Surprised by Suffering by Dr. R.C. Sproul

Lesson 2 – Suffering: A Divine Vocation

Introduction

God is sovereign over suffering and death. He sometimes actually calls us to suffer and even to die. Throughout Scripture, we encounter people whose suffering was the necessary vehicle by which God was able to accomplish His purpose. This session examines three individuals who were called to suffer so that great benefits would result.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session you will:
1. Compare the benefits of suffering with those of pleasure.
2. Examine the suffering experiences of three biblical people.
3. Discover the most helpful response for a person who is called to suffer.
4. Describe situations in which you have seen God accomplish good through someone's suffering.

Quotation

Every one of us is called to die. That vocation is as much a calling from God as is a "call" to the ministry of Christ. Sometimes the call comes suddenly and without warning. Sometimes it comes with a notification in advance. But it comes to all of us. And it comes from God.   R.C. Sproul

Questions to consider

1. What would you say to a person/family going through deep suffering?
2. What would you want others to say to you when you are going through deep suffering?
3. When did you first become aware of God's involvement in your suffering?
4. How do most of us tend to respond when there is no evident purpose in our suffering?
5. What should we do when God's purpose is not clear and we feel overcome by fear, anger, or shock?
6. How can we determine whether specific suffering *is* the consequence of specific sin, an attack from Satan, or a test from the Lord?
7. How can a good God let bad things happen to "nice" people?
8. Can general suffering, not just suffering for our Christian faith, be counted as sharing in the suffering of Christ (1 Peter 4:13)?

Further study:

http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-reasons-god-ordains-suffering-for-his-people

Lesson 2 video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esVTEXngAvI