

The Mark Every Christian Must Have

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Introduction:

Text: Acts 9:15-16

I. The Different Views on Suffering

- A. The **Pessimistic** View – a belief that a Christian suffers as a result of living outside the will of God.
- B. The **Fatalistic** View – a belief that a Christian suffers because of his or her sin
- C. The **Idealistic** View – the belief that once you become a Christian, you become free from suffering
- D. The **Wholistic** View – the Biblical view that acknowledges the reality of suffering and of God's purposes in allowing His people to go through them

God's Purposes in Allowing Paul

- 1. To **discern** the essentials from the non-essentials
- 2. To **test** NOT to **detest** (2 Corinthians 13:5)
- 3. To **foster** spiritual closeness instead of spiritual distancing (Acts 27:23-25)
- 4. To **move** him toward progress rather than stagnation (Philippians 1:12-14)
- E. The **Optimistic** View – the Biblical view that teaches complete salvation and deliverance from human suffering for God's people in the future. (Romans 8:18-25, Revelations 21:4)

II. Our Response to Suffering

- A. **Discover** God's Purpose
- B. **Cooperate** with God
- C. **Trust** God (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Conclusion:

Table Talk – The Mark Every Christian Should Have

Biblical References: Acts 9: 15-16; 2Cor. 11: 23-27; Gal. 6:17

1. In a scale of 1- 10, 10 being the highest, how would you rate the timeliness of this message on suffering? Explain.
2. In last Sunday's message, three of the five views on suffering discussed were: the pessimistic view, the fatalistic view, and the idealistic view. Do you agree with these views on suffering? Why? Cite examples to prove your point.
3. Of the different good purposes of God in allowing his people to go through suffering, which connect to you the most. Why? Or feel free to share your testimony related to your answer if you feel comfortable doing this.
4. Why is it important to have the right response when going through suffering as demonstrated by the Apostle Paul? Which of the four responses to suffering has helped you in the past or helping you presently? Elaborate.
5. Can you describe yourself as having this "distinct mark"(suffering)? Share a testimony about a suffering you have faced or are facing and your response.