

# THE BULLETIN

## THIS WEEK:

Sunday:  
Bible Study & Worship  
Monday:  
Fl. School of Preaching Class  
Wednesday:  
Bible Study  
Saturday:  
Pre-Teen Devotional

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

March 20<sup>th</sup> –  
Teen Devotional  
March 27<sup>th</sup> –  
Fellowship Meal

## PRIVILEGED TO SERVE:

### Month of March

#### Announcements:

Luther Honey

#### Singing:

a.m. – Mark Nortz  
p.m. – John Loanzon  
Wed. – Mark Nortz

#### Prayer:

Harry Collins

#### Bible Reading:

#### Preaching:

Doug Frazier

#### Lord's Supper:

Ray Cauthen  
Ben Stokes  
Tim Stanley  
Cliff Jones

#### Prepare communion

Mary Pahman

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Fellowship:

#### March

Angie Stokes  
Cathy Hitchcock  
Cindy Burgett

## The Value of Human Suffering

By Wayne Jackson

It has been said that there is no greater education than matriculating through the “University of Hard Knocks.” One thing is certain: many who have passed through the crucible of suffering will acknowledge that they have found themselves infinitely better for the experience—bitter though it may have been.

Robert Browning Hamilton expressed this thought so wonderfully in verse:

I walked a mile with Pleasure  
She chatted all the way,  
But left me none the wiser  
For all she had to say.  
I walked a mile with Sorrow  
And ne'er a word said she;  
But oh, the things I learned from her  
When Sorrow walked with me!

Atheism, of course, alleges that the problem of human suffering represents one of the more formidable arguments against the existence of a powerful and loving God. It is not my intention to respond to that baseless argument here; I have addressed it elsewhere in detail (see [Three Great Facts about God](#)).

At this point, it will suffice simply to say that God has, as an expression of his love (1 John 4:8), granted mankind free will (Joshua 24:15; cf. Isaiah 7:15). That free will enables human beings to make their own choices. Foolish choices can sometimes have devastating consequences (e.g., suffering). Thus, the responsibility for **unwise choices** is man's, not God's.

The problem of human suffering is not irreconcilable with the love of a benevolent Creator. In this article, we will limit our discussion to the **benefits** that suffering can provide—if we are wise enough to learn the lessons.

## Suffering: A Reminder of Our Infirmary

Suffering highlights the fact that we are frail human beings; that is to say, we are not God. Some, however, have no greater ambition than to be their own God. They are “autotheists”—self-gods. They imagine that they are accountable to no one higher than themselves. To borrow the words of the infidel poet, William Ernest Henley, they are the masters of their fate, and the captains of their souls! These rebels submit to no law save the self-imposed law of their own arrogant minds.

But when we suffer, we are forced to focus upon our own weakness. There is no remedy within us (see Job 6:13). It is hard to be haughty when you are hurting. Pain can be humbling; it can slap smart-aleckness out of us, and open our hearts to greater vistas.

## Suffering: A Reason to Call upon the Lord

Suffering can draw our interests toward the true God. When one is in a state of anguish that offers little respite, the natural inclination is to turn toward a higher source for help. Only a deliberate and forced stubbornness can quench that urge. When we are hurting, the “God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3) is waiting to help.

Joe, a personal friend of mine, was taught the gospel of Christ and happily embraced it, being united with the Lord in baptism (Romans 6:3ff). For a while, this likable gentleman in his mid-forties struggled to remain faithful against the powerful, negative influences of a family that had zero interest in spiritual matters. Finally, he drifted away from conscientious service.

Then, Joe suffered a severe heart attack. He hastened back to the Savior and maintained a contented fidelity until, some months later, his spirit slipped quietly away into eternity.

Suffering can get our attention! David once wrote: “In my **distress** I called upon Jehovah, and cried unto my God” (Psalm 18:6).

## Suffering: Insight into Sin

Suffering can assist us in seeing sin in all of its hideous gruesomeness. The Bible clearly teaches that this planet has been heir to suffering as a consequence of man’s sin. This principle is set forth clearly by Paul in his letter to the Roman saints. He affirmed that “through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so that death passed to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

At the beginning of human history, sin, in a manner of speaking, was “crouching at the door” (see Genesis 4:7); when grandmother Eve (and subsequently her husband) opened that door, horrible effects were allowed to descend upon their offspring (Genesis 3:22).

And so death—with all its attendant evils—entered the human environment as a result of man’s rebellion against his Creator. When we suffer, it ought to be a sober reminder of how terrible sin is.

While we cannot escape the physical consequences of sin’s high price, we can refresh our souls in divine forgiveness. When that is done, life becomes immeasurably easier.

## Suffering: Value Clarification

Suffering aids us in seeing the real worth of things. When one passes through the experience of intense suffering, and perhaps comes to the threshold of death, the entire world can take on new meaning. The singing of the birds is more vivid than it ever has been. A fresh spring day makes the soul ecstatic. Family and friends take on a new preciousness.

Christopher Reeve, who starred as Superman in the movies, was paralyzed in an accident, and discovered that in real life he was not as invincible as the character he portrayed. In interviews following his personal tragedy, Mr. Reeve commented that since being paralyzed, he had discovered a new zest for life.

Indeed, suffering can provide a sharper vision of life’s priorities. As the poet John Dryden expressed it: “We, by our suff’rings, learn to prize our bliss” (*Astraea Redux*).

