



PARENTS' CORNER

inspiration for parents of elementary-age children

Prepared to Suffer

7.3.22

"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Revelation 2:10 ESV



Introduction

God, out of His infinite love for us and for our child, foils our plans to keep our child healthy and thriving at all times. Instead, He allows our child to suffer.

What do you do when your child suffers?

If you are like me, you may minimize the problem or try to distract your child from it. Or, you may throw yourself at the problem to try to resolve it, using all the resources you have at hand.

The next time your child suffers, try the following activities:

1. Make time to sit with your child. Listen to him or her, and be a conduit of God's love through your willingness to enter into his or her pain.
2. Find time to cry out to Jesus, alone. Learn from Jairus, the father of the sick little girl from Mark 5. Jairus, a synagogue ruler and a man of status and authority, recognized his own limitations, and humbled himself to ask Jesus for help. Jairus had to step away from his daughter to seek out Jesus, at a time when his daughter needed him the most. But Jairus was rewarded for this: Jesus heard his plea, and healed his daughter.
3. Together with your child, visit, pray for, or care for someone else who is suffering. There is a God-ordained purpose for the suffering your child is going through. Part of that purpose may be that your child can comfort those who are afflicted with the same comfort that God comforted him or her with. Praying and caring for others can help your child step out of his or her feelings of self-pity and into a deeper understanding of his or her mission in life.

Questions

If your child is not going through something difficult at this time, take the opportunity now to prepare your child for future suffering. Try discussing these questions with your child:

1. Do you think mommy or daddy will ever die?
2. If we will all die one day, why does the Bible say that we can have eternal life?
3. What do you see [mommy and/or daddy] doing when [I/we] struggle with something, or sad about something?

Prayer

Father God, thank you for being a good, good father. Help us to remember that we are your beloved children. When we encounter suffering, help us to suffer well. Still our anxious thoughts, as too often, we are busy devising ways to try to escape from our suffering. Show us our limitations, as too often, we rely on ourselves, thinking we have the strength, the resources, or the smarts needed to overcome. Instead, draw us near to you. Help us to cry out to you, for you, o Lord, are near to the brokenhearted. Teach us to suffer well, for our sake, and for the sake of our children, who are watching us and learning from us. In Jesus name, Amen.