**Suffering for the Glory of God**

**Week 1: The Problem of Suffering and the Bible’s Answer**

 *The wisdom of God and a call to trust*

**Week 2: God’s Revealed Purposes for Suffering**

 *How God can use suffering for our good and His glory*

**Week 3: The Future of Suffering**

 *The importance of heaven and hell for a suffering Christian*

**Week 4: God’s Grief over Suffering**

 *The empathy of a suffering God*

**Week 5: Unbiblical Reactions to Suffering**

 *Temptations to find hope in what is passing away*

**Week 6: Fighting for faith, Part 1**

 *Struggling for faith in God’s sovereignty and goodness*

**Week 7: Fighting for faith, Part 2**

 *Helping others fight for faith in the local church*

**Week 8: Sharing Their Burdens**

 *A biblical perspective on the relief of physical suffering*

**Week 9: Suffering as Witness**

 *Making the most of your suffering for the glory of God*

**Week 10: Applying the Framework**

 *Suffering through illness*

 **Week 11: Suffering for the gospel**

 *Biblical wisdom for the persecuted*

**Week 12: The Secret of Contentment**

 *Finding joy in Christ in any and every situation*

**Week 13: Panel Discussion**

**Questions?** [Email addresses of teachers]

***Core Seminars—Suffering for God’s Glory***

**Class 12: The Secret of Contentment**

*Finding joy in Christ in any and every situation*

**Introduction**

1. **Contentment – *What it is…***

**Philippians 4:10-12** “10I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. 11Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.”

* 1. *What it is – “…that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God’s wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.”*
	2. *What it is not –*
		1. *It is not anti-ambition*
			1. *Paul had ambition*
			2. *But…Paul attacked selfish ambition*
		2. *It is not indifference to circumstances*

**Acts 16:37-39** “…They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens…Let them come themselves and take us out.”

**1 Corinthians 7:20-21** “Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called...But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.”

1. **Contentment – *How to find it…***
	1. *By experience*

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10** “7So, to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness…”

* 1. *By doing the work in front of you*

**Philippians 2:12-13** “12Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

* 1. *By listening to truth rather than emotions*

* 1. *By being truly satisfied in Christ*

**Philippians 4:12-13** “…I have learned the secret of being content…I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

**Philippians 3:8** “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ”

**John 7:37-38** “…If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”