

Lifting up Those Who Are Suffering

By Sandra Higley and Danielle Schofield



Suffering comes in all shapes and sizes: chronic illness, persecution, relational heartaches, loss of a loved one, senseless tragedy, stresses of many kinds. We all face suffering at one time or another. In addition to praying for specifics centered on individual circumstances, here are a few ways to pray, based on what Scripture says about suffering.

Kingdom Warfare

Father, this child of Yours has gone through unspeakable distress. Help those who are suffering to worship You in the midst of circumstances they don't understand. Lift them out of the hurtful details of what is happening so they get the bigger picture of its Kingdom impact. Help them trust You and hold on to the end, knowing You have a plan in mind for them. May they know You in a deeper, more meaningful way as a result of this circumstance (Job 1–2; 42:1–6, 10–16; Ps. 71:20).

God's Glory

Father, if this suffering is intended to bring You glory, let

it be so! Give Your suffering children the strength and joy to honor You during this difficult time. Deepen their understanding of the inheritance issues at stake when they share in Christ's sufferings. Help them to recognize that what they are going through is no comparison to the glory that will be revealed in them; help them wait for it with eager expectation. As they run the race through this trial, help them resist confusion and instead manifest the fruit of the Spirit (John 11:4; Rom. 8:17–19; Gal. 5:7–8, 22–23).

God's Grace

Lord God, help Your servants embrace Your no as well as Your yes. Assure them that You see and hear them. Enable them to see Your power at work through these difficult circumstances. Show Yourself strong through their fragile state. Thank You that in spite of everything they are not crushed, driven to despair, or abandoned by You. Help them get up when circumstances knock them down so that Jesus' life shines through them (2 Cor. 12:7–10).

Identification with Christ

Jesus, help Your beloved to see that this hatred they are experiencing is visible proof they belong to You and not the world. Encourage them to take a humble view of this identity as they continue to obey Your teaching and walk in love. Help them to fully know You and the power of Your resurrection, even as this situation causes them to become more and more like You. Let every act of unjust suffering commend them to God (Isa. 43:1; John 15:18–21; Phil. 3:10; 1 Peter 2:18–20).

Faithful Friends

Heavenly Father, give Your suffering children true friends who seek to lighten their load rather than cause additional heartache. Give friends and family empathy for what the sufferers are going through; help them resist the urge to judge or assume they would handle things differently if put in the same situation. Help friends and loved ones to look for ways to encourage rather than chastising, condemning, or minimizing these overwhelming situations. Hold accountable those who profess to speak for You. Help sufferers to forgive and pray for any who allow the enemy to use them as unjust accusers. Help those afflicted to bless and not curse (Job 42:7–10; Luke 6:28).

Proper Discernment

Father, give these dear ones a proper understanding of what is going on through this trial. Give them wisdom and courage to ask the right questions about fears, concerns, and needs. While it is commendable to suffer without cause, show Your children if there are other reasons this suffering has come to them. Without guilt or condemnation, help them to recognize any sin in their lives that needs to be dealt with according to Your Word. Help them to find a trustworthy person to come alongside them in prayer and confession if needed—someone in right relationship with You (Rom. 8:1; James 5:13–16; 1 Peter 2:18–20).

Forbearance to Wait on the Lord

Father God, give Your hurting child the forbearance to wait on You, knowing we go through various seasons and each one has its purpose. Thank You that while weeping lasts for a night, You bring joy when the night is past. Turn their mourning to dancing! (Ps. 30:5, 11; Eccl. 3:1–3).

–SANDRA HIGLEY is an author and the editor of *Real Life Downloaded* (Youth Edition), an online Sunday school curriculum supplement that is free of charge. Download the free Real Life Downloaded app. She co-authored this article with her daughter, who has a debilitating (sometimes fatal) disease with no known cure.

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