**Conclusion**

* Discipling people who are hurting starts when times are good by building a solid foundation for difficult times that WILL come.
* Dealing with difficulty and crisis takes discernment, lots of prayer, gentleness and comfort, and a willingness to help.
* Praise God for the privilege we have to point others who are suffering to the goodness and mercy of God.

***Core Seminars—Discipling***

**Class 10: Discipling People who**

**Are Hurting**

# Introduction In studying a theology of suffering, we forced to ask a few questions:

* How do I understand suffering?
* How does my view of suffering shape my faith?
* Are any of my thoughts on suffering unbiblical?
* How does my views on suffering shape the way I care for others?

**What does the Bible say about suffering?**

* The Bible is realistic and honest about suffering in a fallen world (Gen 3:16-19; 2 Peter 3:8-22; 4:12-19).
* God is totally sovereign and totally good (Isa 40: Luke 18:19).
* At the same time, man is sinful and responsible for his actions (Phil 2:12-13).
* God uses everything for His good purposes. (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28).
* God builds good things into the lives of His children, even through difficult circumstances (Hebrews 12:5-11).
* How should we respond to suffering as Christians: Turn to God, not away from Him (Ps 42:5,11; 56:3).

# What are God’s Purposes in Suffering?

# Suffering gives us an opportunity to stand out as Christians in a world that does not honor God (1 Peter 4:16).

# Suffering teaches us to rely on God, not on ourselves (2 Corinthians 1:8-9).

# Suffering teaches us God’s decrees (Psalm 119:71).

# Suffering matures us into godly people the Lord is molding for himself (James 1:2-4).

# The Savior receives glory through our suffering (1 Peter 4:13).

# Suffering even allows us to share in the Son’s glory (Romans 8:17).

**How do we prepare our discipling friends for suffering?**

* Take some time to talk about suffering.
* Help them to deconstruct worldly assumptions about suffering (2 Cor 12: 9).
* Study God’s purposes for suffering as revealed in his Word.
* Study suffering using good Christian articles and books.
* Build the relationship(s) before suffering comes.
* Focus on faith (John 16:33).
* Help build a foundation on the goodness and sovereignty of God. (Luke 6:47-48).
* Teach them to meditate on the gospel (Ps 42-43).

**How can we help our discipling friends when times are difficult?**

* Accept your *covenant* responsibility to partake in their suffering (1 Cor 12:25-26).
* Be present when suffering comes (Job 2:13).
* Be an ambassador of comfort (2 Cor 1:3-4).
* Be willing to make sacrifices for others (Gal 6:10).
* Gently instruct in difficulty but mainly comfort in crisis.
* Reaffirm God’s character: Talk about God’s mercy and goodness (2 Sam 24:14; Ps 34:8).
* Don’t try to explain what you do not know. Explain what you do know: The gospel!
* Truth is always true and sin is always sin (Jer 10:10-11; Rom 6:23).
* Pray with them and/or for them (Eph 1:15-23).
* Think practically how to serve them, esp in the midst of a crisis (Gal 6:13).
* Don’t be scared to ask for outside help.