupt the believer from following the Protocol Plan. He will disturb the believer’s reception, perception, and assimilation of Bible doctrine. If the believer succeeded in his progressive and systematic intake of doctrine, Satan will see to it that such believer will fail to apply the doctrine, so that he will be disciplined by God.

Satan wanted to destroy the believer but since they are forced to rely on God; the only loser at the end is the devil. God uses Satan*s attack to keep the adult believer from falling into the same pattern of arrogance that originally caused his fall. The genius of God uses marvelous finesse to let Satan defeat himself. God is not hurting His children but has devised some perfect ways to bless them.

The omnipotent God has the power to turn suffering into blessing, and this power has been made available to us through residence and function in the divine power system (divine dynasphere). God can use adversity to our advantage even the pressures that our foes have designed to destroy us.

In all suffering for blessing the believer will suffer intensely and God will not relieve the pain but will display His preeminence. Underneath the severely suffering believer will be the everlasting arms of the Lord. The suffering believer as a result will love the Lord much more than before.

The suffering believer will increase his personal love to God. The positive response of the believer to love and appreciate the Lord is never instant but the result of systematic, progressive and diligent intake of Bible doctrine. The advancing believer may resolve to apply human solutions to his human problem that further results to a chain of miseries and divine discipline. The spiritually adult believer is provided with every kind of resources necessary to win every undeserved suffering that may come along.

The victory of the believer over the preventive suffering is never automatic but dependent on three solid factors:

- 1) Bible doctrine in the soul
- 2) Residence inside the divine dynasphere or power systems
- 3) Utilization of divine resources

Spiritual defeat is never from God but from negative volition of the believer whereas he chose to stay in the cosmic system. The believer inside the divine dynasphere functions from the point of victory which the Lord Jesus Christ earned for the believers. The Lord provided us His victory. We do not earn or gain victory on our own.

Man will continue to be free and responsible for every decision that he is going to make. Every bad decision from position of weakness (outside the protocol and divine dynasphere) would mean miseries and divine discipline from the justice of God, while every good decision from position of strength (inside the protocol and divine dynasphere) would mean blessings from the justice of God.

Momentum testing is the suffering of the advancing believer after acquiring spiritual autonomy by passing a series of preventive suffering. Note the correlation between the stages of spiritual advancement and the testing associated with each stage. The term weakness and weaknesses of 2 Corinthians 12:10 do not refer to sins but to categories of undeserved sufferings as a result of spiritual advance inside the divine dynasphere.

It refers to categories of testing which no unbeliever or carnal believer can handle. Spiritual autonomy gives the believer capacity to enjoy life in spite of any adversity that comes his way. The happiness of the mature believer does not depend on environment, possessions, people, or anything in this world. He appreciates the pleasant details of life and copes with the crisis and disasters because he is not enslaved to circumstances, people or anything.

Bible doctrine in the souls causes the believer to love God. The increasing love toward God produces inner peace and genuine happiness that brings the believer into every situation with poise and confidence. Spiritual autonomy gives the believer capacity for life and love, which prepares him for the final approach to spiritual maturity. Spiritual autonomy frees the believer from anything that enslaves him.

The spiritual autonomous believer does not fear the catalog of momentum suffering because he has previously passed a series of warm-up tests for each category of momentum suffering during the stage of spiritual self-esteem. At this stage, the believer should not be caught off guard by suffering since the suffering will be greater and more intense, but should remain confident for he has everything he needs to win.

Preventive suffering is designed to stabilize the virtue love and confidence toward God, which builds courage toward man. The momentum suffering is designed to strengthen the doctrinal conviction of the saint and to accelerate his spiritual momentum by intensified pain and trouble.

There are spiritual exercises in every spiritual stage. Each category of these exercises accelerates the advance of the believer through succession and sequence of undeserved suffering. The prerequisites for these sufferings are three unchangeable criteria: salvation, residence and function in the divine dynasphere, and spiritual adulthood.

No immature, ignorant, reversionist or carnal believer will ever experience these sufferings. The spiritual exercise refers to believer's growth in the grace of God. Growing in the grace (2 Peter 3:18) is the building up of spiritual muscles through stresses, distresses, disasters, persecutions and all testing under suffering for blessing. All throughout the spiritual self-esteem the believer will encounter these four types of sufferings (2 Cor. 12:10).

If the believers passed the tests of first stage of spiritual self-esteem and have been promoted to spiritual autonomy, then he is ready for the next batch of intensified sufferings for spiritual maturity which is referred to as his "Badge of Honor".

The preventive sufferings will be intensified into four momentum sufferings, namely people, thought, system and disaster testing. The believer who passed momentum suffering through reflexes of spiritual muscles and consistent intake of Bible doctrine is ready for the maximum intensity of suffering under spiritual maturity. The pains of the last stage are beyond comparison. The sufferings under the highest level of spiritual maturity (the greater grace of James 4:6) are the intensified pains of spiritual maturity, namely, the loss of wealth, health, human integrity and loved ones or friends.

