

DAILY 10 COMMANDMENT SERIES

CHRIST'S SUFFERING



MASTER PROPHET
ARCHBISHOP
JORDAN

10 Commandments of Christ's Suffering

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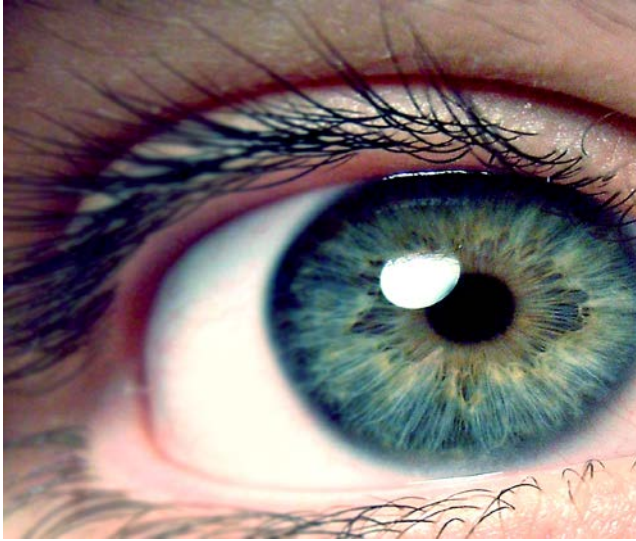
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1st Commandment

The Distinction of Suffering



"When you suffer and lose, that does not mean you are being disobedient to God. In fact, it might mean you're right in the centre of His will. The path of obedience is often marked by times of suffering and loss."

Chuck Swindoll

Power Truth

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered
for us in the flesh, arm yourselves
likewise with the same mind: for he that
hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased
from sin;

That he no longer should live the rest of
his time in the flesh to the lusts of men,
but to the will of God.

Identifying Suffering

Suffering is an inescapable aspect of human life in the present world. Suffering, affliction, and tragic experiences disclose the vulnerable nature of human life. It enables us to recognize our limitations as human beings and our dependence upon others and upon God for sustenance in life. Suffering has the potential to lead human beings either to despair, misery, and self-enclosure or to transcendence through hope and faith, trusting the benevolence of God and His covenant relationship with His people.

*As Christians, we do not argue against suffering, but tell a *story*.*

There is a strong instinct in humans to seek reasons for their suffering. “Why?” “Why me?” These questions emerge from every human experience of suffering. The need to search for the causes of suffering is deeply engrained in us. Sometimes we find the answer and modify our behavior in the light of bad experiences. But, sometimes the causes are beyond our knowledge or control, and the search leads to increased frustration, misplaced guilt or blaming others.

Yet, we find it hard to accept that we may never know the real reason for our suffering. We resent the inexplicable mystery, especially when we feel helpless and numb in the face of meaningless suffering. Thus, our search for meaning and explanations employs all our rational capacities to find intelligible causes for the inexplicable. Every act and any reflection on suffering and death must begin by doing justice to actual human experience. Not all suffering is meaningless. Suffering can be an opportunity for maturation; an occasion to direct one’s life to the essential.

Nevertheless, the suffering which one most often encounters is deadening, barbaric, and meaningless. The concrete experience of human suffering continues to call for a

response, continues to raise the issue of its meaningfulness or, alternately, its meaninglessness. Suffering can never be kept at a distance: “I am always involved in it”, “I share in it”, either personally or insofar as “I share in the lives of the others.”

Suffering, affliction, and tragic experiences
disclose the vulnerable nature of human life.

Undeserved suffering makes suffering intolerable in a world which is not ruled by irrational fate but by the just and powerful God. In Scripture, we find multiple responses and interpretations of what suffering means in a *theocentric* structure of reality.¹ All of them, however, are worth understanding and may help in dealing with our own suffering and that of others. Yet, none of these approaches are fully satisfactory taken on its own. Each one of them is a helpful resource to cope with suffering since escape from suffering as long as we live in history is impossible.

