

How to Suffer Successfully

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.
- B. Paul's secret was that he had gone to heaven and come back again.
- C. He shared this in order to magnify God's grace.
- D. Paul was suffering physically and emotionally.
- E. Paul's experience teaches us how to deal with suffering.
- F. There are three possible responses to suffering.

II. Escape: suffering is an enemy.

- A. God has no obligation to remove suffering simply because one is obedient, but this is how many Jews thought. (Galatians 4)
- B. Many good people go through suffering because God can bless through suffering.
- C. Escape sometimes works, but it did not for Paul.

III. Endure: suffering is a master.

- A. Even if we do endure we spend a lot of time on just making it.
- B. Suffering can make a person self-centered. There must be something higher.

IV. Enlist: suffering is a servant.

- A. Paul took simple steps to turn suffering into a servant.
 - 1. Accept suffering from the hand of God.
 - 2. Give it back to God to work it out.
 - 3. Rest on God's Word.
 - 4. Draw upon God's grace.
 - 5. Use the suffering for God's glory.

Application questions:

1. When have you found yourself responding negatively during suffering? What did you learn?

2. Why is enduring suffering not the highest calling?

3. How would you counsel a Christian to respond to suffering in light of the message and your own experience? Explain.
