

7. How does the truth and reality of the cross change your perspective on God's goodness and love towards us? Do you truly believe that?

8. What does the cross teach you regarding what God can do in your suffering?

9. How have you seen God take the absolute worst and create absolute beauty out of it? Do you believe Him for that in your present suffering?

10. What is God teaching you today through all this? How do you need to respond? What change needs to be made?

## Rejoice In Suffering...Seriously?

Romans 5:1-5

I. The only way you can “*rejoice in sufferings*” is to have the

**BIBLICAL LIFE VIEW.**

*(2 Corinthians 4:17-18; Colossians 3:1-5; I Peter 2:11; Hebrews 12:2; Matthew 6:33; Romans 8:28-29)*

II. Shattered dreams can be our truest blessing...they help us discover our **TRUE HOPE** and God's **ORIGINAL DREAM** for us!

*(Romans 5:3-4; I Peter 1:6-7; 2 Corinthians 12:8-10)*

III. How to rejoice in suffering:

A. Embrace the **BIBLICAL LIFE VIEW.**

B. **EXPECT** difficulty to come.

*(John 16:33; Philippians 1:29; I Peter 4:12-13)*

C. Look to and anchor your hope **IN THE CROSS.**

*(Hebrews 6:19-20)*

1. At the cross, we settle once and for all, that **GOD IS GOOD,** and that He loves us.

2. At the cross, we see that God can turn the

**ABSOLUTE WORSE** into **ABSOLUTE BEAUTY.**

*(Romans 5:5)*

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

For the week of June 20, 2010

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. Before this message, how would you feel if someone heard of your suffering and told you to just simply rejoice, that God will work it all out for good? Would that truth be encouraging to you, or not? Why?

2. What would the difference be if you saw your suffering through a *worldly* life view versus a *biblical* life view? Which one do you tend to be more like? How might your view need to change?

3. Spend some time reflecting on the following verses. What do they teach you regarding how to view life and suffering? *2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 12:1-3; Matthew 6:33 (and surrounding verses); 1 Peter 1:6-7; 2 Corinthians 12:8-10; James 1:2-4; John 16:33; Philipians 1:29; 1 Peter 4:12-13; Hebrews 6:18-19.*

4. Read Dr. Larry Crabb's quote from "Shattered Dreams" again.

**Shattered Dreams: God's Unexpected Pathway to Joy** by Dr. Larry Crabb  
"The problem sincere Christians have with God often comes down to a wrong understanding of what life is meant to provide. We naturally and wrongly assume we're here to experience something God has never promised. More than perhaps ever before in history, we assume we are here for one fundamental reason: to have a good time—if not good circumstances, then at least good feelings. We long to feel alive, to sense passion and romance and freedom. We want the good time of enjoying godly kids, of making a difference in people's lives, of involvement with close friends, of experiencing God's peace. So we invent "biblical" strategies for seeing to it that our dreams come true. We call them models of godly parenting and disciplines of spiritual living and principles of financial stewardship—all designed to give us a legitimately good time...We long to experience a compelling pleasure that eliminates all pain...sometimes all that separates Christians from non-Christians is our understanding of how to produce those feelings. The pursuit of soul-pleasure remains primary. It continues to be the aim behind our choices rather than an occasional and welcome by-product of a higher aim: the aim of glorifying God as the object of our deepest, most passionate desire. We continue to want something or someone more than God. We don't think that's our biggest problem, but it is."

How does that speak to you? Have you invented any "biblical strategies" to achieve comfort and eliminate pain? Is there something (s) in life that you love or want more than God?

5. How has Romans 5:3-5 been evident in your life? Think about each word Paul uses in his "chain"...How has your perseverance grown? In what ways has your character developed through suffering? Where has this ultimately brought you in terms of your relationship with God? Can you say that you have true hope? Why or why not?

6. Have you allowed bitterness to set in because of your suffering? Have you ever broken fellowship with God because of it?