Each Week: End with a Prayer Discipline or another Discipline we can add to our life that helps us walk through SUFFERING.

SUFFER WELL: Key Verse
2 Corinthians 12:9-10

KJV – And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I **strong.**

NIV – But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

RECAP: Week 1 – The TRUTH About Suffering

♓ SUFFER WELL SKILL: WHAT ARE THEY – EACH TIME ♓

Kintsugi –
There is beauty in the broken.

- Japanese art
- repairs broken pottery with gold,
- rendering a new piece that is more exquisite than it was before the break.
- It literally means to join with gold.
- It fixes the broken yet beloved pottery.
- Honoring the breaking.
- Honoring the surviving.
- Honoring the REAL of life.
- Honoring resilience.
- Highlighting the repair…the imperfection makes it beautiful & valuable.

God is the restorer, the kintsugi Master who skillfully and tenderly puts the broken pieces of our lives back together

- Honoring God's work in our lives.
- Celebrating our scars as they point to God's greatness.
- They define our TRUST in God.
- They create a map of our God RELATIONSHIP.

The Beatitudes: Matthew 5:1-12, 13-16

- The nearest thing to a manifesto that Jesus ever uttered (Stott)

Verse 3 - "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

☩ SUFFER WELL SKILL: KNOW whom am I dependent on ☩ - community/ companionship

Verse 4 - Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

☩ SUFFER WELL SKILL: Give WAY for Mourn to happen ☩ - Be Willing! Expect it! Express it! Experience it!

Verse 5 - Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

☩ SUFFER WELL SKILL: PRACTICE Meekness: Gentleness. Humility wrapped with Strength. Gentle.☩ - Strong Humility

Verse 6 - Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

☩ SUFFER WELL SKILL: Active Relationship with Jesus ☩ - Hunger for: growing up with Jesus – to want it all – ALL that he has for me!

Verse 7 - Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

☩ SUFFER WELL SKILL: GIVE Mercy. ☩ - HAVE TO! Kind/ compassionate/ sympathy/ tenderness – Have no mercy? Don't really know Jesus – NOT CO-DEPENDENT!!!

Verse 8 – Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

☩ SUFFER WELL SKILL: GUARD my heart.☩ - How? Push out of my comfort zone/ guard my thoughts/ be hungry for???/ what do I say yes/no to???/ be in a community/ what is uppermost in my mind?

Verse 9 – Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

☩ SUFFER WELL SKILL: PRACTICE peacemaking ☩ - Peace Making VS Peace Loving – deal w/ conflict – making = active keeping = passive – get along

Verse 10 – Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

☩ SUFFER WELL SKILL: EXPECT Persecution ☩ - EXPECT IT!!! Helps our expectations – not a surprise

Verse 11 – Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Θ SUFFER WELL SKILL: UNDERSTAND Persecution. Θ - Rejoice in it! DECISION! To have joy!

Has Jesus' definition of the Christian life altered your definition of suffering?

Vs 1 – 8

DON'T react how "people" do
I GET to grow up!

Point 2:
His Shadow is a Place

Ps 17:7-9 – vs 8 – Hide me under or in the **shadow** of Your wings

Ps 91 – titled – Safety of Abiding in the Presence of God – vs 4 – He shall cover you with His feathers and **under His wings you shall take refuge**

Are you choosing to hide in Him?

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So – tonight – Suffer Well…

Who is volunteering for suffering?

What is Suffering?

Cambridge: physical or mental pain that a person or animal is feeling:

Dictionary.com:

1 – the state of a person or thing that suffers.

2 – Often sufferings. something suffered by a person or a group of people; pain.

Collins English Dictionary:

1 – the pain, misery, or loss experienced by a person who suffers

2 – the state or an instance of enduring pain, etc

Justia – Legal Dictionary:

1 – Pain, distress, and inability to carry out normal activities due to an injury caused by another's negligence or wrongdoing, facilitating recovery of general damages

Synonyms: distress, pain, torture, torment, agony

Adjective:

- mourning
- upset
- unhappy
- sorrowing
- sad
- grieving
- distressed
- melancholy
- crying
- miserable
- mournful
- widowed
- wailing
- weeping
- bereaved
- orphaned
- lamenting
- bemoaning
- bereft

Noun – as in distress:

