

Death, Dying and Human Suffering

Using Bible study aides as needed, answer the following questions:

1. What is Death?

What is its cause?

How does God view the death of the wicked?

How does God view the death of the righteous?

How should the Christian view death?

2. What is grief?

1 Thessalonians 4:13 says that the Christian does not have to grieve as the world does. How does the world grieve?

How should the Christian grieve?

3. Why do sinful people suffer?

Why do the “innocent” suffer?

Why do Christians suffer?

Take the true/false test on suffering. (attached)

Read through the Case Studies (attached) and put together a counseling plan for one or two of them

TRUE/FALSE TEST ON THE THEOLOGY OF SUFFERING

Think through the issue of human suffering by taking this test.

- T F 1. A good bedside salutation is, "*How are you?*"
- T F 2. Another good opener is "*We've come to cheer you - get your mind off your troubles.*"
- T F 3. Try to show the patient that everyone has troubles and some are worse than theirs.
- T F 4. The patient should be encouraged to report any complaint that he can think of.
- T F 5. Try to explain that suffering is the will of God and is not to be resisted.
- T F 6. Advise the patient about his problems so he will have all the right answers.
- T F 7. Most of the visitor's time should be spent in earnest, friendly listening.
- T F 8. The visitor should try to hear what the patient feels.
- T F 9. All questions should be answered with Scripture.
- T F 10. When visiting a non-Christian, carry a big Bible so that they will know you are one.
- T F 11. Never leave a patient until after you read Scripture and pray with them.
- T F 12. Good Christians should not be sick because Christ died for our sickness.
- T F 13. It should be emphasized to the patient that in every grief "*thou art with me.*"
- T F 14. Suggest to the patient that God is probably chastening him for some good reason.
- T F 15. The Biblical statement, "*We are saved by hope*" refers to the salvation from sin.
- T F 16. All suffering should be opposed by every means.
- T F 17. Suffering always mellows and matures people.
- T F 18. Mrs. Job's "*curse God and die*" is irrational.
- T F 19. Job settled on one decision - understand Him or not - he would trust God.
- T F 20. Ultimate glory beyond all human imagination infinitely justifies the vast mystery of human suffering.
- T F 21. Christians do not suffer in the flesh as do the unsaved.
- T F 22. Christians should bear their own burdens but dedicate all good things to God.
- T F 23. "*Fully turning one's eyes upon Jesus*" dissolves all vexing questions.
- T F 24. The statement, "*Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die*" is comforting.
- T F 25. Sympathy and not theology is best for those who minister to the sick.
- T F 26. Sufferers must be stoical because all suffering is God's will.
- T F 27. God has a plan, so wonderful beyond all human understanding, as to make any suffering seem like a very short, unpleasant dream.
- T F 28. The key words in suffering are "*Thou art with me*" and "*Through ALL grief (even 'the valley of the shadow of death').*"

- T F 29. The "hope" that saves is not wishful thinking but rather our immutably promised prospect.
- T F 30. To glory in tribulation is unreasonable for anyone.
- T F 31. Jesus Christ is the answer in regard to the innocent suffering.
- T F 32. Those who have faith and pray will not be sick.
- T F 33. Accidents do not happen to obedient Christians.
- T F 34. Mental breakdown is a disgrace to a good Christian.
- T F 35. Mental breakdown proves aberration from faith and obedience.
- T F 36. Nothing that can hurt God's child is incapable of being used for his good.
- T F 37. The visitor should explain that any tragedy is good for the patient.
- T F 38. *"I will fear no evil"* is really just brave poetry
- T F 39. Be sure to guide the conversation so that you can advise the patient.
- T F 40. Patients often waste the time of the visitor with their talk.
- T F 41. If a patient is wrong in his beliefs, he should be put straight.
- T F 42. The love and grace of God's eternal purposes should be dwelt on.
- T F 43. Bitter, hostile people do not need to be visited.
- T F 44. The agnostic & the abusive should be put in their place.
- T F 45. It is helpful to relate to the patient all the times you were sick.
- T F 47. It helps a patient to know that you *"know just how he feels."*
- T F 48. Tell the patient how much worse it could have been in order to keep him from feeling sorry for himself, and to make him realize just how fortunate he really is.

Counseling Situations Death, Dying & Physical Suffering

Read through all the situations below. Pick one or two and write out how you would respond to the situation and counsel those involved. Include in your answer:

- *What test of their faith may be involved;
- *Relevant Bible verses that would encourage them in their faith and a righteous response;
- *The questions you might ask to uncover what might be going on in their Emotional; Volitional; Rational and Personal circles;
- *Advise you would give them on how to handle the situation they are facing.

Remember the basic counseling flow chart & basic stages of counseling handed out previously

- 1) Your friends have been anxiously awaiting the birth of their first child. You receive a phone call from the new father telling you that the baby has been born with a serious physical handicap. His wife is in a semi-hysterical states. He wants you to come over. What will you tell him? How will you comfort her?
- 2) The doctor of a friend of yours who is a 39 year old man calls to tell that the man has terminal cancer and has less than a year to live. The doctor has just told him this, and he asked the doctor to call you and ask you to come to the hospital. He is married and has three children ranging from 4-13 years old. What will you say to him. What will you say to his wife and children?
- 3) You have just been told that the 7-year old son of your friends has just been hit by a car and killed. What will you say to them?
- 4) The last thing you remember is turning onto Myers Corners Road to go to church. You are now aware that you are in a hospital room with your family close by. You feel pretty banged up and bruised. Your right arm is immobilized in a sling. You become aware that you do not feel any pain in your legs, then realize that you cannot move them. The Doctor comes in and confirms that your spine was broken and you are paralyzed from the waist down. How would respond? How would you want to be comforted? How would you want to respond? What spiritual growth would need to occur in your life in order to respond the way that you would hope?
- 5) It is Sunday afternoon and there is a knock at your door. When you open it there is a policeman there who informs you that the person you love most in this world (spouse, child, parent, sibling, best friend) was just found stabbed to death. How would respond? How would you want to be comforted? How would you want to respond? What spiritual growth would need to occur in your life in order to respond the way that you would hope?