

Study 6: Suffering

From the last five studies it should be obvious that living in the kingdom of God will involve some suffering. Paul and Barnabas strengthened the early churches by “encouraging them to continue in the faith, and by telling them, ‘It is necessary to pass through many troubles on our way into the kingdom of God’” (Acts 14:22).

A. Dealing with Persecution

Read Acts 12:1-5 and John 15:18-16:4.

1. What did Jesus say would be the consequence of standing for Him?
2. Have you experienced any persecution for your stand for Christ? Where and when might you expect it?
3. It is important to recognize that persecution and suffering are a consequence of spiritual warfare in high places (Ephesians 6:10-12). What might the devil try to accomplish against you through trials and persecution?

B. God's Purpose in Trials

Read Romans 5:1-5 and 1 Peter 1:6-9.

1. What are some of God's purposes in suffering?
2. How should we respond to persecution and suffering?

Conclusion

1. What are the areas in your life where you are experiencing trials? (marriage, children, job, relationships, finances, etc.)
2. What has your response been thus far? Is God pleased? (Romans 12:16-21)