The ever-increasing sufferings under spiritual maturity are the climax of the spiritual life designed to resolve the angelic conflict in the life of a believer. The three categories of undeserved suffering for blessings are designed not to discipline the believer, nor to detract him from blessing, nor to persecute or to punish him, and never to trap him into unjustified sufferings.

People testing suffering challenges the believer from two antithetical directions. Approbation is the misdirected personal love toward man or antagonism is the hatred toward men. In either case, the danger lies in giving up or abandoning spiritual autonomy and turning over the control of his life to someone he loves who inordinately influence his life and happiness, or someone he hates.

Initial purposes of undeserved sufferings:

- To prove the sufficiency of God.
- To test the believer's spiritual perspective.
- To bless the mature believer through contrast.
- To defeat Satan in the angelic conflict by sustaining the saint under heavy pressure and pains.
- To accelerate the advance and growth of the believer through exercises of spiritual muscles.
- To develop greater strength.
- To fix the focus of the mature believer toward the fantastic blessings of heaven.
- To serve as reminder and demonstration of God's grace.
- To bless tremendously the believer through the plan of grace, both in time and in eternity.

The highlight of spiritual maturity is not the suffering but on the grace of God. Our focus is on the Bible doctrine and not on the pains of the suffering. The believers accelerate not by the experience of suffering but winning over the suffering through the divine assets and spiritual resources. Suffering is simply a tool for blessing the advancing believers.

Personal human love is virtue dependent. Lacking inherent virtue, it relies on the integrity of the impersonal love as a problem-solving device. This dependence on virtue love makes every personal love relationship a test of the believer's faithfulness to divine priorities. Will he overemphasize the object of love to the point of compromising his personal sense of destiny in the Protocol Plan of God? Will he integrate his human relationships into a consistent Christian life?

Human relationship in most cases, it hinders and distracts the believer from doing the will of God. Personal love emphasizes the object of love, but if a believer elevates the human object of his love above God, he fails the people testing.

In his desire to please the woman he loves, a man may turn over control of his life to her. He makes himself a slave, living by her capriciousness rather than by the strength of his own soul (Gen. 12:12-16).

Ironically, as a slave he renounces all possibility of pleasing her. He ceases to be the man to whom she originally was attracted to. The same may be true of a woman. Although a wife lives under her husband's authority, she should not renounce her responsibility for her own life out of her desire to please him.

Personal love does not require either party to surrender his or her autonomy to the other person. Both the subject and object must maintain their integrity and contribute to virtue love. The spiritual adult believer develops personal love toward God while in the stage of spiritual self-esteem.

In the spiritual autonomy, through consistent intake of Bible doctrine and spiritual exercises he will develop impersonal love toward all men. The danger lays when he misdirects personal love toward man instead of towards God or when he becomes antagonistic toward the brethren or other people.

Like human personal love, antagonism can also cause the believer to surrender the control of his life to another person. Any time the believer reacts to people with bitterness, vindictiveness, hatred, jealousy, merciless or unforgiving, he immediately grants others control over his life.

In an irrational attempt to regain control, he may vent his anger in gossip, maligning, false accusation or physical violence. By attacking the person to whom he surrendered his happiness, the believer attacks his own happiness.

Each antagonistic reaction carries him deeper into self-induced misery with divine discipline.

Misdirected love towards people and antagonism toward others hinder the spiritual momentum of the advancing believer. When detestable personalities control a believer's life, whether or not they want control or even realize they have such influence, he will blame them for his misery.

Blaming others for self-made misery cuts off the possibility for a divine solution and under the law of volitional responsibility this will intensify his sufferings. With advancing spiritual growth, the believer becomes aware of this pattern of unhappiness.

He uses rebound and other divine solutions, especially the virtue impersonal love, in which the believer's own inner strength is the basis for his toleration of others. Impersonal love is crystallized as an active component of virtue-love only after the believer has attained spiritual autonomy.

The solution to all momentum testing is the believer's happiness. Happiness as a problem-solving device is the sole monopoly of God and His plan for the imperfect man. The believer cannot depend on people for happiness but he must depend completely on God. The believer must follow divine protocol to avoid undue influence from those he loves and to keep from falling into hatred toward those who annoy him.

The four categories of momentum sufferings are designed to make the adult believer focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and never again to put his confidence on man. Spiritual momentum in the protocol plan of God will bring the believer to spiritual autonomy where his genuine happiness and contentment is improved and stabilized.

God is bringing him to a situation where he will realize that impersonal love in no way can serve as a solution to his problems with people (Matt. 10:37-38, Mark 12:30-31). Momentum testing is the long and narrow road to spiritual maturity.

