

## ENCOURAGING the DISCOURAGED

What is it that causes us to doubt, to be disappointed, to despair, to be depressed? Have you ever said, "Why is this happening to me? God, you are not fair. God, are you listening? Are you aware of my circumstances? God, do you *really* love me?"

There are many biblical examples of people dealing with the same questions.

Hannah	I Sam. 1	David	I Sam 21 and on
Elijah	I Kings 19	Job	Book of Job
Jeremiah	Lam. 2	Jesus	In the Garden of Gethsemane

### Does pain have a purpose?

#### 1. In Us and For Us. *Isa. 45:3; Phil 3:8-11*

God has treasures of himself in darkness so that we may know Him. Were it not for pain or suffering, things that you might never know are revealed.

*Phil. 3:10 That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.*

#### 2. God's Perspective. *Isa. 55:8,9*

God's ways are not our ways. As humans we'll never have the total capacity to understand life. Never confuse life with God. Life is not God. Someday life will be returned to perfection. Life is not fair. But God is fair. We don't live life in Easter Sunday. We live life on Easter Saturday.

Perfection and life and our bodily resurrection are not here yet. Good Friday and the resurrection of Jesus have happened. But Friday is here and Sunday is coming.

### **3. For Christ's Sake. *I Peter 4:12, 13***

Hey, his problem is not my problem. But for Christ's sake, take it on and share His suffering. And keep on rejoicing. Hey, I didn't want the divorce. But for Christ's sake, take it on and share His suffering. And keep on rejoicing. How will I ever get out of this economic hole? But for Christ's sake, take it on and share His suffering. And keep on rejoicing. My children have caused me suffering like you will never know. But for Christ's sake, take it on and share His suffering. And keep on rejoicing. His words hurt so bad. The pain was terrible. I've never suffered so much. I am so lonely it hurts. I just feel like giving up. I'm dying inside. There's no hope. But for Christ's sake, take it on and share His suffering. And keep on rejoicing.

### **4. For Other's Sake *II Cor. 1:3-7***

You can comfort because you were comforted.  
God, thanks for the blessing of affliction so that you can use me for those who are hurting. God, thank you for allowing me to suffer, for just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also is our comfort abundant in Jesus Christ.

God, could my suffering be used to help others? Could my affliction bring glory to your name? Lord, as I suffer, others are watching. Thank you for this opportunity to build their faith. Father, as I suffer, the angels are watching. Thanks for your strength and comfort and allowing me the privilege of causing the angels to rejoice.

**Embracing the gift of pain with hope. Embracing the gift of pain with learning to wait.**

*Isa. 35*

*Isa. 43: 18,19*

*Rom. 8:18-21*

Some helps in the midst of your pain: immerse yourself in the Psalms and Gospels. Maintain fellowship with believers. Share honestly with a close friend. Take some solitude time and give yourself a break.