

All Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.
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**WHY
CHRISTIANS
SUFFER**
Mini-book
Part 3

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Introduction

Most Christians have not been taught the reason that Christians suffer in so many areas of their lives. Wherever we go we find Christians suffering from all sorts of conditions. Some Christians live in poverty. Some Christians have infirmities in their bodies. Some have mental problems. Some Christians suffer from sickness and disease. Why is it that way among Christians?

In Hosea 4:6 it says, **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge...”** How do Christians reject knowledge? They do not spend time in the Word of God. They do not take the time to study the Word of God, to find out what God’s Word says concerning how they should live their lives here on earth.

Some Christians only open their Bibles when they go to Church on Sunday mornings. The rest of the week they do not get into the Word of God themselves. They seem to ignore the Word of God, when it is the Word of God that will cause them to prosper and be in good health.

For the most part, most Christians do not know what the Word of God says concerning Christians. They still live like the world. They still suffer the same as those of this world who are not born again.

Many born again Christians do not know the difference between people who are truly born again and people who are not truly born again. When a Christian is truly born again they are “born again of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.” In John 3:6 it says, **“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”** In 1 Peter 1:23, it says, **“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”** Once a Christian is born again of the Word of God, they should continue to grow and mature into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.

Most Christians do not know what it means when it tells us in Genesis 1:26,27, that **“God created mankind in His own image and likeness.”** It is so simple, very few Christians understand what it means to be in the image and likeness of God.

The image of God is the way you see God. How do you see God? God is Spirit, and with our natural eyes we cannot see spirits. But, we can perceive and understand the image of God by knowing what God is? In 1 John 4:8 it says, **“God is love (agape).”**

The Greek word “agape” speaks of the love of God, which is a much higher form of love than the Greek word “phileo” which is the highest form of human love. Only God and born again Christians have “agape” love. Those who are not born again do not have “agape” love.

No one can know or understand the love “agape” of God unless they are truly born again. Christians receive the “agape” love of God when they become born again of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. When a person is truly born again, they receive **“the fruit of the Spirit”** which are listed in Galatians 5:22,23. It says, **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”**

Notice that the first one listed of all of the fruit of the Spirit is love “agape.” The fruit of the Spirit, are the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which are given to Christians when they are truly born again into the Body of Christ.

The image of God is love “agape.” Thereby, Christians are born again “in the image of God,” with the love “agape” of God within them, “for God is love” (agape). When we truly know God, we will know God by His love.

In John 3:16 it says, **“For God so loved (agapao) the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (zoe).”** (The

Greek word “agapao” is a verb form of the noun “agape.” The Greek word “zoe” is the spiritual life of God, in born again Christians. Those who are not born again do not have “zoe” life. Those who are not born again have “psuche” which is soul life. By the breath of the LORD God, man became a living soul (psuche, in the Greek) (Gen. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:45).

In John 3:16, we see the fullness of the love of God, in that the love of God is willing to give Himself for others, including giving His own life of the flesh on the Cross, that others could be free of all the works of the enemy. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for the whole world, that through Him, the world might be saved from eternal death in hell. No human being outside of Jesus, loved the world so much that He was willing to come in the flesh of man and die for the whole world. That is true “agape” love. God’s love “agape” prefers others before Himself. That is true “agape” love.

Therefore, the image of God is love “agape.” This is the image that true born again Christians should also walk in. When Christians are willing to lay their lives down for God and for their neighbors you will see the image of God in them also.

Mankind was also created in the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26,27). What is the likeness of God? The likeness of God is how God does things. God lives by faith, and that is the likeness of God. God does everything by faith in His Word. God speaks His Word and it comes to pass. That is the likeness of God that Christians should walk in.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden they no longer walked in the image and likeness of God. Jesus came into this world to defeat sin and death, and restore mankind to the image and likeness of God. By the love of God in Christ Jesus, He defeated sin and death, and became the head of the Body of Christ, which is a new creation of mankind in the Spirit, not in the flesh as Adam was.

In 1 Corinthians 15:49 it says, “**And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.**” Christians must mature into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word of God, which is the “Seed” of the our new birth (1 Peter 1:23).

