

Freedom FOCUS

Summer 2011

NEWSLETTER

"...to turn them
from darkness
to light..."

www.indianabcc.com

Surrendering to God in Times of Suffering

When people come to IBCC for counseling, they are typically suffering. Many suffer because of their own sin (like a sexual addiction), others are dealing with the consequences of their sin (broken relationships with others), and others we counsel have been impacted by how someone else has sinned against them (like the devastating impact of abuse in their lives). They come struggling with anger, depression and anxiety related to their suffering. Many have deep pain in their hearts that never seems to go away. There are many painful realities people have to face in this life, but one thing they need to know is that they do not suffer alone. **We desire to see our counselees know and experience God's love for them and that they grow in loving Him with all of their hearts.**

In the Greek, suffering means *"to be affected in our experience by something that has happened to us."* In the Webster's 1828 dictionary, it is defined as *"the bearing of pain, inconvenience or loss; pain endured; distress, loss or injury incurred; as sufferings by pain or sorrow; sufferings by want or by wrongs."* Satan desires people to misinterpret their suffering. He wants people to question God's loving care for them. We must be careful not to fall prey to his wiles. Some people are tempted to entertain thoughts that condemn, some became bitter, others blame God, some people look to wrong sources to find solace and comfort for their pain, The children of Israel often misinterpreted trials wrongly like when they suffered in the wilderness. I would describe their response in Numbers 14:2-3 as having a "victim mentality." In this passage you find all the



symptoms of a victim mentality which includes: complaining, asking God "why" without really wanting an answer from Him, negative thinking, self-will, and rebellion. Unlike the Israelites, Joseph learned to rightly interpret the trials God brought into his life. (Genesis 50:19-20) This is God's desire for us: that we trust Him in the dark times and learn to see His redemptive plan in our sufferings.

While Christians and non-Christians alike will face times of suffering, the difference comes in how a Christian chooses to deal with the impact of sin in their lives and the suffering it brings. Many people spend their lives protecting themselves from ever being hurt and some medicate their pain. Unfortunately, they are rejecting a means by which God wants to pour out His grace and love and strengthen their relationship with Christ.

When a person is mishandling life's trials it produces bitterness, pride, disillusionment, and fear—rather than the faith, character, grace, and endurance that God wants to provide. It is in these seasons of suffering that our faith in God is being tested. But don't lose hope! God uses suffering in a

Matching Funds Update

From April 15th to June 30th, 2011 IBCC held a matching funds campaign. We had a few donors who were willing to match funds up to \$8,000. Here at IBCC we were greatly blessed by the wonderful response that was shown to this fund raising effort. One donation included this note of testimony: *Dear Jeff,*

When I became aware of the "matching funds" drive I asked the Lord to supply some funds so that I could forward it. A week ago I was asked to fill the pulpit at a neighboring church, and the Lord laid on my heart to share my testimony regarding His grace for a spirit of forgiveness. The folks received it well and sent me home with an unexpected \$50 check. I'm thanking the Lord for answering prayer.

Because of the sacrificial giving of many we more than met our goal. Thank you for your gifts!

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believer's life to grow in knowing Christ intimately and to experience the life changing power of the resurrection! (Philippians 3:10) Another great benefit to suffering is it helps us grow in Christian character. (Rom. 5:3-5)

Surrendering to God in times of suffering is the only choice we can make that glorifies God. Learning to suffer well in our lives ultimately brings Christ-likeness. Here is God's counsel I share when counseling others:

- 1. Never forget that God loves you.** "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued My faithfulness to you." Jeremiah 31:3
- 2. Remember that God is in control—He is sovereign.** "He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords," 1 Timothy 6:15
- 3. Be aware of the spiritual battle in your life and for your mind.** "For we do not wrestle

against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12

- 4. Hold on to the truth of Scripture and do not let it go.** "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalms 119:105
- 5. Realize you do not suffer alone.** "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in Your bottle. You have recorded each one in Your book." Psalm 56:8

God has given His children exactly what is needed to work through times of suffering. My hope and prayer is that you will reject the lies and cling to the truth in your difficult times. Suffering that brings us to completely depend upon God is a good thing.

~ Rev. Jeff Pokone

This message from the Walking in Christ series, entitled *Surrendering to God: The Centrality of Christ*, will soon be available for download at www.indianabcc.com.

Overseas Impact



Over the years, IBCC has enjoyed counseling those on the mission field. Recently we had the privilege of serving a missionary couple who work as Bible translators in Papua New Guinea.

"God led us to IBCC by an Internet search. We were looking for places in Indiana that might be helpful not just with counseling but with a biblical perspective—and IBCC seemed to fit.

In Papua New Guinea, our family was experiencing a lot of trauma when lots of petty crime and more serious crime started up where we were living. It got too much for me and wore me down to the point where things from my early childhood crept up and completely incapacitated me. We knew we had to leave the field and get some help because there's no [counseling] help in Papua New Guinea.

The issues that needed to be addressed were the results

of early childhood trauma. I had some memories of really bad stuff happening to me as a young child. I needed to be taught how to walk through those memories as they crept up and be given the tools to walk through the memories, experience them, and get healing when I came out on the other side. Rev. Jeff really helped with that. It was like when walking through the memories it was Jesus who was leading the way and then Jeff was helping.

The thing that came through strongly in all of the sessions is summed up in Psalm 27:3, "I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!" That has really made an impact on me because...He's going to wipe every tear from our eyes, but heaven is a very long way away right now. I now have hope that I will see the good of the Lord in the land of the living before I go to heaven.

While I haven't actually finished going through the memories, I've become equipped to deal with them. Now, instead of being overwhelmed, I'm actually able, with Christ, to deal with them and find healing through Him. This means we can now return to the mission field."