There is no contradiction or confusion in the above-mentioned verses under the protocol plan of God. Personal love toward man must be put under the strength of personal love toward God expressed in impersonal love toward man. Virtue personal love is directed toward God, and He alone is the first love of the believer. Believers are mandated to love the unlovable with virtue impersonal love. This is possible only under spiritual maturity.

Thought determines the believer's life, it has powerful effect on the believer's success or failure in the Christian life, that is why, it is considered a major momentum test. In all stages of the Christian life the believer will face the pressure of thought conflicts in his soul. Human viewpoint will conflict with divine viewpoint. False concepts will challenge Bible doctrine. Arrogance will intrude upon humility. Expedients of all kinds will compete with the protocol plan of God, and fear will paralyze reason.

There are essentially private conflicts, which the believer must resolve in his own soul. Anxiety, perplexity, confusions, dilemmas, and unanswered questions motivate the positive volition believer to apply the resources of Bible doctrine he has learned. Concentration on doctrine accelerates his spiritual growth.

Thought testing may exist when circumstances are overly prosperous and tranquil. A person is not always he appears to be on the surface; the real person is the thought content of his soul (Prov. 23:7).

The believer is what he thinks; therefore a thought can make or break him, depending on the nature of the thought. If his thought is contrary to Bible doctrine, he is distracted from his true destiny in life. His mental attitude toward life is the function of his thinking, the composite of everything he knows and believes. In rational thinking is the essential human activity that distinguishes man from animal thought.

The mentality of the soul is the battlefield of the angelic conflict. When the believer thinks evil, he is evil. He resides in Satan's cosmic system. From evil thinking comes evil motivation; from evil motivation, evil actions (Mat. 9:4). The thinking that is consistent with the truth of Bible doctrine has massive effects for good. For example, salvation itself is appropriated by a right thought of non-meritorious positive volition toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Right thinking is the result of Bible doctrine stored and functional in the soul which deletes the human viewpoint. Right thinking results to right decision, which results to right action. Mankind's great enemy is a thought called arrogance. Arrogance can inflate or deflate man's opinion of himself.

He thinks he is better or worse than he actually is. Both self-exaltation and self-condemnation distort and deny reality, which is the realm in which God's plan is effective. God's grace deals with us as we are, but a self-centered believer who does not live in objective reality will never use God's grace provisions to advance in the protocol plan (Gal. 6:3).

Arrogance is that of a person who thinks more of himself than he has the right to think. Arrogance is illusion and unreality. An arrogant person is depriving himself of his greatest advantage that comes with the fulfillment of God's plan for his life (Rom. 12:3). The divine mandate that the believer must obey the divine protocol in order to consistently pass thought testing is summed up in Romans 12:1-2.

The renewing of your mind (the radical renovation of your thought pattern) is accomplished by continuous intake of Bible doctrine as the believer's first priority. The good, acceptable and perfect refers to the protocol plan of God executed inside the divine sphere where the believer can make good and right decisions on the basis of Bible doctrine in his soul.

A system is an organization composed of people under authority of other people, which functions according to a policy designed to fulfill a specific goal or objective. Every individual belongs to many of these organizations, both formal and informal. There are almost good and bad systems, successful and not successful.

The person in authority and under authority may be accomplished or incompetent. The objectives may be legitimate or dubious, clear, well thought, or ill defined. Policies may encourage people to excel or may oppress them.

All these systems involve people, not two of whom are alike and not one of whom is perfect. That is why, system testing is inescapable form of suffering that poses a major challenge to the Christian's spiritual momentum, and only spiritual autonomy enables the believer to survive and to benefit from system testing.

Most problems of man will point to arrogance expressed in wrong priorities, laziness, incapacity, silent sophisticated rebellion, ignorance and distraction by unnecessary activities.

Satan will use any human system against the advancing believer with the exclusive objective of destroying him.

There are two courses of action, which are open to the mature believer when confronted with system testing: he can quit or cope up with the pressure.

Spiritual maturity is "maximum" production of fruit of the Spirit, which again, is the production of Christ-like character in the believer. The Holy Spirit produces the character and life of Christ in the believer when the believer obeys the Father's will. The Holy Spirit reveals the Father's will to the believer through a prayerful study of the Word of God. Christ-like character is described in Scripture as the "fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of the Light, the fruit of righteousness" (Gal. 5:22).

John 15:1-2 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

- The term “branch” refers to a shoot, which comes forth from, the central vine; therefore, its life and growth depend on the trunk of the grapevine.
- “Every branch in Me” refers to the believer’s eternal union with the source of the believer’s spiritual life, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- “Fruit” refers to the production of Christ-like character, which is accomplished by the Holy Spirit in the believer who is obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love and serve his fellow believer self-sacrificially as the Lord loved and served the believer self-sacrificially at the Cross.