A seed must reproduce after its own image and likeness. Jesus Christ is God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. God is love (1 John 4:8). The image of Jesus Christ is love. Therefore, because that God is love, Christians must also walk in love. Jesus said in Matthew 22:37-40, “**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind...This is the first and great commandment...And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself...On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**”

The likeness of Jesus Christ is that Jesus lived by faith in God. Therefore, Christians must mature into the likeness of Jesus and “live by faith in God.” In Hebrews 10:38 it says, “**Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.**”

The Seed of the new birth is the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23). Jesus is the Word of God which came in the flesh of man (John 1:1,2,14). Jesus is the Head of the Body of Christ (Col. 1:18). All who are in Christ must mature and walk in love and live by faith.

Living by the Word of God

How do Christians live by the Word of God? The way to live by the Word of God is to be continually speaking and hearing the Word of God daily. It is the hearing of the Word of God and speaking the Word of God that brings eternal life, and continues to sustain our eternal life here on earth. We are born again of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we need the Word of God daily to maintain our daily lives.

God teaches us by His Spirit and His Word. When we understand the importance of the Word of God, we will understand how we must continue to live in the Spirit.

In Joshua 1:8, the LORD said to Joshua, **“This book of the law shall not depart out (stop coming out) of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate (murmur, speak softly) therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”**

This is what Christians should be doing day and night. They should be speaking the Word of God out of their mouth daily. Christians should be seeking to do the will of God in their lives. In Luke 18:1, it says, **“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”**

Prayer should be an important part of the life of a Christian. Not just praying, God do this for me or God do that me. That is a selfish prayer. Christians should have a greater concern for others than for themselves. Christians should be willing to set aside their own desires of the flesh, so that they can do the will of God in their lives. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, **“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”**

Christians should be looking to heaven and sowing to the Spirit rather than to the flesh. In Galatians 6:17,18, it says, **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap...For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”** The Epistle to the Galatians is not written to those who are not born again Christians. It is not written to those who do not know God. It is written to Christians, to know the will of God for their lives.

The world sows to the flesh, because they do not understand the importance of doing the will of God. Those of the world will reap corruption, which includes eternity in hell. The only thing those of the world are interested in is their own will of the flesh. They are not born again, therefore, they do not know the LORD Jesus Christ as their LORD.

What about Christians today, do they understand the importance of doing the will of God the Father? Do Christians today understand the importance of doing the will of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the Body of Christ? In Luke 6:46, Jesus said, **“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”** The word “Lord” means, “supreme in authority.” Is Jesus supreme in authority in the lives of Christians? Or, are Christians still desiring to do their own will of the flesh?

If Christians sow to the flesh, they will reap corruption (Gal. 6:7,8). How many Christians today are desiring the best the world has to offer? How many Christians today are seeking “beautiful mansions, vacation homes, expensive automobiles, expensive clothing, and all the luxuries, like kings and queens?”

How are they obtaining these desires of their flesh? Prosperity to the LORD is not the same as what the world calls prosperity. Prosperity to the LORD is having all sufficiency of that which is needed for daily living. It is not necessary to have “T bone steaks” for dinner in an expensive

restaurant everyday.” Hamburger has the same food value as “T bone steaks.”

Some Christians are making a mockery out of the Gospel, and causing many others to turn away from the LORD and Churches by their desires of the flesh. They say they are called to the ministry of the LORD, but they use the office to satisfy their desires for the things of this world. This should not be found among Christians, especially among those who are called to the five-fold ministry. In 1 Timothy 6:10 it warns us, **“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”**

When Christians live according to the teachings of Jesus, they will not do things that cause others to become offended. We must not become like the world. We are not of this world, therefore the things of this world should not be the desires of our heart. In 1 John 2:15-17 it says, **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him...For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world...And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”**

If the love of God is not in us, what will happen to us? How can a Christian mature and walk in love, if the love of God is no longer in them? Can a Christian bear the image of Christ without the love of God abiding in them? The image of Christ is that we walk in love toward God and our neighbor.

The Desires of the Heart

God looks at the desires of the heart, not the desires of the mind. We must make sure our heart is to do the will of God, not the will of the flesh.

What many Christians are not taught in the Churches today, is that the desires of our heart determine how that God will answer our prayers. In Luke 6:45, Jesus said, **“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.”**

I believe the reason so many Christians are suffering today, is because the desires of their heart is not right before God. For the most part, the Churches today are not teaching Christians what the Bible says. They are taking Scripture verses out of the Bible and making them say what they want them to say.