Suffering is not a *problem*, but an unfathomable, theoretically incomprehensible *mystery*. We should not try to explain suffering or construct theories about the reasons for suffering in the world and systematic explanations that seek to reconcile innocent suffering with belief in a good and all powerful God. The pervading presence of senseless suffering in the world falls outside the bounds of every rational system. When faced with the mystery of evil and suffering, the story of Jesus as the story of God is the only adequate response. The human quest for meaning and hope in tragic situations of affliction, draw from Christ's death and Resurrection the power of life needed for sustenance. Thus, as Christians we do not *argue* against suffering, but tell a *story*.

What Now

1. How will you define Suffering?
2. Do you see suffering as a problem? Why?
3. Do you see suffering as a blessing from God? Explain.

2nd Commandment

The Crucifixion of Christ



"Even in the greatest afflictions, we ought to testify to God, that, in receiving them from his hand, we feel pleasure in the midst of the pain, from being afflicted by Him who loves us, and whom we love."

John Wesley

Power Truth

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

1 Peter 3:18 KJV

Suffering and the Crucifixion of Christ

The suffering and death of Jesus were the outcome of his public ministry, his preaching, and making present the reign of God. The death of Jesus cannot be an isolated act of redemption detached from what transpired in his life. The crucifixion of Jesus was the intrinsic historical consequence of both his message and his lifestyle.

God does not intervene to save Jesus, but
neither does God abandon Jesus.

The cross is a glimpse only in light of what God has accomplished in the Resurrection. The Crucifixion of Jesus should be envisioned as the ultimate expression of human rejection of salvation from God offered in Jesus. God, who according to Leviticus “abominates human sacrifices”, did not put Jesus on the Cross. Human beings did that. Although God always comes in power, divine power knows no use of force, not even against those who had crucified Christ. But the kingdom of God still comes, despite human misuse of power and human rejection of God’s love.

The fact that Jesus, in the last supper with his disciples, offered the cup to his disciples for one last time, with the trust that he will drink it anew in the reign of God, indicates Jesus’ trust that his communion with God and with his disciples was stronger than death. Jesus’ cry of abandonment: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me”, taken from the opening line of Psalm 22, should be interpreted in light of the entire psalm.

Read as a whole, this psalm is a prayer of anguish but also a confession of trust in God. And it concludes with an expression of praise and thanksgiving for deliverance by God. These words reflect Jesus’ persistent trust in God even amidst the experience of darkness and the apparent failure of his mission.

The suffering and death of Jesus were the
outcome of his public ministry, his preaching,
and making present the reign of God.

God does not intervene to save Jesus, but neither does God abandon Jesus. Jesus' life ends with an open question to God, "God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" God answers to the crucified Jesus by raising him from the dead and glorifying him. The resurrection signifies that God is present in the suffering of Jesus and of every human person.

If we speak of Jesus' real abandonment by God at Calvary, this could lead to the mistaken impression that suffering human beings are also forsaken by God. Instead, we must speak of God as silently present to Jesus at this terrifying moment, just as God is silently present to all those who suffer. This silent presence of God to Jesus becomes manifest in the Resurrection.¹ The resurrection of Jesus confirms and completes all that Jesus was about in his life. The bottom line of the Christian faith is that God will be victorious over evil and suffering, as exhibited and effected in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

What now

1. What is the importance of knowing the crucifixion of Christ?
2. Do you believe that God is always watching over us? Explain.
3. What lesson did you learn about the crucifixion of Christ?

3rd Commandment

The Suffering Servant



" Christ wrought out His perfect obedience as a man, through temptation, and by suffering."
Alexander MacLaren

Power Truth

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

1 Peter 2:24 KJV

God as the Suffering Servant

God's relation to suffering has practical consequences for Christian life. It means that Christians are called to be people of memory and action. Believers in Christ keep the memory of human suffering—the memory of the ongoing passion of humanity.

Jesus confronted disappointment, felt pain,
became hungry and tired, faced temptation, and
apprehension.

Christians are summoned to live in solidarity with suffering people and to enable suppressed stories of suffering to be told, whether they be the stories of individuals in pain or stories of peoples who are victims of systematic oppression. Christians also keep the memory of another story—the story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. It is this story, remembered and lived out, that speaks to us about the God of the kingdom who overcame the death of Jesus in the resurrection and who is on the move to overcome all evil and suffering.