The Means of Pruning:

- Word of God (Heb. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Divine Discipline (Heb. 12:1-11)
- Undeserved suffering (Jn. 15:2)

John 15:3-8 “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

Bible doctrine in the soul strengthens the believer, enables him to submit to harsh authority and thereby becoming an asset to any organization.

Only the immature believer will think that totally depraved human beings will be enlightened and fair.

There are four categories of believers mentioned in John 15: 1-7

- Those who “does not bear fruit” refers to believer’s who are disobedient to the Lord’s teaching to love and serve one another self-sacrificially and who die the sin unto death (1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Cor. 11:30).
- Those who “bears fruit” refers to the minimum production of Christ-like character in the believer by the Holy Spirit.
- Those who bear “more fruit” refer to moderate production of Christ-like character in the believer by the Holy Spirit.
- Those who bear “much fruit” refer to the maximum production of Christ-like character in the believer by the Holy Spirit.

Evidences of Abiding in Christ:

- Prayers answered (John 15:7)
- Experiences a greater love for Christ and other believers (Jn. 15:9, 12-13).
- Experiences joy (John 15:11)

The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant (Psalms 25:14).

For the devious are an abomination to the LORD; But He is intimate with the upright (Proverbs 3:32)

There are two types of relationships:

- Friendships
- Acquaintances

Of all the relationships that you have in life, your relationship with God is the most important, but it must be cultivated and matured. We as believers must recognize the awesome privilege that we have been given; namely, we have been called into fellowship with the Triune God.

Majority of believers treat the Lord as an acquaintance because they do not love Him and are disobeying the first great commandment.

God is faithful through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9)

In quitting, the entire believer follows the impulses of the old sin nature. To cope up with, he uses the dynamic of divine omnipotence. There are two categories of Christian quitters:

- Honorable quitters are those who separate from a system where policies and objectives are clearly evil and contrary to Bible doctrines.
- Coward quitters are those who separate from a system because of fear, intimidation, insecurity, inferiority or bad decision.

Separation is required in extreme cases of honorable quitters but Church Age believers should never give up because of pressure that results to bad decisions (Prov. 24:10). If the believer perseveres in a situation even when circumstances are critical and continues to do a good job, he will be vindicated and promoted spiritually by the Lord (The believer inside his royal palace (his divine dynasphere) is strong to endure any storm if he remains inside and uses his divine assets. Spiritual autonomy gives the Christian the power to put the problem in the Lord's hands and continue to function without arrogant reaction.

Note that spiritual autonomy is impersonal love for all mankind and fortified spiritual self-esteem derives from personal love for God, which is the result of Bible doctrine in the soul. In spiritual autonomy the believer is motivated by his virtue personal love for God. In any system to which he belongs, he does his job not to please men but please God (Col. 3:17-25). He does not rely on organization to furnish his motivation because he is self-motivated.

Human organization cannot provide strong motivation that stems from intrinsic virtues. Only the believer can destroy his motivation by negative volition that results to divine discipline. The mature believer is not looking for justice and fairness in the cosmic system, which is always unfair, but God is always fair.

The adult believer must develop the capacity to identify and differentiate from each of the four categories of the momentum testing. He has to identify the nature of the test in order to apply the proper problem-solving device and pass the test.

Disaster test is the most delicate tests: The problem is not to identify the threat but to endure the shock and to maintain poise for decision-making under extreme pressure. It comes unexpected and without any warning, especially when the believer is in the attitude of happiness and relaxation. There are two categories of disaster testing, the personal disaster and the historical disaster A personal disaster may be physical pain caused by injury, disease, genetic weakness, or physical handicap.

It may be mental anguish caused by loss of loved ones, reputation, property, wealth or health. It is the privations of hunger, exposure to weather, and the pains of severe poverty.

Historical disaster is a situation that brings grief to many people resulting to widespread damages caused by natural calamities, animal and plant pestilence, bacterial and viral epidemics that may annihilate a population completely. It may be caused by the cycles of a free economy manipulated by some big tycoon.

Historical disaster is executed against a group of people who with negative volition against the Gospel (if unbeliever) or against Bible doctrine (if believers) but that which will serve as blessing to the spiritually mature. It might also be the result of some changes in the governmental policies causing immediate pains and hardships in the life of the adult believers.

It can be brought about by the injustice of a political leadership. When a nation declines spiritually, the evil of all sorts of crimes, terrorism, all kinds of violence, afflicts terrible suffering upon the entire nation and each individual believer of all spiritual status (immature, mature, spiritual, carnal or reversionist).

When a nation suffers under divine discipline, God never disregards the faithfulness of individual believers. The spiritually autonomous believer uses all the problem-solving devices, directs his hope toward doctrine, his personal love toward God, is called impersonal love toward mankind. He acquires divine happiness toward himself. With these powerful assets he can not only survive the storm but also even enjoy it with total confidence in God's plan for his life. The mature believer is always a winner inside the plan of grace.

