

BELOVED DISCIPLES LEARNING COURSES

SUFFERING AND HEALING

Quick Resources to Watch:

- Pastor Kevin's sermon, "The Sleepover"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJf2vVK5Vu0>
- Joe Thorn's sermon, "Sweetness in Suffering"
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/word-of-the-week/sweetness-in-suffering/>

Quick Resources to Read:

- "When Suffering Doesn't Make Sense," by Vaneetha Rendall Risner
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/when-suffering-doesnt-make-sense>
- "Your Suffering Is Not Meaningless," by John Piper
<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/your-suffering-is-not-meaningless>

Recommended In-Depth Readings:

- "Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers," by Dane Ortlund
<https://www.amazon.com/Gentle-Lowly-Christ-Sinners-Sufferers-ebook/dp/B086GWZ6CY/>
- "Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering," by Timothy Keller
<https://www.amazon.com/Walking-God-through-Pain-Suffering-ebook/dp/B00C1N951O/>



“Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers,” by Dane Ortlund

Reading Discussion Guide

Introduction

1. Reflection Question: What are your initial thoughts on the focus of this book, which emphasizes the heart of Christ for sinners and sufferers?
2. Reflection Question: What motivated you to read this book? What do you hope to learn or achieve by the end?

Chapter 1: His Very Heart

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund describe the heart of Christ, and why is it significant for us to understand this aspect of Jesus?
2. Reflection Question: How does knowing that Christ's heart is gentle and lowly impact your relationship with Him?

Chapter 2: His Heart in Action

1. Reflection Question: What examples does Ortlund provide to show Christ's heart in action during His earthly ministry?
2. Reflection Question: How can you emulate Christ's gentle and lowly heart in your interactions with others?

Chapter 3: The Happiness of Christ

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund explain the connection between Christ's happiness and His compassionate heart for sinners and sufferers?
2. Reflection Question: How does this perspective on Christ's happiness influence your understanding of His love for you?

Chapter 4: Able to Sympathize

1. Reflection Question: What does it mean that Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, according to Ortlund?
2. Reflection Question: How does this truth affect your approach to prayer and seeking comfort from Jesus?

Chapter 5: He Can Deal Gently

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund explain Jesus' ability to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward?



2. Reflection Question: In what areas of your life do you need to experience Christ's gentle dealings?

Chapter 6: I Will Never Cast Out

1. Reflection Question: What assurance does Ortlund draw from John 6:37 about Jesus never casting out those who come to Him?
2. Reflection Question: How does this promise affect your confidence in approaching Jesus with your struggles and sins?

Chapter 7: What Our Sins Evoke

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund describe Jesus' reaction to our sins, based on His compassionate heart?
2. Reflection Question: How can understanding Christ's compassionate response to sin change the way you view repentance and forgiveness?

Chapter 8: To the Uttermost

1. Reflection Question: What does Ortlund mean by saying Jesus saves to the uttermost, and how is this a source of hope?
2. Reflection Question: How can you apply the truth of Jesus' complete salvation to your daily life and struggles?

Chapter 9: An Advocate

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund describe Jesus' role as our advocate, and why is this significant?
2. Reflection Question: How can you find comfort and assurance in knowing that Jesus advocates for you?

Chapter 10: The Beauty of the Heart of Christ

1. Reflection Question: What aspects of Christ's heart does Ortlund highlight as beautiful, and how do they attract us to Him?
2. Reflection Question: How does the beauty of Christ's heart motivate you to draw closer to Him?

Chapter 11: His "Natural" Work and His "Strange" Work

1. Reflection Question: What distinction does Ortlund make between Jesus' natural work of mercy and His strange work of judgment?
2. Reflection Question: How does this understanding of Jesus' heart shape your view of His dealings with humanity?



Chapter 12: A Tender Friend

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund describe Jesus as a tender friend to sinners?
2. Reflection Question: How can you deepen your friendship with Jesus based on His tender heart?

Chapter 13: Why the Spirit?

1. Reflection Question: What role does the Holy Spirit play in making the heart of Christ real to us, according to Ortlund?
2. Reflection Question: How can you be more open to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Chapter 14: Father of Mercies

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund explain the relationship between God the Father and Jesus' merciful heart?
2. Reflection Question: How can understanding God as the Father of mercies affect your relationship with Him?

Chapter 15: His Ways Are Not Our Ways

1. Reflection Question: What does Ortlund mean by saying God's ways are not our ways, particularly in the context of His mercy and grace?
2. Reflection Question: How can you align your perspective and actions more closely with the merciful heart of God?

Chapter 16: The Lord, the Lord

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund explore the significance of God's self-revelation in Exodus 34:6-7 for understanding Jesus' heart?
2. Reflection Question: How does this passage influence your view of God's character and your response to Him?

Chapter 17: His Heart and Our Hearts

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund describe the impact of Jesus' heart on our own hearts?
2. Reflection Question: What steps can you take to allow Jesus' heart to transform your heart?

