

6. **Keep your eyes firmly fixed on Jesus.** Read *Heb 12:1,2*.
 Jesus can lead you down the pathway of suffering because He has been there before!

THE RESULTS OF SUFFERING

Explain the results of suffering as found in the verses below:

1. *Heb 12:11* _____

2. *Job 23:10, 1Pet 1:6,7.* _____

3. *2Cor 6:4-10* _____

4. *Rom 8:17-19* _____

AN ILLUSTRATION

“Picture an ancient goldsmith who puts his gold ore into a crucible, subjecting it to intense heat. When the impurities rise to the surface, he skims them off. As soon as he can see his face clearly reflected in the liquid, he removes it from the fire for he knows that he has pure gold. God as the eternal goldsmith, allows the Christian to undergo fiery trials in order that such impurities as obstinacy, wilfulness, lack of faith, lack of concern, lack of compassion, and self-centredness might be burned out of his life that he might become pure, reflecting in his very being the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

H. L. Fickett in “Peter’s Principles”

No 15

CHRISTIAN LIFE BIBLE COURSE

Study Fifteen: Suffering

Suffering is a subject that is often overlooked by Christians, because they think of it in an entirely negative way. However, in order to be mature in the things of God, each one of us sooner or later has to endure some kind of suffering, be it physical, emotional or spiritual. It is with this aspect of Christian experience that we concern ourselves. *1Pet 4:12.*

SUFFERING IN THE EXPERIENCE OF JESUS

How did Jesus’ walk of obedience to God’s will deepen? *Heb 5:8.*

What was the result of suffering as far as Jesus was concerned?
Heb 2:10 _____

Although Jesus never ceased to be God, He had to endure suffering in order to reach maturity as a man, and in so doing become at one with us in our humanity. He was therefore made complete for His ministry of providing a way of salvation.

SUFFERING IN THE CHRISTIAN’S EXPERIENCE

(We are not referring to sickness here, for Jesus bore our sicknesses on Calvary – sickness and healing will be dealt with in another study.)

1. **A partnership with Jesus.** Write the first three things that Paul desired in *Phil 3:10* _____

N.B. The Greek word for fellowship, “koinonia”, means a mutual sharing and participation in something. To partake in the life of Jesus means to share his life of suffering, for we are called to tread the pathway that He trod. (Cf. *Jn 15:18-21*)

2. **AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR CALLING**

What is the example that Jesus has left us?

1Pet 2:20,21 _____

We often think of our “calling” in Christ in terms of the joys and blessings that permeate the Christian life, but as well as the joy and thrill of knowing Jesus, there is the calling to suffer for Him!

3. **THE CHASTISEMENT OF THE LORD**

Sometimes but not always, suffering is the chastisement of the Lord. He chastises us, not out of vindictiveness, but out of a desire to see us become mature sons and daughters in His family. Maturity is not the product of **time**; it is the product of **experience** and this includes suffering. Read *Heb 12:5-11*.

What should be our attitude to the chastening of the Lord?

V5 _____

Why does the Lord chastens us at times? V6 _____

What does the Lord’s chastening assure us of? V7,8, _____

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUFFERING

1. **Recognise that God has limited it to the amount that we can bare.** *1Cor 10:13* Suffering is a test of our faith.
2. How should we respond to suffering in the Christian life? *1Pet 4:12,13.* _____

To respond this way may seem strange at first but do not be discouraged. Part of the key is to keep praising God, by His Word, in the “good times” and the “bad times”. *Heb 12:11* brings a balance.

3. Try not to be introverted or negative in your thoughts. Look at Paul’s example in *2Cor 6:4-10*. Why must we be careful to remain positive in our thinking and speaking through all our trials, tests and struggles? *Neh 8:9,10.*

What did David do when his own followers were about to stone him? *1Sam 30:6* _____

How did Habukkuk suggest that we cope with trials? *Hab 3:17-19.* _____

4. **Recognise that God’s purpose for your life is only good.** This includes His purpose for our suffering. As we love God and walk in His calling what does He guarantee for us? *Rom 8:28* _____

5. **Consider it a privilege to suffer for Jesus!** How did Peter and John respond? *Ac 5:41* _____