

Go Ahead, Ask Me Anything! – Staying Faithful in Hard Times

Faith in the midst of suffering is believing in **ADVANCE** what will only make sense in **REVERSE**.

(Adapted from Philip Yancey)

1. Why is it so hard for us to trust in God when we go through hard times when we celebrate when things are OK?

- **We need to stop being SURPRISED when suffering comes!** (Romans 5:3-4; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 3:12) Instead of being SURPRISED, we need to be aware of its reality and prepare emotionally and spiritually for its eventuality.
- **We need to not be dependent on knowing the WHY of suffering!** (Job) God's perspective is bigger than ours. We only see in part, but He sees the whole.
- **We need an eternal perspective with the END in mind.** (Romans 8:28-39, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10) In the midst of evil, there are things we can count on from God: The BAD THINGS will work out for the good. The GOOD THINGS cannot be taken away. The BEST THINGS are yet to come.

2. Why do good people have to suffer debilitating pain despite continued prayers to God to please relieve the pain?

Pain is God's chisel, with which he carves his image in the heart. – Charles Naylor

- **God is present in our pain.** Jesus experienced all of the pain we have – emotional and physical. And He cares.
- **God uses our pain to build character** Remember that God's number one priority for us is NOT our comfort, but our character. He wants us to have the character of Jesus.
- **Pain can bind us closer to people.** Those relationships are truly a gift.
- **Pain can filter our true motivations for loving God.**

3. (Reworded) Too many Christians see poverty as punishment and sin without asking questions. How does the poor Christian combat this and how do they not lose heart?

1 Thessalonians 3:10 vs. Proverbs 28:27

- **POVERTY ≠ SIN**
- We are to work, in whatever capacity is necessary, to provide for ourselves and our family.
- We are to provide for those in need, especially to those inside our spiritual family. This help takes on many different forms.

4. How do you stay strong when your spouse is struggling spiritually?

1 Peter 3:1b-2, Ephesians 5:21-33

- **TELL God First, Foremost and Always** – Persistent prayer is key!
- **PURSUE God consistently and faithfully.** – The best way to point your spouse back to God is to be a light yourself!
- **LEAN into God, not away from Him.** – Be transparent about your shortcomings and fears, but always make Jesus the object of your faith!
- **THANK God every step of the way.** – Progress needs to be measured in steps and not miles!

Jesus Christ suffered, not so that we would never suffer but so that when we suffer we would be like him. – Tim Keller