- distress
- sorrow
- agony
- anguish
- pain
- torment
- heartache
- grief
- heartbreak
- misery
- oppression
- unhappiness
- woe
- despair
- melancholy
- dejection
- dolor
- affliction
- wretchedness
- blues
- remorse
- depression
- gloom
- gloominess
- dumps
- guilt
- heartsickness
- regret
- dreariness
- miserableness
- despondency
- sorriness
- joylessness
- contrition
- glumness
- shame
- sorrowfulness
- doldrums
- despondence
- desolation
- dolefulness
- forlornness
- melancholia
- woefulness
- downheartedness
- disconsolateness
- blue devils
- desolateness
- rue
- mopes
- self-reproach
- dispiritedness
- self-pity

Grieving

- grieving
- aching
- mourning
- sighing
- crying
- agonizing
- sorrowing
- hurting
- bleeding
- sobbing
- weeping
- anguishing
- groaning
- smarting
- eating one's heart out
- moaning
- tormenting
- tearing one's hair
- torturing
- bewailing
- lamenting
- longing (for)
- pining (away)
- bemoaning
- languishing
- howling
- deploring
- blubbering
- yammering
- racking
- wailing
- ruing
- bawling
- regretting
- keening
- yowling

So… The question again – and there are **SO** many questions around suffering…

Who is volunteering for suffering??? Can we avoid it? Escape it? Do we try to?
OR
Do we expect it???

Back to the Beatitudes…
Verse 4 - Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

☩ SUFFER WELL SKILL: Give WAY for Mourn to happen ☩

Be Willing! Expect it! Express it! Experience it!

MEANS FIX IT

NOTES:
This is not our home

The whole counsel of the word

Is suffering for nothing???

Does embracing pain express lack of faith?

Does suffering reflect God's disapproval?

DON'T LIKE THIS WORDING - Is there "bigger" or "smaller" suffering

The answer to these questions & all the ones we have, might show us the imbalance in our beliefs about God… about being a believer… about what our life is supposed to be…

These questions & so many more are why we must have good theology around suffering…

Books I am using:
Suffering: Its Meaning for Spirit-Filled Life – Craig Keener
Suffering is Never for Nothing – Elisabeth Elliot

Read – Inside dust cover of the book

Jesus is Worth Everything!

Keener: Just as we charismatics rightly believe that the New Testament's spiritual gifts continue, we also ought to believe that **New Testament kinds of suffering continue.**
Though some of my fellow charismatics believe that faith will *always* heal the sick or can even prevent some persecution,[12] most of us recognize that suffering does challenge us whether we invite it or not. Prayer sometimes **averts** expected hardships (e.g., 2 Kings 19:20), but **sometimes it just gives us strength to face the hardship that is coming** (as in Mark 14:38).[1]

Sooner or later, all of us will face suffering—unless we suddenly die first. Whether grief, illness, financial hardship, or another crisis, challenges come unbidden. Given our world's electronic and other vulnerabilities, there is nothing implausible about even the more apocalyptic scenarios some critics offer, such as economic collapse, terrorists contaminating water supplies, outright persecution, or war on our soil. Forewarned is forearmed; recognizing that testing will come (Matt. 18:7; Luke 17:1) helps get us ready. Being faithful to Jesus in our present tests helps make us ready for future ones. **Understanding that eternal blessing follows helps us endure even our worst testing. Knowing what others have gone through also provides encouragement that we can make it too.**
Suffering is not the most popular topic. Yet we must teach what Scripture teaches, even when it makes us feel uncomfortable. When we stand before the Lord at the judgment, what will matter will not be how big our churches are or how many followers we have on Facebook. What will matter will be that we have prepared disciples who can persevere no matter what.[2]

Scripture is clear that suffering is a fundamental part of the Spirit-filled Chirstian life.

Jesus is upfront about being His disciples: Matthew 16:24-27
NKJV – 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.
Jack W. Hayford et al., eds., New Spirit-Filled Life Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Bibles, 2002), Mt 16:24–27.

[1] Craig S. Keener, *Suffering: Its Meaning for the Spirit-Filled Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2025), xiv.
[2] Craig S. Keener, *Suffering: Its Meaning for the Spirit-Filled Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2025), xv.

AMP - 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests], and take up his cross [expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come] and follow Me [believing in Me, conforming to My example in living and, if need be, suffering or perhaps dying because of faith in Me]. 25 For whoever wishes to save his life [in this world] will [eventually] lose it [through death], but whoever loses his life [in this world] for My sake will find it [that is, life with Me for all eternity]. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world [wealth, fame, success], but forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory and majesty of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each one in accordance with what he has done.

