

Learning from Affliction – Part 2

Introduction

- The goal of godly learning is to live according to the will/word of God (Ps. 86:11)
- Godly change is the objective of godly learning (2Tim. 3:16)
- One who learns from God must become a learner/disciple (Jn. 3:3)
- Learning is a process of understanding & acting on knowledge gained through experience (Phil. 4:11-12)
- A disciple with understanding imitates what is taught (1Co. 11:1)

I. Define Affliction

A. In the Old Testament

Affliction is anything that causes pain, distress, suffering or calamity.

Examples: plagues (Gen. 12:17), injustice (Gen. 31:42), oppression (Ex. 1:11), sickness/disease (Lev. 13:9), self-affliction (Lev. 16:29), barrenness (1Sam. 1:11), poverty, war, etc.

B. In the New Testament

Individual & groups are afflicted (Phil. 4:14; 2Co. 8:1-2). Examples: sickness & demon-possession (Mt. 4:24), natural disasters (Ac. 7:11), opposition to the gospel (2Co. 7:5), poverty (2Co. 8:2), imprisonment (Phil. 1:17), etc.

II. Understand Affliction

A. Cause

God is ultimately in control of all affliction – sovereign over everything (Ps. 66:10-11; Is. 45:7). God can cause affliction directly or indirectly (2Th. 1:6; 2Co. 12:7). Affliction began with humanity's disobedience & sin (Gen. 3:16-19; Rom. 8:19-21).

B. Purpose

God's purpose in affliction for the believer is ultimately good (Rom. 8:28). There are other purposes: punitive or retribution (2Th. 1:6), disciplinary (Heb. 12:5-6), prove genuineness (1Pe. 1:6-7) & to reveal the character of God (Jas. 5:11; Jn. 11:3-4).