Abram failed to use any problem-solving devices in economic depression but the Lord still provided his every need (Gen. 12:10-12:1). Abram neglected to use the doctrine he knew and manufactured necessary pressures for himself making him unable to enjoy God's provision which was always there for him (1 Peter 1:7-8). In disaster testing, the spiritually adult uses the greatest of all problem-solving devices, the happiness of God, which is described as inexpressible and glorious joy.

God shares His happiness with the believer beginning from spiritual self-esteem, then more powerfully in spiritual autonomy, and more effectively in spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity is just the beginning of the abundant life (John 10:10).

The adult believer inculcated with the mind of Christ is genuinely happy even in the most terrible situation and is capable of coping up with any pressure in life. Bible doctrine prepares the believer for the worst thing in life (Heb. 10:35-39). Christians are equipped with the resources of heaven and possessors of divine assets. God left them in the world to grow under terrible conditions so that they will understand the reality of God's grace.

Christians received at the moment of salvation the imputed righteousness of God, including 40 gifts that accompanied salvation. Divine assets are made available plus the logistical grace blessings necessary for existence in the world and everything related to spiritual growth.

Believers are mandated to have a consistent, progressive and systematic intake of Bible doctrine and upon reaching spiritual maturity to grow in the grace by spiritual exercises (undeserved suffering for blessings). And upon reaching spiritual adulthood, to be strong in the power of his might. Spiritual exercise utilizes the power and might of God (the available problem-solving devices).

John 12:24-26 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

Loving life, refusing to die means remaining alone in selfishness. There is no way to find life but by giving up one's life for others. This is the path by which the Lord Jesus entered into His glory and by no other way can the disciple of the Lord enter into His joy. The spiritually mature believer has practiced these principles of self-denial and self-sacrifice to the maximum.

Self-sacrifice is the very essence of God's love. A disciple is willing to love and serve others self-sacrificially to further God's kingdom in the devils' world, whereas a believer who is not a disciple is one who is "not" willing to make sacrifices for the Lord's sake and His kingdom. The spiritually mature believer has taken up his cross as a lifestyle. Taking up one's own cross means being identified with Christ in His death, which is expressed through obedience to the Father's will for your life by denying self and living self-sacrificially for others.

Taking up one's cross means we must exchange the following:

- Pre-salvation unregenerate self-life for the post-salvation regenerate Christ-life
- Human viewpoint for divine viewpoint
- Human power for divine power.
- (4) Relative human self-righteousness for absolute divine righteousness
- Old Adamic nature for the new Christ-nature.
- Your will for God's will.

The believer can only interpret his cross by our Lord's cross (Phil. 2:6-8). Self-denial and self-sacrifice means that we are not to please ourselves but rather please others (Rom. 15:1-3). Self-denial and self-sacrifice expresses itself in putting the interests of others ahead of your own (Eph. 4:32-5:2; Phil. 2:3-4). God's love denies self and sacrifices self for the good of others.

The primary responsibility of every Church Age believer is to study the Word of God, whenever there is an opportunity. We make time" for the Word of God in order to redeem time before evil days overtake our spiritual ignorance and carnality. Every Church Age believer is free to grow, gain momentum, and to advance toward spiritual maturity. Believers are not free to become losers. Every spiritual loser will face the Bema or the Judgment Seat of Christ and receive the worst discipline that will last all throughout eternity, the absence of blessing in eternity due to his spiritual immaturity.

An adult believer becomes a spiritual loser because of his negative volition and has arrogance and not because of God's sovereignty. Genuine Christians are not designed to become losers and spiritual maturity is not designed to produce spiritual losers. Spiritual losers are either immature or carnal believers who are controlled by OSN and who because of their egotism have rejected Bible doctrine, surrendering their lives under the control of another person or anything they cherish more than God.

They are afraid to experience severe undeserved sufferings while at the same time they manufacture their own miseries. Under the suffering for blessing, even the most horrible suffering loses its dread in the light of the grace of God. Since it is the protocol plan of God incorporated with suffering that uses adversity for the purpose of blessing the mature and advancing believer, there is nothing to fear about suffering.

These suffering tests the believer understands of Bible doctrine. As the believer passes each test, he confirms and deepens his love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever the believers defy, ignore, reject, or rebel against God's plan and purpose, they bring destruction upon themselves and the people around them.

The human history is the extension of the angelic conflict, and man is God's evidence against Satan. The angelic conflict is not war between God and the human race but between Satan and God. There is no power struggle between God and Satan because any power struggle is between opposing parties with almost equal strength. Satan is not equal with God and will never be equal with God.

- Only God is omnipotent.
- Only God is sovereign.
- Only God is perfect.
- God is superior Satan is not.