He that hath an ear, let him hear what suffering whispers to the soul.

.....To Be Continued Next Week.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **SPRING BREAK IS HERE:**

Several of our members are gone this morning because of Spring Breaks. Jonathan Thompson has gone home to Crystal River, Luther and Patty Honey have gone with their children and grandchildren out West, and Jessica and Doug will be traveling to the Florida Panhandle this week.

**TEEN DINNER:** We will not be having a teen dinner this month. We will be meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> for our regularly scheduled devotional.

**LADIES NIGHT OUT:** We will not be meeting this month for our Ladies Night Out. We will resume our night out in April.

**PRE-TEEN DEVOTIONAL:** All of the pre-teens are invited to our monthly devotional that will take place on Saturday March 12<sup>th</sup>. The devotional will be held at church annex.

**THANK YOU:** Thanks to everyone who stayed after this past Wednesday night to help move everything out of the back building so that the floors could be cleaned. Mr. Hitchcock arranged for the floors to be cleaned on Thursday. The floors look great! Thanks to everyone for all of your hard work.

### **SICK AND/OR INJURED:**

- Morgan Earnhart had his surgery and is recovering very well.
- Leonard and Nancy Sherouse and their granddaughter, Gene Burgett, Ben and Dwight Stokes and others have been sick these last few weeks with the flu and viral infections, and bronchitis.
- Randy Howe's mother had surgery and is doing very well.
- Tawny Collins mother had an outpatient surgery this past week. She will not require any further surgery.
- Sherrelle Kendrick went for tests this past week.
- Rhonda Howe continues to suffer with several medical problems.
- Jean Gause and Carl Lee both continue to have shots for their back pain.
- Shirley Rogers continues to make progress after her hip injury and is waiting on the results of her recent tests.
- Continue to remember Linda Martin, Tommy Mikell, Della Brunson, Ann Ewing, Diane Jones, Terry Dickerson (nephew of Ruth Gufford), Betty Hitchcock, Mike Elledge, Shirley Kirby, Carolyn Canady (Rhonda's Mom), James Harrison, Edward Brown (cancer building at Shands).

Please keep these loved ones in your prayers. Many of those who have chronic conditions suffer from day to day. Those that are confined need not only our prayers but visits, calls, cards or letters.

## TO OUR VISITORS

It is our sincere desire to help all men and women understand what God's will is for their life. Here at the Alachua Church of Christ, we stand ready and willing to help you with any needs you may have. Here are just a few of the services we offer: Marriage Counseling, Family Counseling and Addiction Counseling, free audiotapes of any lesson and In-home Bible Study. Feel free to make your request know. Ask any member of the congregation.

## THE HARDEST PERSON TO FORGIVE

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**Elders:**  
Ray Cauthen  
Luther Honey

**Deacons:**  
Doug Frazier  
Mark Nortz  
Dwight Stokes

**Minister:**  
Doug Frazier

**Meeting Times:**  
**Sunday Morning**  
Bible Study: 9:30  
Worship: 10:30

**Sunday Evening**  
Worship: 5:30

**Mid-Week Bible Study**  
Wednesday 6:30

- A. When is it the hardest for you to forgive someone?
- a. As Christians we know that our salvation depends upon our forgiving others.
  - b. Wounded \_\_\_\_\_ always makes it difficult to forgive.
- B. What is the hardest thing for you to forgive?
- a. Sometimes the hardest thing for some people to forgive are the offenses against those who they \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. By nature we instinctively protect the ones we love.
- C. Who is the hardest person for you to forgive?
- a. Those who deliberately try to hurt us.
  - b. The ones that we love.
- D. Regardless of the where, the when or the what, there is one who is often harder to forgive than any other and that is one's self!
1. **Guilt is something that each of us deals with.**
    - i. As we look at guilt, \_\_\_\_\_ is often the result of it.
    - ii. Carrying guilt in our lives has its \_\_\_\_\_.
    - iii. Guilt will not only affect our relationship with others but it will also affect our relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
    - iv. We all must deal with guilt or it will end up \_\_\_\_\_ us.
  2. **There are some reasons why we have difficulty forgiving ourselves.**
    - i. Sometimes we can not accept our \_\_\_\_\_ failures.
    - ii. We often \_\_\_\_\_ the failures of others but when it comes to our failures we \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves up over and over again.
  3. **The feeling of guilt can be a good thing.**
    - i. Guilt can \_\_\_\_\_ us when we are straying from the path we know not to be right.
    - ii. Guilt can function as a \_\_\_\_\_ rail.
    - iii. Our relationship with God is most defiantly going to be affected if guilt is present.
    - iv. Our God wants us to clean out the \_\_\_\_\_ that has been tucked away in our hearts.
    - v. If guilt is left unresolved it is very \_\_\_\_\_.
    - vi. As children of God we must learn to stop \_\_\_\_\_ the grace of God.
  4. **How do I put myself in a position to enjoy the peace that comes from forgiveness?**
    - i. We must distinguish between Godly \_\_\_\_\_ and simple \_\_\_\_\_.
    - ii. Godly \_\_\_\_\_ is what leads one to repentance.
    - iii. We must realize that God is \_\_\_\_\_ than the guilt we \_\_\_\_\_.

**We're on the Web!**  
alachuachurchofchrist.org