The story of Jesus assures us that entering into communion with suffering people and acting to bring life out of death is what God is doing for all people. Being attentive and hearing the stories of the afflicted and oppressed people and responding to their needs with compassion, care, and love and actively working against the causes of suffering provide opportunities to participate in God's mercy and become true icons of His presence in the world. As Christians, we see the presence of the suffering Christ in our suffering brethren.

Is God fair? This question was answered once and for all 2,000 years ago by Jesus. God came in human flesh and suffered the worst unfairness of history. Jesus didn't enjoy peace, had no wealth or possessions, lived a rather short life full of sorrows, and was ignominiously murdered. Some think God gives an automatic promise to make life fair for a good person.¹ If so, it was a promise badly broken in the life of Jesus, the only sinless person in history.

God's relation to suffering has practical
consequences for Christian life.

Jesus, God in the flesh, was also the *Suffering Servant*. His coming had been prophesied hundreds of years earlier. The prophet Isaiah said the future Savior would be “a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering”. He was to be the willing lamb led to the slaughter by his God. Isaiah wrote of Jesus: “it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer.” To what purpose? It was to pay for human sin and make salvation possible.

Though fully God, Jesus also took on the same humanity as we have, in order to accomplish his saving grace. He also experienced the suffering and pain that humans do. Jesus confronted disappointment, felt pain, became hungry and tired, faced temptation and apprehension. Shortly before his betrayal, on his last night, Jesus told his disciples, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.”

What Now

1. In your own opinion, is God a fair God? Why?
2. Why is it important to know and learn the suffering of Christ?
3. Do you have what it takes to face all the sufferings in the world just to obey and worship God?

4th Commandment

God is Always Present



"I am not a theologian or a scholar, but I am very aware of the fact that pain is necessary to all of us. In my own life, I think I can honestly say that out of the deepest pain has come the strongest conviction of the presence of God and the love of God."

Elisabeth Elliot

Power Truth

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:2 KJV

God Was Not Hiding

The Bible says that Jesus endured torture and finally hideous torment on the cross. People taunted and derided Jesus— “Save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” “He saved other but he can’t save himself,” some mocked a suffering, dying Jesus.

God in Jesus came to share in the sufferings of the world and to free wretched humanity from the slavery of sin.

God was not hiding. From that time forward, no one could accuse God of not suffering as humans do, of not understanding. Jesus had suffered through the entire human experience. Think of it: God in the flesh shared our human pain. The suffering and death of Jesus once and for all put to rest the idea that life must be fair, or that God is unfair.

No one could accuse God of hiding himself or not caring. In the Old Testament, some of God’s favorites suffered. In the New Testament, it was God himself, manifested in the flesh as Jesus, who suffered supreme injustices. He was spit on, beat up, nailed to a piece of wood, humiliated and lifted up for all to see, and then speared. Jesus’ suffering and death exposed a world of gross and obscene unfairness. But the cross also made plain that God endured unfairness. Jesus was not exempt.

God decreed from all eternity to display the greatness of the glory of his grace for the enjoyment of his creatures, and he revealed to us that this is the ultimate aim and explanation of why there is sin and why there is suffering, and why there is a great suffering Savior.¹ Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came in the flesh to suffer and die and by that suffering and death to save undeserving sinners like you and me.

God in the flesh shared our human pain. The suffering and death of Jesus once and for all put

to rest the idea that life must be fair, or that God
is unfair.

This coming to suffer and die is the supreme manifestation of the greatness of the glory of the grace of God. Or to say it a little differently, the death of Christ in supreme suffering is the highest, clearest, surest display of the glory of the grace of God. If that is true, then a stunning truth is revealed, namely, suffering is an essential part of the created universe in which the greatness of the glory of the grace of God can be most fully revealed. Suffering is an essential part of the tapestry of the universe so that the weaving of grace can be seen for what it really is.

God in Jesus came to share in the sufferings of the world and to free wretched humanity from the slavery of sin. In the process, he took on the worst the world could mete out—unjustly and unfairly. When suffering becomes our lot, the question of God's fairness will naturally come to mind. Is it fair that we must suffer? God has given us an answer to this question. He gave it through the life and death of God in the flesh, Jesus Christ. May it give us faith and love in God in our darkest moments.

What Now

1. Why is it important to know that God was there in the crucifixion of Christ?
2. What was the ultimate goal of God in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?
3. Do you believe that God in Jesus came to share the sufferings of the world and free wretched humanity from the slavery of sin? Explain.