2 Tim 3:12, 1 Peter 2:21, John 12:25

I. Jesus is Worth Everything – What does that mean? Is He? Do I behave as if He does?

In Keener's book – His chapter – Jesus is Worth Everything – he has 7 topics…

1. Jesus Comes Before Everything Else
2. The Cost of Discipleship
3. How Much is Jesus Worth?
4. Baptism in the Spirit & Suffering
5. Our Model for the Spirit-Empowered Life
6. Revivals Among the Broken
7. Revival May Prepare Us for Hardship

1. Jesus Comes Before Everything Else – He was completely counter-cultural – telling them that He is above:

A – Job Security – Jesus called them – they left whatever they were doing & followed	**Matt 4:18-22** – 18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and

	immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. • **Matt 9:9** – [9] As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. • **Mark 1:16-20** – [16] As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. [17] "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." [18] At once they left their nets and followed him. [19] When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. [20] Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. • **Mark 2:14** – [14] As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.
B – Residential Security – Where they would live/stay	• **Matt 8:19-20** – [19] Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." [20] Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." • **Luke 9:57-58** – [57] As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." [58] Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."
C – Financial Security – Give away his wealth & follow Jesus	• **Matt 19:16-22** – **The Rich and the Kingdom of God** [16] Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" [17] "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." [18] "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, [19] honor your father and mother,'[a] and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'[b]" [20] "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" [21] Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." [22] When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. • **Mark 10:17-22** – **The Rich and the Kingdom of God** [17] As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" [18] "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. [19] You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give

	false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'[a]" 20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." 21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.
D - Family Ties – Who do you love more? Not that you can't love family – which comes 1st?	• **Matt 10:37** – 37 "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. • **Luke 14:26** – 26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.
E – Social obligations – Failing to bury your family could leave them as a permanent outcast	• **Matt 8:22** – 22 But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." • **Luke 9:60** – 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."
F – Life itself – take up their cross & follow Me	• **Matt 10:38** – 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. • **Luke 14:27** – 27 And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. • **Matt 16:24** – 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. • **Mark 8:34** – 34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

1 – ASK: If Jesus comes before every thing else – What is in front of Jesus in my life?

2. The Cost of Discipleship – the Life of growth – Sanctification – instant/progressive

Spirit willing – flesh is weak	• Disciples – at the garden – couldn't stay awake to pray

	• Ran away when Jesus was arrested – abandoning Him
Jesus did not abandon them	– He restored them
Empowering them	– With the Holy Spirit
What did they do after?	• They grew – They grew up… • Peter • John

2 – ASK: If I realize there is a cost of discipleship – What cost am I willing to pay? What cost do I pay for good health? To look a certain way? For my kids? For??? What cost am I willing to pay to walk with Jesus – to have a life with him?

3. How Much is Jesus Worth?

	Matt 26:16 – [6] While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, [7] a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. [8] When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. [9] "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor." [10] **Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.** [11] **The poor you will always have with you,**[a] **but you will not always have me.** [12] **When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.** [13] **Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."**
To her:	• Jesus was worth everything • Her affection • Her expensive ointment • She didn't come to get from him • BUT what she could offer Him – deepest devotion

God MUST be the supreme object of our love	**Matt 22:36-37** – [36] "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" [37] Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'[a]
Without Jesus being central AND renewing us	– all our other service – no matter how good – can just burn us out!
Judas	– He sought only what he could get from Jesus

3 – ASK: How much is Jesus worth to – You? Me? Do we decide that the cost of serving Jesus is higher than it is worth? What do I offer Jesus?

4. Baptism in the Spirit & Suffering

	People want the gifts of the Spirit – the power of the Spirit – to do signs & wonders
	That gets the attention
	The disciples did many signs & wonders
BUT	
	They also faced much opposition – Acts 12:2–3; 14:5–6, 19; 16:22–23[3]
	Acts 4-5 – temple authorities arrest, beat, and consider killing the apostles
	Signs don't guarantee conversion
	Miracles don't covert people – they make the gospel impossible to ignore

[3] Craig S. Keener, *Suffering: Its Meaning for the Spirit-Filled Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2025), 5.

Jesus's warning about what Spirit-empowered witnesses will face appears in all the Gospels, in one form or another:	• **Matt 10:19-20** – When they hand you over, don't worry how you'll speak or what you'll say, because what you should say will be given you in that hour. That's because it's not you speaking then, but the Spirit of your Father speaking by you. • **Mark 13:10–11** – And the good news must first be preached among all peoples. And when they bring you to court and hand you over for arrest, don't worry beforehand about what you should say. Instead, speak whatever is given you in that hour, because you're not the one speaking it, but the Holy Spirit. • **Luke 12:11–12** – When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and authorities, don't worry how you should defend yourselves or what you should say, because the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour the things you need to say. • **John 16:2** – [Initially], they will just throw you out of synagogues; but the time is coming for everyone who kills you to suppose that they are offering worship to God!
It isn't if – it's WHEN	
	Both in the Bible and today, reaching the lost usually entails a measure of hardship.

