Misery Loves Company!
By Richard Crisco

BECAUSE we do not understand God’s plan or His intentions for our suffering, we find ourselves despising the very thing that will eventually bring us blessing. Thus, we go to all extremes to escape the pains suffering!

We must gain an insight and understanding to God’s intentions and purposes for suffering in order to embrace the suffering sent our way.

1. Suffering develops obedience.

Even Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered.

Heb. 5:7 During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.

Since Jesus never sinned; Obedience must go beyond the concept of just “not sinning.”

Obedience is a heart issue!

If we do well, in this school of hard knocks and suffering then the things in which we suffer should intensify and increase as we mature in life.

Not making a new doctrine; (I’m just saying) Jesus had to learn obedience through the things that He suffered during His lifetime – so that, when the time came for Him to be crucified, He was ready! Perhaps Jesus would not have been mature enough when He was 32 years of age? (Just a thought)

Are the trials God is able to trust you with today, much greater than the trials of the past?

Are you still facing the same trials you faced 5 years ago? (If so, I would not be surprised if all you are doing is crying and complaining about them, instead of learning from them.)

We love to quote: 2Co 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

But what we fail to realize is that each new level of His Glory is accompanied by an increased level of suffering!

Rom 8: 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

The amount of His Glory is proportion to the amount of suffering one can properly handle.

2. Suffering Forges us together as ONE!
I even purpose that one of many reasons why there is not greater unity in the Body of Christ in America, is because we run from suffering and we run from those who are suffering – thus missing God’s Plan for Unity!

2Ti 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. 8 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life-- not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

There is a bonding and a depth of fellowship that can only be obtained by sharing and experiencing a season of suffering!

Some of the Greatest koinōnia is experienced during Suffering! (When you go through the fire together, you are melted together and fused together as one – henceforth inseparable!) This is why we are invited to share with the sufferings of Christ and one another!

You lose your individuality and are melted, molded, engrafted into a much larger, new identity – the Body of Christ!

Pre-marital Counseling: The trials of life will either be a wedge that will drive you apart or a rallying point that will bring you closer together.

Men who fight in a war together – become friends for life!

Families with children suffering in the Children’s Hospital have a bond that is unique.

To unite two pieces of iron, one must heat the iron from (50 to 90 percent of the melting temperature) and then beat them together with a hammer!

Noah Webster 1828

FORGE:
1. To form by heating and hammering; to beat into any particular shape, as a metal.

You can tell who your friends are during the most difficult and the most blessed times!

Rom 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

I personally believe you can tell who your true friends are more from great victories than from great trials,
because often the people crying with you are just relieved it did not happen to them.

1 Cor 12:24b … But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Phil 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

When we sincerely identify with others pain, there is a bonding that takes place that will allow us to lead them into the Kingdom!

Psa 126:5 Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. 6 He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

One reason sinners were attracted to Jesus is because He could identify with their pain!

Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.

Heb 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

2Cor 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. 7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

This Passage reminds me of the Old Nursery Rhyme “The Little Red Hen.” If you do not participate in the suffering of planting the seed, or in the suffering of grinding the grain into wheat, or in the suffering of baking the wheat over a hot oven, do not expect to experience the comfort that comes from enjoying the bread!

Lk 10:25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?"
he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered: '"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 In reply Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Mt 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. … 37 'Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 'The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"