When we read the Bible, we should be looking at what God desires, not what we desire. We should be looking for the reason for this creation, and the reason why God created man in His own image and likeness in the beginning. This is God’s creation, not man’s creation. God had a plan and a purpose for creating man in His own image and likeness in the beginning.

Adam and Eve disobeyed the LORD God, and ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which the LORD God commanded mankind to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 1:16,17). Adam was created in the image and likeness of God. But, Adam’s children were not born in the image and likeness of God. Everyone (except Jesus) were born in the image and likeness of Adam after he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 5:1-3).

Therefore, everyone (except Jesus) had sin and death resident within them when they were born into this world (Rom. 5:12). When a person “is born again” God gives them “a new heart and a new spirit” (Ezek. 11:19, 36:25). Once a person is born again, they have the image and likeness of God within them (in their spirit).

God has given us the ability to walk in the image and likeness of God in Christ Jesus. God knows that the desires of the mind, which is in our soul, are the will of the flesh. These have a lot to do with the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2). Satan still tries to control what Christians do, according to the thoughts he puts in the minds of Christians.

This is why Christians need to keep the Word of God coming out of their mouth day and night, that they **“...observe to do according to all that is written therein...”** (Joshua 1:8). The desires of our heart are established by what we do about the renewing of our mind on the Word of God.

If Christians do not renew their minds upon the written Word of God, what will be in their heart when God looks at their heart? Will it be to do the will of God the Father? Or, will it still be to do the will of the flesh?

This is God’s creation. We are not in this world to do our own will of the flesh. We have been chosen out of this world and translated into the body of Christ to do the will of God the Father. This creation will not be here forever. The end will come when this world and everything upon it will pass away (Isa, 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:11-14, Rev. 21:1).

Not only will the world pass away, but even ourselves, we will not be on this earth forever. Our days are numbered, and only God knows when we will leave this earth. Why is our will of flesh more important to us than the will of God? Why are Christians seeking the will of flesh over the will of God?

Christians suffer mostly because they are not doing the will of God. They are seeking their own will of the flesh. Therefore, Satan has control in many of the thoughts and intents of their minds, and their hearts.

When the intentions of Christian's hearts are no longer to do the will of God, what do you think God is going to do? Why should God deliver and protect us from the works of the enemy, when all that is in our heart is to do our own will of the flesh?

All throughout the Bible it talks about the desires of the heart. It talks about the works of the enemy. It talks about God's desire for those who are His own Children, born of the Spirit and of the Word of God.

God does not force anyone to do anything. God has a plan for everyone of His Children who are truly born again. God's plan and purpose is that they do the will of God in their lives, and then spend eternity with God forever and ever. That is God's plan and purpose for Christians.

Therefore, God looks at the hearts of Christians to know what their intentions are? Only God can search the intentions of the hearts of a Christian. Yet, we can know what the will of God is, and what we should do about the will of God for our lives here on earth.

When our heart is to do the will of God, God will answer our prayers. God will deliver and protect those whose heart is right before God.

How God Answers Prayers?

First, God makes known He will and plans for our lives in the written Word of God. Then God looks at our hearts to know what is the desires of our heart.

God knows what the Devil is doing all the time. God knows every thought that comes into our minds. God knows if the thoughts we receive are from the Devil or from the Holy Spirit.

God knows the intentions of our hearts at all times. God sent Jesus Christ into this world to pay the price for our redemption. That is to pay the price for us, that we could become children of God.

God knows that the enemy will always be trying to steal the Word of God out of our heart (Mark 4:14-19). God also knows that of our own ability, we are not able to do the perfect will of God. Therefore, God has done many things to help us in times of need.

Look at what it says in Hebrews 4:12-16). It says, **“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart...Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do...Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession...For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin...Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”**

We need to look closely at what Hebrews 4:12-16 is telling us. First of all, Hebrews 4:12 is telling us that the Word of God is alive, and it is powerful. That means that the Word of God is not a dead Word, but a living Word, that can establish our hearts to do the will of God.

Secondly, the Word of God knows the difference between the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The Word of God knows the difference between the soul and the spirit of man. The soul of man contains the mind, the intellect, the reasoning and knowledge. God knows what we know, and God knows what we do not know.

In Hebrews 4:13, it tells us, God knows everything, every thought, and there is nothing hidden from God. The Devil likes to get Christians to think they can do things without anyone else knowing what they are doing. The Devil likes to get Christians to believe that lying is ok, if they can benefit from it. But, God knows every thought and everything we do. There is nothing hidden from God.

