

# The Blessings Of Despair:

## Why God Wants Me To Hurt (or Why God Allows Suffering)

by [Jim Massey](#)

### Introduction:

#### *I Need To See What God Is Doing When I Am In Pain:*

1. Like a dentist visit, I must see why suffering is needed which changes my perspective.
2. Some things can grow only in an environment watered by tears:
  - a. We learn prayer in despair.
  - b. We learn confidence in despondence.
  - c. *Poem:* "Courage is the armor a blind man wears,  
The callused scars of outlived despairs,  
Courage is fear that said its prayer."

## 1. Despair Drives Me To See That I Need God

### *And Need To Re-evaluate My Life:*

[Matthew 26:75](#) Peter wept bitterly, then became powerful.

[Acts 9:9](#) Saul fasted three days, then changed the world.

[2 Corinthians 7:10](#) "Godly sorrow brings repentance unto salvation."

**Illustration:** Physical heart trouble can change spiritual heart trouble.

## 2. God Wants Despair To Build Enduring Faith To Take Us To Heaven:

[James 1:2-3](#) "Knowing that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."

[1 Peter 1:6-7](#) "that the proof of your faith may be more precious than gold."

[1 Peter 1:9](#) "receiving the goal of your faith even the salvation of your souls."

[Romans 5:3, 4](#) "Suffering produces perseverance, character, & hope."

**Illustration:** Boxers in training need to be pushed to their breaking point.

## 3. Hardship Trains Me Like The Prophets

### *Who Were Examples Of Endurance:*

[James 5:10](#) "take the prophets as an example of patience in the face of suffering."

[James 5:11](#) "You have heard of Job's perseverance & have seen what the Lord finally brought about."

[Lamentations 1:12](#) (Jeremiah): "Is any suffering like my suffering?"

## 4. Suffering Makes Me Like The Early Christians

### *Whom I Want To Imitate*

[Acts 5:41](#) "Rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."

[1 Thessalonians 2:14](#) "You became imitators of God's churches in Judea."

[2 Timothy 3:12](#) "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

[1 Peter 5:9](#) "Your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

**Illustration:** Material bankruptcy can show me my spiritual bankruptcy.

## 5. My Cross Conforms Me To The Image Of Christ Whose Steps I Follow

[Romans 8:28-30](#) "He predestined them to be conformed to the likeness of his Son."

[1 Peter 2:21](#) "Leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps."

[Romans 6:4](#) "We were buried with him through baptism into death."

*My cross must precede my crown if I am to be like Jesus.*

## 6. Jesus Healed Bodies To Show He Can Heal Souls

### *Which Is My Real Sickness*

[Matthew 8:16, 17](#) "He healed all sick to fulfill, He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

[Mark 2:10](#) "That you may know that the Son of man has authority to forgive sins."

[John 9:3](#) (Blind man): Not his or parents' sin but so that God's work be displayed.

# Thought Questions To Consider Before Class

**Introduction:** Why must we see God's purpose in our suffering?

## 1. Despair Drives Me To See That I Need God:

Why is Peter's despair helpful to us?

What did Saul learn by his despair?

Why must we get to our rope's end to be ready to change?

Why must repentance be preceded by godly sorrow?

## 2. God Wants Despair To Build Enduring Faith:

Why does perseverance come only by faith-testing?

Explain Peter's analogy of smelting gold.

Final eternal salvation comes after what is developed?

Explain these three steps and why they are necessary

## 3. Hardship Trains Me Like The Prophets:

Define "patience" as revealed by the prophets' lives.

List 5 severe losses endured by Job.

List 3 of Moses' hardships and 3 things he sacrificed.

Describe 4 aspects of Jeremiah's rejection & suffering.

## 4. Suffering Makes Me Like The Early Christians:

Why is this happiness so unusual?

What general practice did churches expect to come upon them?

What rule is here stated as if without exceptions?

How would this be encouraging?

## 5. My Cross Conforms Me To The Image Of Christ:

In what way are we to be conformed to Christ?

In what way was Christ our example?

Identifying ourselves in baptism with Christ results in what?

## 6. When I Sacrifice, I Am Preparing Myself For Heaven:

Why is this comparison not worth making?

What is the result of a refined faith?

What 3 things will God do after we have suffered?

Why is suffering necessary for heaven?