Man is not caught in crossfire between two rival forces but God's evidence of His perfect integrity (divine righteousness and justice) against Satan's devious and imperfect nature. Man is inside the human history, which is inside divine decree for the imperfect human race as God's evidence of perfect plan of grace. By God's perfect plan of grace, God is proving Satan's imperfection. For the perfect God, there is no need to prove His perfection. In his arrogance, Satan will never give up his frustrated scheming against the evidence of God.

This war is between God and Satan, while the believers are "evidences". Satan directs his assault against the believers instead on God. Evidence suffering is the mature believer's personal confrontation with the devil. Evidence testing is Satan's cross examination of the believer who has graduated from a series of undeserved sufferings. Satan will do everything to make the believer trample down the grace of God. The spiritual battlefield is the soul of every believer.

The cosmic world is his armory and barracks. The only way to fight Satan is from the spiritual powerhouse secured and protected by God. During the course of every battle (each undeserved suffering) the saint must remain inside his divine sphere otherwise, he is already defeated. The world is the territory of Satan and no ignorant believer can bully him to leave his territory.

The issue in the angelic conflict is the Christian victory through divinely given assets and resources. We do not use the tactics, schemes, strategies and the weapons of the world. The issue is not defeating Satan but overcoming his scheming by spiritual problem-solving devices provided by God. The objective of the mature believer is never to expel Satan from this world or capture his territory as some are trying to do, but to win every testing or suffering that he may inflict upon the believer.

The battle is very personal, meaning to say, nobody can fight my battle. My battle is my own battle. Your battle is your own battle and I cannot be your ally to fight your battle. I have to use the Bible doctrine in my soul for my own battle. I cannot use the Bible doctrine in my soul to assist you fight your own battle.

Your testing and suffering is very personal and you alone can solve it. No religious support group or cell group can help you win your testing. It is a privilege to pray for our brethren under testing but we cannot in anyway interfere with the purpose and plan of God.

Giving unsolicited advices and guidelines is an act of arrogance and self-righteousness. There is no way to win the undeserved suffering except through the divinely instituted method. Reversionistic and carnal believers may create another system but it will not work.

Only God's method is workable inside the divine system. We have to do it, the protocol way. It is doing the right thing at the right time. God cannot share His victory to any believer who is trying to take away God's plan and who replaces it with his (own) human plan.

Those who achieve greater intimacy with Lord are that who have experienced the Cross in their own lives meaning they are dedicated and are devoted to the Father's will for their lives and have exchange what self wants for what God wants. We must obey the Word of the Cross in order to experience deliverance from self, sin and the devil's cosmic system and by doing so we will experience the joy of the Lord (1 Cor. 1:18).

Those who obey the word of the cross and deny self and take up their cross will experience deliverance from the following:

- Self (Ga. 2:20)
- Flesh (Rm. 6:6, 11; Ga. 5:24)
- World (Ga. 6:14)
- Rudiments of the world (Colossians. 2:20)

We must experience death to self in order to experience the life of Jesus. Death to self means rejecting your will for the will of the Father (2 Cor. 4:8-11). A spiritually mature believer is faithful in his relationship with His Lord and Savior. Church age believers have been entered into a marriage relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ at the moment of salvation (Eph. 5:22-32). Many believers are committing spiritual adultery with the Lord today forsaking their relationship with the Lord and have committed spiritual adultery by putting idols in their souls such as money, houses, wives, husbands, children, jobs and self (Jer. 3:8-10; 1 John 2:15-17).

James 4:4 “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”.

There appears to be three types of Christians in the world today:

- Those who do not love the Lord because they refuse to hear the Word of God.
- Those who do not love the Lord because they learn His Word but do not apply that which they have learned.
- Those who love the Lord because they obey His Word.

Those who are diligent in pursuing their relationship with the Lord will also be rewarded with even greater intimacy with the Lord during His millennial reign and eternal state. Spiritually mature believers are close to the Lord. Those who put the most effort into their relationship with the Lord will have greater intimacy with the Lord than those who do not put as much effort into their relationship with Him.

The believer must experience sanctification in order to grow to spiritual maturity. A spiritually mature believer is one who has in the past and is experiencing sanctification in his life. Sanctification is a technical theological term for the believer who has been set apart through the Baptism of the Spirit at the moment of salvation in order to serve God exclusively and is accomplished by God in 3 stages:

- Positional
- Experiential
- Ultimate

The Word of God, Bible Doctrine provides the believer with spiritual energy needed to live the Christian way of life. The Christian way of life is a supernatural way of life and demands a supernatural means of execution. The believer must eat his spiritual food, the Word of God everyday in order to mature spiritually. The believer’s sanctification is accomplished by means of the Word of truth.

The believer’s only ambition in life must be to become like Christ in His death in order to grow to spiritual maturity. Paul’s sole ambition in life was to become like Christ by experiencing identification with Christ in His death and resurrection (Phil. 3:10). Four very important principles from Philippians 3:10:

The believer must come to know Christ experientially in order to attain Christ-like character as articulated by the phrase “that I come to know Christ experientially.”

