

# Damsel in Distress

## #9 Suffering

### I. Principle #1: Suffering is universal!

- A. Sometimes, "suffering" takes the form of verbal persecutions - Matt. 5:11-12
- B. Sometimes the "persecution" is emotional in nature – 2 Cor. 4:9  
    "Perplexed:" To have no way out, to be at a loss
- C. Sometimes, we suffer as a consequence of our own actions – 1 Peter. 2:20
- D. Sometimes, we are afflicted so our spiritual walk can be "adjusted" – Psalm 119:67
- E. Sometimes, we are afflicted to humble us and keep our perspectives straight – 2 Cor. 12:7-10
- F. And sometimes it occurs as part of God's ultimate plan – often unknown to us!

### II. Principle #2: Suffering is inevitable!

- A. Some spiritual misconceptions:
  - 1. ...Because you are a Christian – all problems are solved
  - 2. ...All problems are specifically covered in Scripture
  - 3. ...All problems are a sign of being unspiritual
  - 4. ...Being exposed to sound Bible teaching automatically erases your problems
- B. Pain and blessings run on parallel tracks in the life of the believer  
    Look at an incident in the life of Jacob in Gen. 32:24. Some things to note about this encounter:
  - 1. This was a planned encounter. God made sure he was alone.
  - 2. The angel asked Jacob his name. He was not gathering information, but seeking a confession. The angel was dealing with his character ("Jacob" means "supplanter" or "conniver"). After the wrestling, his name will be changed to "Israel," meaning "Prince of God."
  - 3. Note that his struggle is not with Satan or a devil. Many of your toughest battles are with God and not the devil.

4. Two specific things occur as a result of that wrestling...
  - a. **There is a blessing**...vs. 26-30. Literally, this is a transfer of power. Jacob wanted (needed) the power of an angel. And he was given it!
  - b. **There was pain**...vs. 25 and 31. God "popped" him on the hip and he limped for the rest of his life, permanently marked."
5. Jacob came away from that momentous occasion with what he wanted and what he didn't want. Good and bad run on parallel tracks and arrived at the same time in his life.
6. He named the place "Peniel." Not marked for all time as the place of struggle and pain, but marked as the place **where he saw God face to face**.
- C. Suffering is an integral part of the life of a believer. It is not optional. (2 Tim. 3:12, Rom. 8:17)
- D. Suffering is inevitable (James 1:2, Phil. 1:29, 1 Peter 4:12-17)

### **III. So what? There is a purpose behind our suffering**

- A. Consider the blind man in John 9
 

"That the works of God might be displayed in Him"
- B. Consider Lazarus' death in John 11
 

"For the glory of God...that the Son of God may be glorified by it"
- C. Consider Jesus' comment regarding His pending death in John 12:27
 

"Now my soul has become troubled and what shall I say, Father save me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father glorify thy name."
- D. Consider 2 Cor. 1:3-12 and the focus on comfort:
  1. The source: God is the God of comfort (vs. 3-5)
  2. The sharing: We are to share in the sufferings of others (vs. 6-12)
  3. The solution: Do not trust in yourself, trust in the Lord (vs. 9-10)