5th Commandment

The Divine Plan of God



"When a founder has cast a bell he does not presently fix it in the steeple, but tries it with his hammer, and beats it on every side to see if there be any flaw in it. So Christ doth not, presently after he has converted a man, convey him to heaven; but suffers him first to be beaten upon by many temptations, and then exalts him to his crown."

Richard Cecil

Power Truth

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

Hebrews 2:14 KJV

The Fulfilment of God's Plan

“The mystery of God ordaining but not doing sin:” Do you see what this implies about sin and suffering in the universe? According to this divine plan, God permits sin to enter the world. God ordains that what he hates will come to pass. It is not sinful in God to will that there be sin. We do not need to fathom this mystery. We may content ourselves by saying over the sin of Adam and Eve what Joseph said over the sin of his brothers, when they sold him into slavery: “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.”

Suffering exists so that Christ might display the greatness of the glory of the grace of God by suffering in himself to overcome our suffering.

For not only did sin enter the world, but through sin came suffering and death. Paul tells us that God subjected the world to futility and corruption under his holy curse. He put it like this in Romans: “The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

When sin entered the world, horrible things followed. Diseases, defects, disabilities, natural catastrophes, human atrocities—suffering is no respecter of persons. That's why Paul said, "We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

The stage has been set. The drama of redemptive history begins to unfold. Sin is now in its full and deadly force. Suffering and death are present and ready to consume the Son of God when he comes. All things are now in place for the greatest possible display of the glory of the grace of God. Therefore, in the fullness of time God sent his Son into the world to suffer in the place of sinners.

*For not only did sin enter the world, but through
sin came suffering and death.*

Every dimension of his saving work was accomplished by suffering. In the life and death of Jesus Christ, suffering finds its ultimate purpose and ultimate explanation: suffering exists so that Christ might display the greatness of the glory of the grace of God by suffering in himself to overcome our suffering.¹ Everything that Christ accomplished for us sinners, he accomplished by suffering. Everything that we will ever enjoy will come to us because of suffering.

What Now

1. What was the divine plan of God?
2. How do you face your sufferings in life?
3. Do you have the will to face all the circumstances in life just to follow God?

6th Commandment

Face Your Barriers in Life



" Any discussion of how pain and suffering fit into God's scheme ultimately leads back to the cross."

Philip Yancey

Power Truth

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Galatians 3:13 KJV

Let God Help You to Take Action

If we want to break through the barriers that stop us from taking more action, we must first be able to identify what

these barriers are. The key to solving any problem lies in first understanding what the problem is. Only then can we begin to arrive at the right solutions.

We must believe that God's words can shelter
us from all the negativity in this world.

The reason why many people are unable to solve their problems is because they fail to realize that they have a problem in the first place. They know that they are struggling yet they cannot seem to pin-point where the source of their struggle lies. Without the awareness to uncover the root of their difficulties, their problem can never be successfully addressed.

Another issue with regards to determining what the barriers are is denial. Sometimes, we are not quite ready to let go of our barriers, because they keep us within our comfort-zone. We refuse to acknowledge them, and sometimes, even unconsciously turn a blind eye.¹

The problem with closing our eyes to the barriers that stop us from taking more action is that without the acknowledgement and acceptance that the problem exists, there can be no solution. We are only able to address a problem when we know that 1) it needs to be addressed in the first place, and 2) we understand its nature. Knowledge is always our best tool with regards to overcoming obstacles.

If we want to break through the barriers that
stop us from taking more action, we must first
be able to identify what these barriers are.

That said, we need to be mindful when it comes to determining what exactly stops us from pushing our cause forward. We need to observe our own actions, intentions, and words. Moreover, we need to be conscious of even the things we fail to do or say, and why we commit these omissions.

If you want to eliminate the problems and move forward with your life, start by first uncovering the barriers that stop you from taking more action. Know what is holding you back. Only then can you begin to arrive at a solution. When it comes to achieving any cause, the most important thing is that we believe it to be a possibility. When we are sure that our goals can be achieved, we are all the more determined to work towards these and take action. The Bible said, “God, your God, is the God of all gods, he’s the Master of all masters, a God immense and powerful and awesome.”