To come to know Christ experientially, the believer must come to know experientially the power made available to him from Christ’s resurrection and session as articulated by the phrase “the power from His resurrection.”

Then the believer must experience underserved suffering in order to experience the power made available to him from Christ’s resurrection, as articulated by the phrase “the participation in His sufferings.”

The manner that must be adopted by the believer in order for him to know Christ experientially and the power from His resurrection and the participation in His sufferings is by becoming like Christ with reference to His unique voluntary substitutionary spiritual death and appropriating what Christ accomplished on the cross as articulated by the phrase “by my becoming like Him with respect to His death.”

Identification with Christ in His resurrection experientially is appropriating and experiencing the eternal life that was imputed to the believer at the moment of salvation through regeneration. Resurrection life is eternal life or the life of God.

Two categories of spiritual death:

- Real spiritual death: unregenerate people
- Temporal spiritual death: regenerate people who are consistently out of fellowship with God.

It was the death of Christ, which saved us from sin in the past; it is the life of Christ, which delivers us from sin in the present and future. Thus, the believer cannot appropriate and experience eternal life in time prior to his death or the rapture until he first experiences identification with Christ in His death. The believer must die to self before Christ can live out His life through the believer. Identification with Christ experientially in His resurrection is appropriating and experiencing eternal life in time, prior to death or the rapture.

Two-fold process of experiential sanctification:

- Identification with Christ in His death experientially
- Identification with Christ in His resurrection experientially

Reasons why believers do not experience the joy of the Lord:

- They are not experiencing fellowship with the Lord.
- They do not love the Lord with their entire being.
- They are not dedicated and devoted to the Lord.
- (4) They disobey the Lord's commands to love their fellow believer.
- (5) They don't serve the Lord's body, the church.

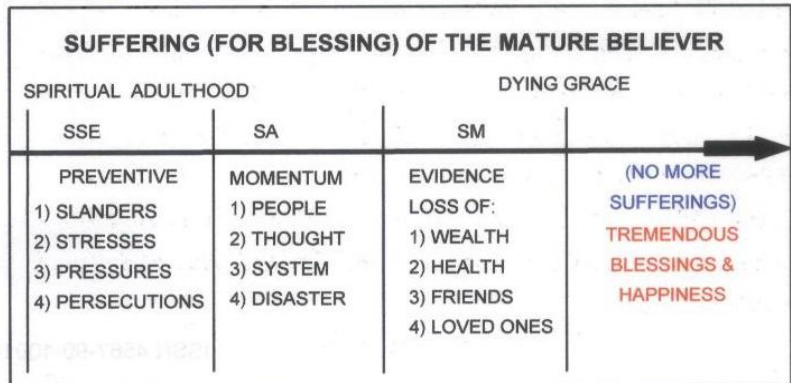
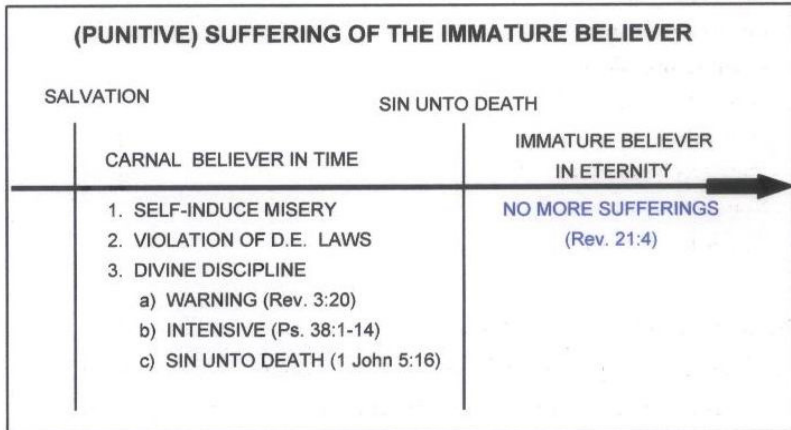
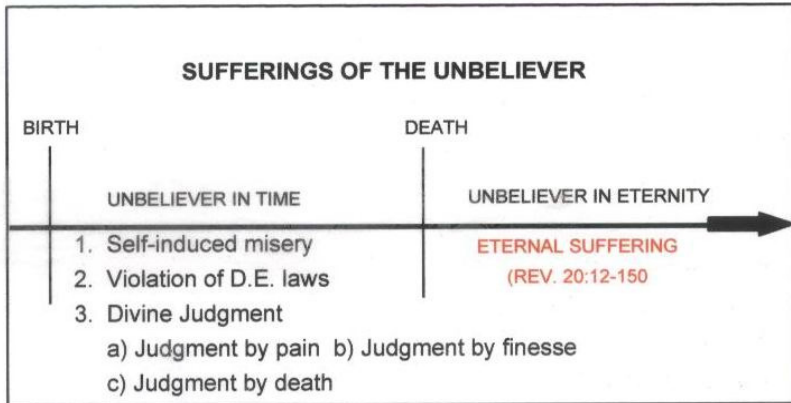
If we love our fellow believer we will serve our fellow believer as Christ loved and served us by dying on the cross as our Substitute. Experiencing the joy of the Lord is based upon our obedience to the Lord's command to self-sacrificially love and serve each other as He was obedient to the Father's will and self-sacrificially loved and served us by dying for our sins on the cross as our Substitute.

