

## Caring For The Suffering and The Afflicted

*Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

Some folks are battling cancer, diseases, physical ailments, etc. When people suffer they feel that their situation is unique, but God says it is common. Look on the Internet, you will find tons of information and support groups for everything that is out there.

How to help those who are suffering and afflicted.

### **I. God knows what you are going through.**

God watched His Son suffer for thirty-three years. Jesus didn't just suffer for nine hours on the cross. He suffered for thirty-three years.

a. During the days of Herod, he had heard from the wise men that a king was to be born. He felt threatened by this and sent out a decree that all the male children two years old and under would be killed. His soldiers would go from house to house murdering, sticking a sword through each child in front of his mother and his father, that was in the kingdom.

*Matt 2:16-18 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*

This is what Jesus had to live with all his life on earth. How would you like to have that hanging over your head?

Mary and Joseph feared for the life of their Son Jesus and ran away into Egypt to escape Herod's wrath. If you were one of those parents whose child had been killed, wouldn't you blame Jesus for its death? That is what Jesus had to live with!

b. He grew up in Nazareth, an extremely oppressed city, and a wicked town. It was said of Nazareth... *John 1:46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*

For thirty years he lived in a sinful city, under oppression. He left heaven to live here!

c. He was the eldest son in his home. In a Jewish family there is a lot of pressure on the eldest child.

d. He was called all his life the child of fornication by the educated. A shameful title back then. *John 8:41 Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication;*

e. When He was tempted in the wilderness by the devil, He was so weak after going forty days and forty nights without food, That God the Father had angels dispatched from heaven to come and minister to His body, it was so weak and so frail. Forty days face to face with the devil! That is suffering, and yet without sin!

f. His own brothers and sisters didn't believe Him until after the resurrection.

g. Somewhere along the way Jesus' earthly father Joseph had died, and Mary was left to His care. Even as He hung on the cross, he provided for his mother, that she would have a place to live and be taken care of.

h. Not to mention the precrucifixion and interrogation, the abuse, the imprisonment and the torture that he suffered being brought before the courts and mean men. Which ultimately led to His bodily agony on the cross of Calvary.

The Bible says... *Isa 53:3-8 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 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. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken*

*from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

- i. He was subject to his parents! The God of heaven made himself subject to sinful human beings.
- j. *Heb 2:9-10 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* (Notice the plurality of the word “sufferings.”)

I don't understand it, but Christ was perfect when He entered into this world and He left it even more perfect through the sufferings that He endured.

Jesus Christ the Son of God, suffered for us.

*Heb 5:7-9 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

Jesus had to learn obedience by the things that he suffered. How is it that a sovereign God needed to learn anything? I don't know. I just read it and believe it!

*Heb 2:17-18 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

I am glad for a Savior that I can talk to and reach out to, who can and will hear me, help me, who was made like you and me, who feels our pain and is a merciful and faithful high priest. I'm thankful for a God who can relate unto us.

He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.

Name whatever mankind has gone through and you will find out that Jesus has already been there.

1. You might say, “But I'm divorced!” In the Old Test. God divorced Israel.
2. You might say, “But I'm too old.” My God is called “The Ancient of Days” three times in the scriptures.
3. You might say, “My wife is unfaithful!” Realize this, that Jesus is married to the church. We are adulterers and adulteresses if we love this world.
4. You name it, God has suffered with it for not the nine hours on the cross or even the thirty-three years of His earthly ministry. But He has suffered for it for the past six thousand years since He has made mankind. And He still suffers to this day!

He hears the name of His own dear Son cursed every day.

Look at and read Heb. 2: 17-18 again. It says that he is able to succour them that are tempted. (Succour means “to help”) God knows what you are going through. And as a result the scriptures teach us... *1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

He is all man and He is all God.

Christ can identify with you!

## **II. It will come to pass:**

The most often repeated phrase recorded in the Word of God is this; “And it came to pass.”

Whether here or in eternity, it will come to pass. What a promise!

## **III. Everyone will go through a fiery trial sometime in his or her life:**

*1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

Job, in the scriptures was a perfect and upright individual, yet the fiery trials of life came his way. How many of you can attest to the fact that bad things happen to good people? None of us are exempt. We will all experience the trials of life.

In fact, as the scripture I just quoted said, that we ought not even to think it strange when it does come.

Do you know what the first reaction of individuals is when fiery trials come their way? They think completely contrary to what that verse says. They think that it is strange, that it would or could happen to them.

We say, "I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS!" When we should have said, "Well, I knew this was coming, and that eventually it would come to me." That is what we should be saying!

*1 Cor 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

#### **IV. Pray in your affliction:**

Often we think that the problems we are going through are unique. But they are not. The scriptures teach that they are common to man. It is common!

The Book of James teaches us that we should teach the afflicted to pray.

*James 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.*

The question is, Have you prayed to God about this?

Turn with me to PSALM 38. I want to give you an example of a man that was afflicted.

I don't pretend to know what this Psalm is all about, but it is written by David who has seemed to have contracted some kind of disease in his body due to his foolishness and his sin.

The good news is this. He knew to come to God in his affliction. There are too many people because of the foolishness in their past are suffering the consequences of their wrong choices and so they don't come to God. They just live with it!

Don't you know that we serve a merciful God? And that you might not have to just live with it? He is merciful! He is not like the human race who says, "Well they have made their bed, now they will just have to lay in it." "They sowed their wild oats and now it is time to reap." We can be very heartless in our clichés' at times.

This Psalm is in obedience to James 5:13. Let's read it.

David blew it! He may have had some kind of Venereal disease. But he cries out to God and is repentant for his sins, and prays to the Lord in his affliction.

No matter what your affliction, whether self-imposed or otherwise come to a merciful God and ask for His help and healing in your life. I believe God has some miracles and deliverance stored up ready to be made available for people just like that.

*Rom 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

I don't understand His mercy, but why not try it out? Why not start there, bring your affliction to Him instead of just living with it the rest of our lives?

To those who are dealing with sufferings and afflictions:

1. God knows what you are going through:  
Realize first that Jesus Christ suffered for thirty-three years on this earth.  
That God has suffered for some six thousand years of human history.
2. That it will all come to pass someday.
3. Everyone goes through trials. No one is exempt!
4. Pray in your affliction.