



Promise: God Will Not Bring Any Unnecessary Suffering into Your Life

MAIN IDEAS

- **God does not delight in the difficulties of His children; He brings only necessary suffering into our lives.**
- **God uses difficulties to teach His children to trust in Him.**

MEMORY VERSES

but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love;³³ for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.

—Lamentations 3:32-33

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Daniel 4
- 2) Lamentations 3:32-33
- 3) John 11:1-44
- 4) 2 Corinthians 1:8-9



LESSON SUMMARY

Lazarus was a close friend of Jesus, as were his two sisters, Mary and Martha. Yet when Lazarus was dying and the sisters sent for Jesus, the Good Physician delayed two days in coming—until Lazarus was dead. The scene that greeted Jesus was one of mourning, for by that time Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. *Why didn't Jesus come sooner? Why didn't He heal Lazarus?*

It was because Jesus had a better plan. The suffering He caused was necessary to the faith of those who would see Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead and believe as they beheld the glory of God. Surely a few days of grieving were worth an eternity of joy for those who believed.

God causes suffering—but only the suffering necessary to do what is best for His children. He loves us enough to weep with us as we go through trials...and enough to allow the trial to do its good work in us and for us. Far from oblivious or calloused to our pain, God understands the pain of His children. He is full of compassion and, in His abundance of steadfast love, He does not willingly afflict or grieve us.

Yet He knows that suffering is a necessary teacher for our stubborn and blind souls. This is why He humbled proud King Nebuchadnezzar after warning him to repent. Only after losing his faculties, behaving like a wild animal, did Nebuchadnezzar repent and acknowledge God's greatness. The resulting praise is a testimony to the value of suffering and the compassionate reason our loving God causes affliction. May we in our hardest moments affirm that God weeps with us and does not willingly afflict or grieve us. We have a compassionate Father whose steadfast love is abundant.

What difficulties do you struggle with? Can you thank God for them, recognizing that only necessary suffering comes to you? Thank God for His abundant love and compassion for you. Pray that your child will understand that God grieves over the suffering of man and yet loves man enough to cause necessary suffering for our good.

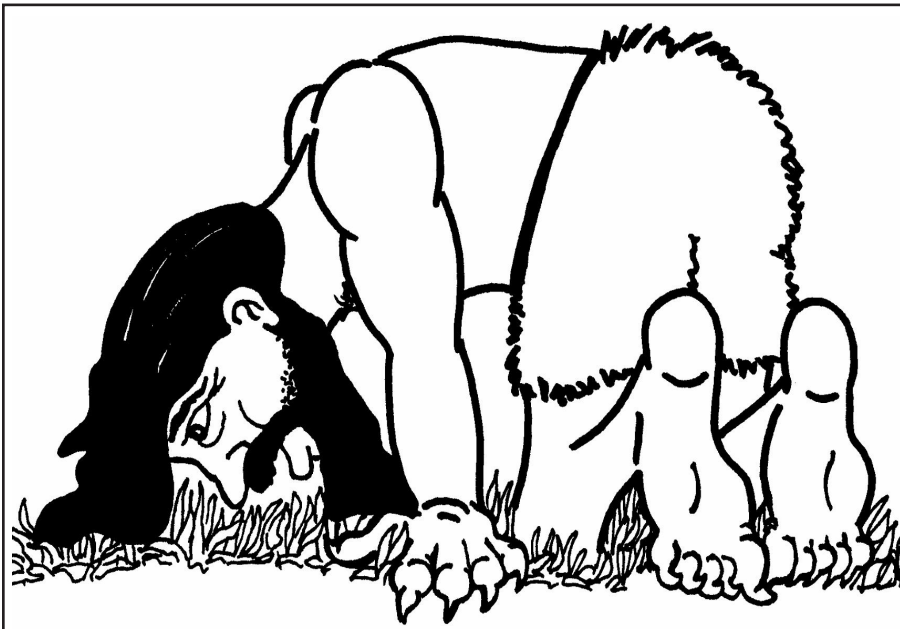
AS YOU WALK BY THE WAY

- Read Lamentations 3:32-33 with your child, making sure your child understands the vocabulary. *How can a person love someone and yet cause him pain? Can you think of a time when I caused you pain because I love you? What good result came from that pain, or what good reason did I have for causing the pain? Is God more loving than I am? Why is it a loving thing for God to cause suffering and pain? How much pain will God bring into your life?* [Help your child understand that God is a loving Father and He takes no pleasure in the sufferings of His children. He will only bring that which is necessary to do good in us and for us.]

- Ask your child to tell you the story of Nebuchadnezzar from Daniel 4. *Where is God's compassion for Nebuchadnezzar in this story?* (You may want to remind your child that God warned Nebuchadnezzar punishment was coming and gave Nebuchadnezzar a year to repent. He restored Nebuchadnezzar's mind, taught him humility, and gave him faith.) *Was the suffering Nebuchadnezzar went through worth the good that came from it? Just like Nebuchadnezzar, we can learn our lessons the hard way because we are proud and stubborn...or we can learn them the easy way. How can we fight stubbornness and pride in our lives?*

ACTIVITY

Read the verses in the boxes. In the first box, color the picture of Nebuchadnezzar in his suffering. In the second box, draw a picture of Nebuchadnezzar praising God. He should look very happy in this picture.



*Lamentations
3:32-33—...but,
though he cause
grief, he will
have compassion
according to the
abundance of his
steadfast love;
33for he does not
willingly afflict or
grieve the children
of men.*

*Daniel 4:37—Now
I, Nebuchadnezzar,
praise and extol
and honor the King
of heaven, for all
his works are right
and his ways are
just; and those who
walk in pride he is
able to humble.*