Chapter 18: Jesus Desires That We See Him

1. Reflection Question: What does Ortlund say about Jesus' desire for us to truly see and understand His heart?



2. Reflection Question: How can you cultivate a deeper vision and understanding of Jesus' heart in your spiritual life?

Chapter 19: Rich in Mercy

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund expand on the concept of God's richness in mercy, and what does this mean for us?
2. Reflection Question: How can you live out the reality of God's rich mercy in your interactions with others?

Chapter 20: Our Law-ish Hearts, His Lavish Heart

1. Reflection Question: How does Ortlund contrast our natural, law-ish hearts with Jesus' lavish, merciful heart?
2. Reflection Question: How can you move from a law-ish mindset to embracing the lavishness of Christ's heart?

Conclusion

1. Reflection Question: Reflect on your overall experience reading the book. What are the most impactful lessons you've learned about Jesus' heart for sinners and sufferers?
2. Reflection Question: How will you apply the insights and principles from this book to your daily life and faith practice?

Personal Reflection:

- Reflection Question: Write a personal reflection on how this book has influenced your understanding and experience of Christ's heart.
- Reflection Question: Identify one or two key takeaways that you will implement to deepen your relationship with Jesus.

Group Discussion:

1. Reflection Question: What was the most surprising or enlightening part of the book for you?
2. Reflection Question: How can we support each other in applying the principles discussed in this book to our daily lives and relationships?

Prayer and Commitment:

1. Reflection Question: Spend some time in prayer, asking for guidance and strength to apply the teachings of this book to your life.
2. Reflection Question: Consider making a commitment to regularly review and discuss the principles from this book with a trusted group of friends or within a small group.



“Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering,” by Timothy Keller

Reading Discussion Guide

Introduction

1. Reflection Question: What are your initial thoughts on the topic of pain and suffering as introduced by Timothy Keller?
2. Reflection Question: What motivated you to read this book? What do you hope to learn or achieve by the end?

Part 1: Understanding the Furnace

Chapter 1: The Cultures of Suffering

1. Reflection Question: How does Keller describe the different cultural perspectives on suffering?
2. Reflection Question: How has your cultural background influenced your understanding and response to suffering?

Chapter 2: The Victory of Christianity

1. Reflection Question: What does Keller say about Christianity's unique perspective on suffering?
2. Reflection Question: How does the Christian view of suffering provide hope and comfort?

Chapter 3: The Challenge to the Secular

1. Reflection Question: How does Keller challenge secular views on suffering?
2. Reflection Question: How do you see secular views of suffering impacting your own life or the lives of those around you?

Part 2: Facing the Furnace

Chapter 4: The Problem of Evil

1. Reflection Question: What are the main points Keller makes about the problem of evil?
2. Reflection Question: How do Keller's insights help you reconcile the existence of evil with a good and powerful God?

Chapter 5: The Varieties of Suffering

1. Reflection Question: How does Keller categorize different types of suffering?
2. Reflection Question: Which type of suffering have you experienced most, and how have you dealt with it?



Chapter 6: The Challenge to Faith

1. Reflection Question: What challenges to faith does suffering present, according to Keller?
2. Reflection Question: How can you strengthen your faith in the midst of suffering?

Chapter 7: Learning to Walk

1. Reflection Question: How does Keller describe the process of learning to walk with God through suffering?
2. Reflection Question: What practical steps can you take to walk more closely with God during difficult times?

Part 3: Walking with God

Chapter 8: Walking

1. Reflection Question: What does Keller mean by "walking with God" through suffering?
2. Reflection Question: How can you develop a deeper relationship with God during times of pain?

Chapter 9: Weeping

1. Reflection Question: How does Keller address the importance of weeping and lament in the Christian life?
2. Reflection Question: How can you incorporate honest lament into your spiritual practice?

Chapter 10: Trusting

1. Reflection Question: What insights does Keller provide about trusting God in the midst of suffering?
2. Reflection Question: How can you cultivate a deeper trust in God when facing difficult circumstances?

Chapter 11: Praying

1. Reflection Question: How does Keller describe the role of prayer in suffering?
2. Reflection Question: How can you enhance your prayer life during times of pain and hardship?

Chapter 12: Thinking, Thanking, Loving

1. Reflection Question: What does Keller say about the importance of thinking, thanking, and loving in response to suffering?
2. Reflection Question: How can you apply these principles to your own experience of suffering?



Conclusion

1. Reflection Question: Reflect on your overall experience reading the book. What are the most impactful lessons you've learned about walking with God through pain and suffering?
2. Reflection Question: How will you apply the insights and principles from this book to your daily life and faith practice?

Personal Reflection:

- Reflection Question: Write a personal reflection on how this book has influenced your understanding and response to suffering.
- Reflection Question: Identify one or two key takeaways that you will implement to enhance your spiritual growth and resilience.

Group Discussion:

1. Reflection Question: What was the most surprising or enlightening part of the book for you?
2. Reflection Question: How can we support each other in applying the principles discussed in this book to our experiences of pain and suffering?

Prayer and Commitment:

1. Reflection Question: Spend some time in prayer, asking for guidance and strength to apply the teachings of this book to your life.
2. Reflection Question: Consider making a commitment to regularly review and discuss the principles from this book with a trusted group of friends or within a small group.

