

SUFFERING AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD
SESSION 1 – JUNE 3, 2018
JOHN PIPER VIDEO SERIES

Ten aspects of God's sovereignty over suffering and Satan's hand in it.

When we say that God is sovereign, we are not merely saying that God has the power and the right to govern all things, but that He does govern all things for His wise and holy purposes! Because of this...

1. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's delegated world rule. Satan rules only at God's permission and within God's appointed limits. Dan 2:20-21, 4:17; Ps 2:2-4, 33:10-11
2. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's angels. Though Satan has thousands of cohorts in supernatural evil, God is in charge in all these skirmishes. Dan 10:13; Matt 8:29-32, Mk 1:27
3. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's hand in persecution. Whether God wills that we suffer or wills that we do not suffer at any given moment, He does so for the good of His precious children. 1 Pet 3:17, 5:8-9; Lk 22:3,31, 52-53; Jn 10:18
4. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's life-taking power. None lives and none dies but by God's grace, decree and perfect timing. Rev 2:10; Jam 4:13-16
5. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's hand in natural disasters. God is the ruler of the sky, wind and waves. Job 1:12, 16, 18-21, 37:10-14; Jam 5:11; Mk 4:39; Ps 135:5-7, 148:7
6. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's sickness causing power. Though the finite cause of sickness is through Satan, the ultimate cause is God. Acts 10:38; Job 2:7-10, 42:11; Ex 4:11; 2 Cor 12:7-9
7. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's use of animals and plants. Only God commands the world of animals and plants. Jonah 1:17, 2:10, 4:6-7; Ps 104:26; Ex 8:16-17
8. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's temptation to sin. Satan is not sovereign in the temptation of Judas, Peter, you or those around you—God is. Acts 1:16, 2:23; Lk 22:31-32
9. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's mind-blinding power. God creates light in the darkened human heart. 2 Cor 4:4-6; Eph 2:5
10. Let us celebrate that God is sovereign over Satan's spiritual bondage. When God chooses to overcome our rebellion and Satan's resistance, nothing can stop Him! 2 Tim 2:24-26

Rom 8:31-39 --- Therefore, if God is for us, who can be against us?...Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us... Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

INTRO TO SESSION 1 -- JUNE 3, 2018

"See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand." Who said this—Pharaoh, Herod, Hitler, Satan, God? God said this! Deut 32:39

Life. It's often taken for granted. In college I was hoping to be drafted in baseball by the Minnesota Twins or the Cincinnati Reds. Instead, Uncle Sam had his eyes intent on me and three of my fellow teammates as we all had very low lottery numbers. All four of us decided to sign up for the reserves or national guards. That move saved us from Vietnam, but ended up ruining our chances of playing in the majors. Then again, just like we planned, I married my high school sweetheart, Bob married Marg, Gary married Becki and Dave married Joanne. Two years later, Bob died of hardening of the arteries, Becky divorced Gary, Dave was on the fast track with a major corporation, and Jeanne and I had our first of two children.

Life. It just happens—or does it? Three years ago this month, I faced the hardest trial of my life and faith when I found my wife of 46 years lying flat on her back on our kitchen floor, unresponsive to my voice. 36 hours later she was pronounced dead. What happened? Could I have done more? Could the doctors have done more? Who's to blame? How did God let this happen? Why didn't God answer my prayers, our prayers? Where was God during all of this?

Suffering is part of living. It often comes at times when we least expect it, but it does come... with a lost job, a speeding ticket, an accident, a bill you can't pay, a doctor's diagnosis, a broken relationship, a broken arm, a call in the middle of the night, loss of a loved one, a miscarriage, being un-liked on Facebook, not being invited to a neighborhood get-together.

We often wish that there was a course we could take, or could have taken, so that we would be more prepared to respond rightly.

God has given such a course—it's in His Word the Bible. As His children, we learn of Him and through Him. We learn how we can be more than conquerors. Yet this happens in various ways. Sometimes we learn by studying. Sometimes by living. It has been said that if you are a Christian, you've just come out of a trial, are presently in a trial, or are being prepared to go through a trial.

Over the next couple months we will be spending time with John Piper and a few of his friends as they discuss suffering and the sovereignty of God—a prerequisite for living, and living a victorious Christian life.

The first video lasts a full 55 minutes and it's worth every second of it. When it's over, I'll have a summary handout and take a few minutes to conclude the lesson.