

Perspective: Suffering
2 Timothy 2:8-13 Discussion Questions

1. What are some examples of suffering you have experienced?
2. What are some examples of wrong, unhealthy perspectives on suffering you have experienced?

I. The Past Perspective

3. In verse 8, Paul says to remember Jesus Christ. We are reminded that Jesus was one of us and he suffered. What are some examples of ways Jesus suffered, especially throughout his life?
4. Why is it helpful when we suffer to remember that Jesus had these same types of experiences?
5. Also, Paul mentions Jesus is the offspring of David which reminds us of the big picture and reminds us God created the world with no suffering. Why might it be helpful to consider this when we are suffering?
6. We should also remember that Jesus is “risen from the dead” (v.8). Why would it be helpful to remember Jesus’ resurrection when we suffer?

II. The Present Perspective

7. In verse 9, Paul says God’s Word is not chained even though Paul is chained. He recognizes that God is in control even though it doesn’t seem like it. Why is it important to have this perspective?
8. Can you think of any other times in the Bible when it seems like God is not in control but we discover that He is?
9. Tim Keller says that if God is so great that he could prevent suffering, then he is probably so great that his ways are beyond us. Do you think this is a helpful perspective for someone who is suffering?
10. More than one person has said, “if there is a God who is good, he is not in control; if there is a God who is in control, he is not good.” How would you respond to someone who made this statement?
11. In v.10, Paul’s perspective is to live for others even when he is called to suffer. What is your natural tendency when you suffer? Is it to live for others?
12. Why/How does it glorify God when we experience suffering and yet endure and continue living for others? Have you seen someone do this well?

III. The Future Perspective

13. Explain the first two “if-then” statements in vv.11-12. How do these verses encourage us to have an eternal perspective?
14. Explain the last two statements in vv.12-13. Why might someone think these two statements are contradictory? How would you explain that they are not?
15. What is the relationship between suffering and denying Christ? Have you known anyone who was tempted to walk away from Christ because of suffering in his/her life?
16. Verse 13 says that God is faithful even when we are faithless. Have you experienced God’s faithfulness even when you have not been faithful?
17. What are some practical ways you maintain a big picture, future perspective when you suffer?