

Do you have a healthy view of suffering?

(True or False)

1. Suffering is generally from Satan and should be resisted as a curse.
2. I can expect to be blessed with a life of minimal suffering if I walk with God.
3. To have joy and peace I must minimize or medicate pain & suffering in this life.
4. Whenever I suffer, God is trying to teach me something.

Dinesh D'Souza



“A world without suffering is a world without virtue.”

**God
can turn
suffering
into joy!**



**Some
defeats
are really
victories!**



Psalm 30:5,11

“Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.”

“You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness”

Luke 15

“1 Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. 2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to **grumble**, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them. . . .

Three Parables

**The lost sheep vs.3-7
The lost coin vs.8-10
The lost son vs.11-31**

Parables of Mourning & Dancing

The lost sheep vs.3-7
celebrating the found sheep

The lost coin vs.8-10
celebrating the found coin

The lost son vs.11-31
celebrating the returning son
(the older brother's response)

The Parable of Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32

1. The younger son demands independence and leaves home.
2. He becomes destitute through worldly living.
3. This brings him to repent and return home.
4. His father graciously receives him back.
5. His older brother becomes bitter, feeling the father is not fair in graciously receiving the wayward younger brother.

This is the story of two sons

Luke 15

"¹¹ And He said, "A certain man had two sons;"

The Prodigal

Outwardly rebellious
Saw himself as a humble, needy person
In the end enjoyed the fellowship of the Father
The portrait of a spirit of repentance

The Older Brother

Outwardly obedient
Saw himself as a proud, entitled person
Excluded himself from fellowship
The portrait of a religious spirit

Luke 15

"¹¹ And He said, "A certain man had two sons;"

When does obedience hurt us?

When it leads to pride!

When it blinds us to our need for grace!

When it becomes a bargaining chip with God!

Luke 15

"¹¹ And He said, "A certain man had **two sons**;"

When does rebellion help us?

When it brings us to our senses about our spiritual neediness!

When it exposes us to the folly of life apart from God!

When it leads to deeper repentance!

The occasion for repentance

Luke 15

"¹¹ And He said, "A certain man had two sons; ¹² and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. ¹³ And not many days later, **the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.**"

Two great missteps



1.

The Prodigal Son in leaving home declares his independence.



2.

The Prodigal Son squanders his inheritance in the world.

STRATEGIC REPENTANCE

exchanging hope in self and the world for the Cross of Christ



★ The sin of unbelief
★ Conversion

tactical repentance

letting go of worldly attachments, attitudes, & actions for Kingdom living



★ Acts of sin
★ Communion



Steps to repentance #1 Feeling the Pain

Luke 15

“**14** Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and **he began to be in need.** **15** And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. **16** And **he was longing to fill his stomach** with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.”

Pain



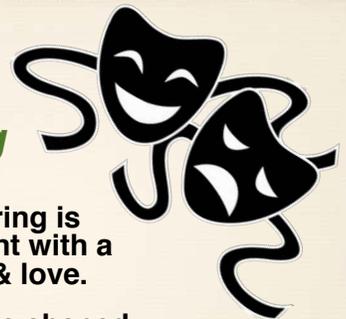
Insight

Bitterness

Blame and Shame

Hopelessness

Turning mourning into dancing



1. Pain and suffering is not inconsistent with a God of power & love.
2. Our character is shaped and showcased in our response to life's highs and lows.

Some of the many Purposes of Pain

1. It reveals the depth of our neediness.
2. It gives meaning for our Gospel.
3. It builds depth in our character.
4. It brings empathy to our ministry.
5. It provides credibility to our witness.
6. It draws us nearer to our Lord.

Pain Etiquette

1. Do not be intimidated by pain for yourself, family, or friends lest you miss its hidden value. God uses, even the afflictions of Satan - **2 Cor.12**
2. Be careful in the use of pain killers lest you miss God's purposes.
3. Comforting those in pain should come with words of wisdom (not just empathy and sympathy).
4. God's discipline (inflicting pain) is meant to help us "get it" when we don't.

Repentance (change of view & direction) may be called for if:

1. I am suffering the **natural** effects of living in a fallen world and feeling hopeless.
2. I face the brunt of the sins of **others** and am bitter.
3. I have declared my **independence** from God to pursue a worldly life and am empty & ashamed.
4. I am **carrying** the suffering of others and exhausted.

God's blessings are missed when we resist discipline, pass the blame, & kill the pain, in our life story.



C.S. Lewis

"Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."



Steven Tyler

"Every life has a measure of sorrow, and sometimes this is what awakens us."