There are two categories of happiness in the world today:

- Divine: based upon doctrinal truth
- (2) Cosmic: based upon the cosmic lies and deception

Characteristics of a Spiritually Mature Believer:

- An example for other believers to imitate (Tit. 2:7).
- Filled with Spirit and wisdom most of the time (Gal. 5:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:6; Eph. 1:8, 17).
- Powerful and productive private life (Eph. 3:16-17; Psalms 119:9-11; 1 Th. 2:13).
- Biblical concept of oneself (Rom. 12:1-3, 2 Ti. 1:7-8).
- Doctrinal motivation (James 1:12; Rev. 2:17, 26; 3:21).
- Single-minded devotion to God, tenacity (Phil. 2:12-13; 3:10-14, Rom. 12:1-2).
- Biblical conviction (2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Ti. 3:16-17).
- Moral excellence (Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-20; Rom. 12:1-2).
- Servant's mentality (Mk. 10:45; Mt. 20:20-28; 23:11).
- Surrender and self-sacrifice (Rom. 12:1; 2 Tim. 4:6).
- Self-Control, discipline, consistency (1 Tim. 1:7; 2:9, 15; 3:2).
- Pursuit of excellence (Phil. 1:9-10; 2 Cor. 8:7, 4:1, 10; 10:).
- Endurance, perseverance, and patience (Heb. 12:1-3; 2 Ti. 4:5-7, Col. 1:11-12; 1 Ti. 6:11-12; 2 Co. 6:4-6).
- Courageous and encourager (Jn. 16:33; 17:27-28; He. 5:7-10; 1 Co. 2:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:5-7; Ro. 15:4).
- Faithfulness (Colossians. 1:2, 7; 2:5; 1 Tim. 1:12; Tit. 2:9-10; Rev. 2:10).
- Team Player (Rom. 12:4-8; Col. 1:18,24; 2:19; 3:1-17, Phil. 1:27-30; Ex. 18:1-27; Acts 6:1-7).
- Accountability (Rom. 3:9-19; 14:10-12; Phil. 2:9-11; Luke 12:48, Mat. 12:36, 1 Cor. 3:23; 11:3; 15:24-28; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Pet. 5:2-3).
- Wisdom to deal with failure (Phil. 3:13, Romans 8:35-39).



CATEGORIES OF SUFFERING	STAGES OF GROWTH
<p style="color: red;">PUNITIVE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) SELF-INDUCED MISERY 2) VIOLATION OF DIVINE ESTABLISHMENT LAWS 3) DIVINE DISCIPLINE <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A) WARNING DISCIPLINE B) INTENSIVE DISCIPLINE C) DYING DISCIPLINE 	<p style="color: red;">SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MAXIMUM IMMATURITY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SPIRITUAL BABES (1 Pet. 2:2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CARNALITY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PROLONGED CARNALITY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MAXIMUM REVERSIONISM</p>
<p style="color: blue;">FOR BLESSING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PREVENTIVE SUFFERING <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A) SLANDERS B) STRESSES C) PRESSURES D) PERSECUTIONS 2) MOMENTUM SUFFERING <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A) PEOPLE TESTING B) SYSTEM TESTING C) THOUGHT TESTING D) DISASTER TESTING 3) EVIDENCE TESTING <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A) LOSS OF WEALTH B) LOSS OF HEALTH C) LOSS OF LOVED ONES D) LOSS OF HUMAN INTEGRITY 	<p style="color: blue;">SPIRITUAL ADULTHOOD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SPIRITUAL SELF-ESTEEM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SPIRITUAL AUTONOMY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SPIRITUAL MATURITY</p>

	SUFFERING FOR BLESSING	DIVINE DISCIPLINE
ISSUE	BLESSING	PERSONAL SIN
STATUS	DIVINE DYNASPHERE	COSMOS DIABOLICUS
INTENSITY	BEARABLE	UNBEARABLE
VIEWPOINT	GENUINE HUMILITY	ARROGANCE
SOLUTION	DIVINE PROBLEM-SOLVING DEVICES	REBOUND
INTENDED RESULT	ACCELERATED SPIRITUAL GROWTH	CURSING TURNED TO BLESSING