Yet, God has established a way to help us when we error and do things that are not according to the divine plan of God for our lives. God has established a Priestly order, whereby the High Priest can make sacrifices and offerings for the sins of people. Thereby, God will accept the payment for our sins, and forgive us for not obeying His commandments and laws.

Jesus Christ is our High Priest and Mediator. In 1 Timothy 2:5, it says, **“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”** As our mediator and High Priest, Jesus makes intercession for us according to the will of God. In Hebrews 7:25 it says, **“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”** God is for us, not against us (Rom. 8:31,32). Even if we miss the mark and sin against His commandments.

Jesus is our High Priest, and He knows all the attempts the Devil makes to get us to sin

against God. He was here in this world, and faced the same Devil we face everyday. Jesus overcome the Devil, but He also experienced the same temptations as we do. Therefore, Jesus understands fully, the battle that goes on in our minds day and night. Therefore, after seeing the thoughts and intents of our hearts, Jesus will intercede for us, and take our case to the Father, that we can be forgiven and cleansed from all sins and unrighteousness. Once our sins and unrighteousness are cleansed, we are restored to a right standing before God.

Therefore, we can come boldly before the throne of grace and make our request known unto God. We have an High Priest, Jesus Christ, to present our case before the Father.

To be restored, the intentions of our heart must be right. If our hearts intentions are not according to the will of God, we may not get our prayers answered. That means, we must first “Repent, and confess our sins.” Repent, means “change from what we were doing that is not pleasing to God.” If we are not willing to “Repent, and make changes,” it is very likely that we will not get our prayers answered. Jesus said in Luke 24:47, **“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”**

If the intentions of our heart are not right before God, we need to make changes in the desires of our heart. We need to get the intentions of our heart in line with the will of God for our lives.

God loves us. God is for us. Therefore, God has given us a High Priest, Jesus Christ, to make the sacrifice, and offer up the offerings to please God for us.

Jesus already took all our sins and iniquities, sickness, and diseases upon Himself for us. Jesus already paid the price for our deliverance from all the works of the Devil. It was the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus that make it possible for Jesus to become our High Priest. As our High Priest, Jesus will be a faithful High Priest, doing all things according to the will of God the Father.

What God the Father is looking at, is not what Satan did that we found ourselves in situations not acceptable to God. God is not looking at the intentions of our mind, which change day and night by the thoughts that come to us. God is looking at the thoughts and intents of our heart.

Why Christian Suffer

The main reason Christians suffer is because they disobey God. All disobedience is sin, and sin brings sickness, disease, and death. Jesus never disobeyed God the Father, therefore you will never find anyplace in the Bible where Jesus had any sickness or disease. Sickness and disease are works of the Devil. In heaven where the Devil cannot go, there is no sickness or disease. There is no pain or sorrow. In Revelation 21:4, it says, **“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”**

Whatsoever is of the Devil will not be in heaven when we get there. But, we are not there yet. First, we must overcome the works of the Devil in our lives, then we can go to heaven when we leave this earth.

God has done all He can to give us His Word, that if we will do all that is written in the Scriptures concerning us, we can be free of the works of the Devil. If we obey the written Word, God will give us the ability to overcome the works of the Devil.

It is our disobedience to the Word of God that brings suffering, pain, sickness, and disease, and even death. God has already done all He can to deliver us from the works of the Devil. It is up to us, what will we do to obtain that which God has already done for us?

There are many Christians asking, why doesn't God heal me? Why do I have to suffer with sickness and disease? The answer is, where is our heart? What are the intentions of our heart? Many Christians want God to heal them so they can keep on doing what they were doing that brought sickness and diseases upon them. They do not want to change the desires of their heart, they only want to be healed so then can continue living and doing the will of the flesh and the mind.

When Christians repent of all that is not pleasing to God, God will restore them to health, and even give them more than they had before. Job had a problem. Job's attitude was not right before God. Job suffered greatly because of his attitude.

Many Christians do not understand the book of Job. They only know what others have taught concerning Job. Most of what is taught about Job is not correct. It took a long time for Job to come to the knowledge and understanding of the will of God. Then Job finally repented for his sins. In Job 42:10 it says, **“And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.”**

God is not a respecter of persons. God will do the same for Christians, if they will repent, and set their heart to do the will of God in their lives.

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