We too, must try to have faith. We must believe that God’s words can shelter us from all the negativity in this world. Only then can we actually begin to take the actions necessary to bring solutions about the hindrances we face in our lives. If God is calling you, be prepared for trials and breakdowns in your life. You must believe and do what He will ask you to do because with God, you can make the impossible possible.

What Now

1. Do you believe in being self-aware?
2. Are you mindful of your own barriers?
3. Do you believe that God can eliminate all the barriers in your life? Why?

7th Commandment

Believe in Yourself



*"We want to avoid suffering, death, sin, ashes.
But we live in a world crushed and broken and
torn, a world God Himself visited to redeem.
We receive his poured-out life, and being
allowed the high privilege of suffering with
Him, may then pour ourselves out for others."*

Elisabeth Elliot

Power Truth

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that
ye may be a new lump, as ye are
unleavened. For even Christ our
passover is sacrificed for us:

1 Corinthians 5:7 KJV

Exercise Your Faith

Another barrier that stops us from taking more action in order to do what God wants us to do is the lack of belief in one's own abilities. When we doubt our own transformative power, we are held back from performing as well as we might with full confidence. Self-doubt is crippling, and hinders us from striving for success.

When it comes to facing sufferings in life, it can be tempting to lose faith in yourself and your potential to make a difference.

The most successful people are those who believe in their own potential. This is a result of their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a psychological concept that is defined by the belief in one's potential to perform successfully. According to psychologists, the higher your self-efficacy is, the better you perform.¹

The reason why believing in yourself translates to successful performance is that *distractors* such as doubt and fear do not get in the way. When you are completely certain that you can achieve your goal, all your energy will be directed towards this. You will be fully focused on the task at hand, and more than ready to give it all that you have because you know that your efforts will result in victory. The Bible said, "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"

Conversely, when you lack belief in yourself, your energy will be torn between wanting to succeed, and wanting to back down out of fear of failure. When your energy and will is divided, you cannot expect to achieve your goal. You need to be one hundred percent confident in order to ensure that all your actions are completely directed towards your cause.

When we doubt our own transformative power,
we are held back from performing as well as we
might with full confidence.

When it comes to facing sufferings in life, it can be tempting to lose faith in yourself and your potential to make a difference. This is especially the case when people are not swayed by your words, or when your actions geared towards God's promises seem to have no effect on others. In times like these, we need to remember that the outcomes of our efforts are two-way.

No matter how well we perform, in the end, we also have to accept that the recipients of our actions have their own free-will as well. If they do not listen, we should not take this personally against ourselves and doubt our own capabilities. Instead, we must focus on our victories and strengths, and use these to inspire us to keep moving forward and taking action.

What Now

1. Do you believe that self-doubt can be crippling?
2. Do you ever allow self-doubt to hinder you from achieving your goals?
3. How can you have better faith in yourself?

8th Commandment

Have a Steadfast Trust



"Power, no matter how well-intentioned, tends to cause suffering. Love, being vulnerable, absorbs it. In a point of convergence on a hill called Calvary, God renounced the one for the sake of the other."

Philip Yancey

Power Truth

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8:16 -17 KJV

Have Unwavering Trust in God

“Trust” is not a simple concept as most of us think it is. The experience of trusting another person or an object is usually taken for granted. We limit it to a feeling. We think trust is something that simply occurs. Instead, trust must be seen as a characteristic that we set for our lives. It’s a choice we make based on our assessment about the object of the trust. When trust is betrayed, it cannot be restored to its full integrity. Trust in the Lord is not about blind obedience. It is because we grow in the wisdom of the Lord that we get to trust Him more and more.

If you have a steadfast trust, then your perceptions and your actions toward the object of your trust would reflect this.

The word “steadfast” means secure, firm, or loyal. The word steadfast trust is grounded on an assessment of security or loyalty. If you do not think the object of your trust is firm or loyal, you would not have steadfast trust for this person or thing.

People may confuse trust with blind trust—the refusal to consider evidence or argument that one should not be trusted, or that one should be trusted. Trust seems to be unconditional, because it is open-ended and sometimes restricted to a single task or commitment. However, trust is almost always conditional, focused, qualified, and limited. In our limited human capacities, our trust, even for God can be conditional. The amazing thing is the fact that God is faithful and that He is the One who leads us into this steadfast trust in our lives. Without God’s initiation, we would not be able to step into this personality toward Him.