4 – ASK: The Holy Spirit in your life – Who is He? Do you talk with Him? Only when you want something? Power? Peace? Strength?

5. Our Model for the Spirit-Empowered Life

JESUS	– Filled with the Spirit – He is our model
Mark 1:12-13	– Holy Spirit – leads Jesus into the desert – for CONFLICT with the enemy
The rest of Mark's Gospel recounts:	• Jesus performing Spirit-filled miracles • Facing increasing opposition

Signs get attention	– NOT ALWAYS acceptance

5 – ASK: If Jesus is our model for the Spirit-Empowered life – Do we really want to be baptized with the baptism that Jesus was baptized with?

6. Revivals Among the Broken

	The Spirit's work is often deepest where people are most desperate for Him.
	Brokenness – need – is often the matrix for revival
	Among those that who hunger & thirst for Him (Beatitude)
People who are desperate – seeking Him	• Whitefield and the Wesley brothers preached to masses in the fields, much to the dismay of more "proper" churchmen. • Much of the Second Great Awakening happened on the then-frontier rather than in (and sometimes receiving criticism from) the venerated halls of academia. • The Welsh Revival (1904–1905) began among miners, who worked in a long-dangerous profession. • India's Mukti Mission Revival (1905) began among orphan girls. • The son of former slaves led the interracial Azusa Street Revival (1906–1908). • The 1907 revival in Korea began after years of suffering and helped fortify the church for sufferings to come. • The bloody Biafra War (1967–1970) killed between half a million and three million in Nigeria, especially in its southeast. Some estimate that the resultant famine alone killed a million Igbos. In the war's wake the interdenominational work of Scripture Union birthed the massive Nigerian revival. • More recent revivals include those among repressed or neglected people in, for example, China and Mozambique.[4] • Jesus Movement • Asbury College – 2023 – young people desperate for a fresh touch from God.

[4] Craig S. Keener, *Suffering: Its Meaning for the Spirit-Filled Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2025), 7–8.

God is near to the lowly – close to the broken-hearted	• Ps. 138:6; Prov. 3:34; Matt. 23:12; Luke 14:11; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5 • Ps 34:18 – The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

6 – ASK: (On the board?) If Revival is among the broken – What makes us desperate for Him?

- Family – Husband/Children/Parents/
- Loss
- Rejection
- ???

7. Revival May Prepare us for Hardship

Sometimes	revival comes after hardship
Sometimes	it comes to get us ready
	• 1857-1859 – prayer revival among businessmen in NY City – led to an estimated million conversions – on the eve of the Civil War (1860-1865) • 1904-1905 – Welsh Revival – many died in WW 1

SUFFER WELL SKILL: Right Theology – Leads to – Right Thinking

- Jesus is worth EVERYTHING
- He more than rewards us eternally for any sacrifice we make to follow Him
- God's Spirit empowers us for HIS mission in the world
- His mission is not always easy – neither is life
- Holy Spirit:
  - Enables us
  - Empowers us
  - Comforts us

ASK: So… if…

1. Jesus Comes Before Everything Else
2. The Cost of Discipleship
3. How Much is Jesus Worth?
4. Baptism in the Spirit & Suffering
5. Our Model for the Spirit-Empowered Life
6. Revivals Among the Broken
7. Revival May Prepare Us for Hardship

What does that mean for my day to day living???

Elisabeth Elliot's – Suffering is NEVER for Nothing

II. Offering – ASK: What is it? What do we think of?

- **If God has given us a gift, it's never only for ourselves. It's always to be offered back to Him and very often it has repercussions for the life of the world.** Jesus offered Himself to be bread for the life of the world. He said the bread that I will give is my body and I give it for the life of the world. For a Christian, the pattern is Jesus. What did He do? **He offered Himself, a perfect and complete sacrifice, for the love of God.** And you and I should be prepared, also, to be broken bread and poured out wine for the life of the world.[5]
- **Rom 12:1**
  - NIV – Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to **offer your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.
  - AMP – Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies** [dedicating **all** of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship.
- ASK: If we are to present ourselves – our bodies – to God as a living sacrifice –
  - Brains/mind
  - Personality
  - Heart
  - Emotions
  - Will
  - Temperament
  - Prejudices
  - Failings
  - ALL the rest of it
- If we do that – then we can start to see:
  - everything we have –
  - everything we are –
  - everything in my life –
  - **EVERYTHING**
  - Pain?
  - Sorrow?
  - She saw her widowhood
  - **As a gift – that we can use to glorify God with.**

Consider – How offering relates to suffering

[5] Elisabeth Elliot, *Suffering Is Never for Nothing* (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2019), 75.

