

Whenever You Suffer, Ask This Question to the Holy Spirit

But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own authority. But He will speak whatever He hears, and He will tell you things that are to come. He will glorify Me, for He will receive from Me and will declare it to you. All that the Father has is Mine. Therefore I said that He will take what is Mine and will declare it to you (John 16:13-15).

As Christian leaders and counselors from a range of backgrounds ministered to us, the variety of what they taught us thoroughly blessed us. I believe this has ignited a new understanding on how to best help people, gleaning from all that the Holy Spirit says in the Bible without being limited to one tradition and its emphasis on one paradigm for helping people.

We came to appreciate each approach and grieve the pride and cynicism that often divides these biblical insights into warring camps. To be truly helpful we need to be deeply Spirit-led. The Holy Spirit knows exactly how someone is suffering and what the solution is.

Every honest pastor and Christian leader reaches a point where they realize the same truths taught in the same way bring the same incomplete results. Who in your immediate world would bring a new biblical perspective to your struggles as a follower of Jesus?

There's a good chance you stand on one side of various theological, methodological, and relational divides, and the help you need is right on the other side. Ask people who aren't in your tribe for practical wisdom drawn from real ministry. Invite them to tell you their case histories of real

change. Let them enthusiastically draw out their biblical emphasis and challenge yours. Why? Because every problem you face isn't a nail, and every solution doesn't require a hammer.

When you suffer, it is essential to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you why you are suffering and how you can be growing. Your suffering is so expensive that you should not waste it on sin, folly or rebellion. Instead, you would be better served to invest it by reflecting on Jesus' suffering for you so that you can become more like Him.

I admit that at times I have wished there were another way. I wish we could go online and shop for character, punch in our credit card information and have it delivered to our house along with the rest of our Amazon order. But that is not how the Christian life works. When Jesus says to pick up our cross and follow Him, He is inviting us to suffer with our Savior so that we can become like our Savior. Often our healing from suffering begins by forgiving those who hurt us. {eo2}

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