We need to recognize that trusting someone is not about saying that “anything goes”. Instead, it’s about being open to one’s responses, expectations, and willingness to

negotiate. There is no obstacle, disappointment, or betrayal that will bring such a trust to an end, because this kind of trust is grounded on a relationship, a cause, or a practice that is itself open-ended. We go through different seasons in life. In these seasons, the steadfast trust is activated and we can respond according to it, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Trust in the Lord is not about blind obedience. It is because we grow in the wisdom of the Lord that we get to trust Him more and more.

King David said, “But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.”¹ He speaks about coming from the steadfast trust. A few verses before this, David was crying out to God because he was undergoing a difficult situation, as if the Lord has forgotten him. But the Lord never forgets. Even if his emotions can lead him to this conclusion, David knew from his steadfast trust that this was never true. Out of this personality, he declared of his trust in the Lord and his joy in His salvation, regardless of what he was going through.

If you have a steadfast trust, then your perceptions and your actions toward the object of your trust would reflect this. Your trust is the background by which you make decisions and respond to your present circumstances, which ultimately leads you into the future you’re creating. When you trust in the Lord, your actions, your choices, and your emotions will reflect it. Having an unwavering faith in God could lead to better results when facing circumstances that will come into your life.

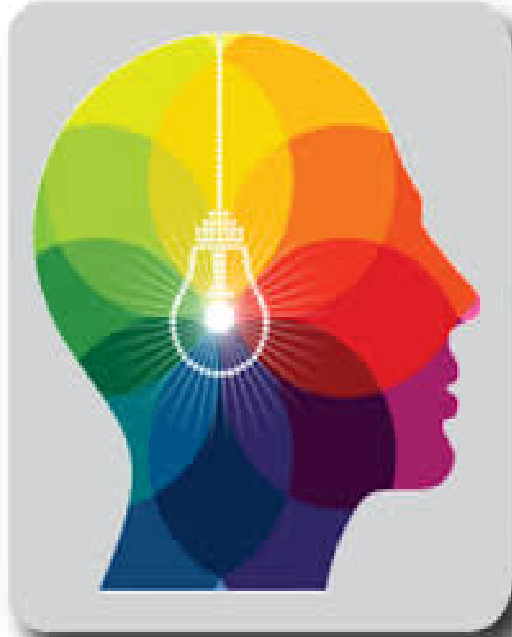
What Now

1. Why do you think trust is conditional?
2. How did King David’s steadfast trust in the Lord allow him to persevere in challenges?

3. Do you believe that we have a God who is firm and loyal?

9th Commandment

The Suffering of Jesus Christ



"Gaining spiritual life is conditional on suffering loss. We cannot measure our lives in terms of "gain"; they must be measured in terms of "loss." Our real capacity lies not in how much we retain but in how much has been poured out. The power of love is attested by love's sacrifice. If our hearts are not separated from the love of the world, our soul life has yet to go through the cross."

Watchman Nee

Power Truth

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them;
for they know not what they do. And
they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Luke 23:34 KJV

Why Did Jesus Have to Suffer and Die?

Two primary qualities of God help us understand why Jesus Christ had to suffer and die in order to redeem mankind. First, God is righteous. Thus His justice demands that a penalty for sin be paid. As a writer once wrote, “God cannot ignore the fact of man’s hideous transgression. That transgression must be punished, and if man is restored to God, it must be upon grounds that will not pauperize man nor rob him of his self respect; but it must be upon legal grounds that will perfectly justify man in the sight of God.”

Jesus suffered so that those who believe in him
can one day have peace and joy forever, and a
taste of it even in this life.

Second, God is love. Thus, in His grace and mercy, He decreed that the penalty for sin could be paid by a substitute, providing that the substitute be sinless. God wanted, and mankind needed, a man who met the demands, first, the heart of Deity for a perfect human who would do His will; second, He met the demands of fallen man in that as a man He met the Devil and conquered him in honorable open combat. Because of the magnitude of Adam’s sin and its reverberating ramifications, only the death penalty would satisfy true justice. Hebrews says that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin.”