1st – Everything is a gift
2nd – There are several kinds of offerings that I can make to God - Sacrifice
3rd – The greatest – is the offering of obedience

1st – Everything is a gift

- Being thankful
  - Waking up – Walking – Dishes – Family – Food – Clothing – AND???
  - Joseph – taken into captivity – told his family – Gen 45:8 – It was not you who sent me here, but God
  - Joseph – named his son Ephraim – Gen 41:52: The second son he named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."
  - Paul – the thorn in the flesh
  - Jesus – the cup which His Father had given him
  - All of these were not small – but rather great sufferings
- It was not the experience – **BUT THE RESPONSE!**
  - Jospeh trusted God
  - God/Jesus gives us something which I can turn to Him & offer it back WITH thanks!
- **Everything** we have comes from Him – we have nothing to offer except what He has given us.
  - We receive it from Him
  - We accept it in our hands.
  - We say thank You.
  - **THEN** we offer it back!
- Everything is a gift AND everything is meant to be offered back.

ASK: Do I look at EVERYTHING as a gift? Do I offer EVERYTHING back to Him?

2nd – there are several kinds of offerings that I can make to God – Sacrifice

- OT – very important part of life
- Blood sacrifice – daily occurrence
- We don't do that… so… how does that apply?
  - Ps 51:17 – My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

    - When we are suffering we feel broken – If what we have to offer is a broken heart – God desires that…
- Elijah & the widow Zarepath:
    - Elijah was fed by the ravens – God told him it was going to stop & go to the widow
    - Zarepath – she would feed him – she had nothing – completely destitute
    - Elijah asks her to bake him a cake – ABSURD
    - She recognizes he is a man of God
    - For her – it is now a matter of obedience – SO SHE OBEYS
    - God sent Elijah to her – to ask her to give what she had – then HE supplied what she needed
    - HE gave her & she gave it back – It was a gift
- **Suffering AND love are inextricably bound up together**
- Love invariably means sacrifice
    - Fathers/mothers
    - Husbands/wives
    - Dreams
        - Amy Carmichael – believed God was calling her to remain single – it scared her
            - **Desolate** with loneliness
            - God brought to her Ps 34:22 – KJV – The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants, and none of them that trust in Him shall be **desolate.**
            - Missionary – founded Dohnavur Fellowship – children rescued from temple prostitution in India
            - Her family numbered in the 1,000s
- We have no idea what God has in mind when we make the offering
- Everything is potential material for sacrifice

"If my life is broken when given to Jesus, it may be because pieces will feed a multitude when a loaf would satisfy only a little boy"

ASK: What is my – what is your offering???

- Loneliness?
- Rejection?
- Fear?
- Grief?
- ????
- A talent?
- To go and do?
- Stay and be?

3rd – The 3rd component of offering relative to suffering – the offering of obedience

- EE brothers story – not obeying mom, but listening to dad play the piano "I wanna sing 'Jesus Loves Me'" – dad stopped playing –
- It's no good singing "Jesus Loves Me" when we are disobeying
- The highest form of worship – is obedience
- Ezekiel 24:16 on…
    - There's a great lesson on this in the book of Ezekiel, hidden back in the 24th chapter, beginning in verse 16. God told the son of man, "I take away from you the desire of your eyes with one stroke; yet you shall neither mourn nor weep, nor shall your tears run down. Sigh in silence, make no mourning for the dead; bind your turban on your head, and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover your lips, and do not eat man's bread of sorrow" (Ezek. 24:16–17 nkjv). In other words, forget all the ritual signs of mourning. And Ezekiel replies this, "So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died; and the next morning I did as I was commanded" (Ezek. 24:18 nkjv). Now that's a very short description of some pretty important things! In the evening my wife died, and the next morning I did as I was commanded.[6]

In suffering – there is no consolation – no comfort – no relief – like obedience

ASK:
If Jesus is worth everything – What am I to offer Him?
What is the next right thing you are supposed to do?
What does it mean for my day to day living?

Prayer Discipline:
Moving Inward – Seeking the Transparency we need.

- **The SIMPLE prayer**
- **The prayer of the FORSAKEN**
- **The prayer of EXAMEN**
- **The prayer of TEARS**
- **The prayer of RELINQUISHMENT**
- **The FORMATION prayer**
- **The COVENANT prayer**

[6] Elisabeth Elliot, *Suffering Is Never for Nothing* (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2019), 86–87.