In the Old Testament, it was the death of unblemished “stand-in” lambs and other animals that God allowed to temporarily cover His people’s sins. These sacrifices were foreshadows, or types, of the coming Redeemer, Jesus Christ. He is the true “Lamb of God” whose blood was shed to take

away the sin of the world. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God.

Jesus Christ willingly endured the pain of the cross and death for all men.

As we have stated, Jesus Christ was the only man who was “without spot or blemish”, both genetically and behaviorally. As such, only he could qualify to offer his life as the payment for the sin and sins of mankind. The suffering and death of Jesus Christ was part of God’s plan to make available salvation to all mankind.¹ By his freedom of will he gave up his life for us. He willingly endured the pain of the cross and death for all men. We must understand, however, that it was not God who was responsible for Jesus’ death.

God’s word plainly says that it is the Devil who was responsible for killing Jesus Christ. Once the dominion of the world was given to Satan, and mankind was ruined by sin, God has had to ask people to step into harm’s way so that His redemptive purposes could be accomplished. Jesus Christ is the chief example of this, and there are many others. Jesus suffered so that those who believe on him can one day have peace and joy forever, and a taste of it even in this life. In Jesus, we see the epitome of the redemptive value of suffering.

What Now

1. In your opinion, what is prophecy?
2. What will happen if God pours Himself to an individual?
3. Are you ready to embrace God in your life? Explain.

10th Commandment

Be Happy to Face Persecution



" They gave our Master a crown of thorns. Why do we hope for a crown of roses?"

Martin Luther

Power Truth

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5 KJV

Submit to Grow

An important thing to remember is that you have to commit yourself to confronting the world, or you will never face persecution. James says, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into various trials.” Trials give us the opportunity to grow.

Sometimes when Satan persecutes someone, that person will end up in a circumstance that opens up new avenues for the work of God.

If we live godly lives, we will be persecuted. If we suffer persecution, we should be happy because it will make us grow and reach others for Christ. But you have to be willing to live a godly life, rather than hiding and protecting yourself. Although the thought of receiving persecution may create great anxiety, we should look forward to it with great joy for righteousness' sake.¹

The Bible tells us that Peter and John were taken into custody by their arresters. They did not strike back at their arresters; they did not start a brawl. It came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and *Annas*, the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set (Peter, John, and the healed Man) in their midst, they asked, “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?”

Implied in those verses is the fact that Peter and John did not offer any resistance. They didn't develop a martyr's complex and say, “We will die for what we did.” They simply trusted in God. Peter and John saw that God was presenting them with a great opportunity through their persecution. They had been obedient to proclaim Christ. Since their proclamation brought about their arrest, they assumed they were where God wanted them.

You have to commit yourself to confronting the world, or you will never face persecution.

If in the course of obeying the Lord you end up in difficult circumstances, you can assume that God ordained that to happen. He wants to do something through you in those circumstances. However, if you are disobedient to the Lord and end up in a bad situation, that's a different issue. If you are persecuted as a result of confronting the world and proclaiming Christ, praise God and wait to see what He will do. Be submissive; don't fight back.

Sometimes when Satan persecutes someone, that person will end up in a circumstance that opens up new avenues for the work of God. There is no other way that Peter and John would have been allowed to preach to the *Sanhedrin*. They submitted to persecution, and God was able to put them where He wanted them. That's why submission is so important—you want to stay within God's master plan. God allowed Peter and John to carry their testimony to the Sanhedrin itself. If you are obedient to God and get persecuted for righteousness' sake, then accept the persecution, because God has designed to accomplish something through it. If we resist persecution, we can thwart God's plan. God has a way of using Satan's opposition for His glory.

What Now

1. Why do you think submitting to persecution is good?
2. Do you have a stable commitment with God? Explain.
3. Why should you be happy if you will be persecuted because of Christ?

More Resources

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Scriptural References

1st Commandment

¹ Mark 23:9

2nd Commandment

¹ Psalm 22:4

3rd Commandment

¹ 1 Peter 2:36

4th Commandment

¹ Revelations 4:23

5th Commandment

¹ Romans 12:17

6th Commandment

¹ Galatians 3:13

7th Commandment

¹ 1 Corinthians 5:7

8th Commandment

¹ James 23:20

9th Commandment

¹ Hebrews 6:31

10th Commandment

¹ John 13:18