

Appointed to Affliction

1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

9.20.26

1. Paul says in verse 3 that believers should not be “shaken by these afflictions.” Why is it important for Christians to understand that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life?
2. In verse 3, Paul says, “we have been appointed for this.” What does this statement teach us about God’s sovereignty over the trials His people experience?
3. What is the difference between saying “God caused this suffering” and saying “God is sovereign over this suffering and can use it for His purposes”?
4. Paul had already told the Thessalonians that they would experience affliction (v. 4). Why is it better to prepare Christians for suffering rather than give the impression that following Christ will make life easier?
5. How can an incorrect expectation that the Christian life should be comfortable make a person more vulnerable when trials come?
6. What are some biblical purposes God may accomplish through suffering? Consider Romans 5:3–5, James 1:2–4, and 1 Peter 1:6–7.
7. Paul was concerned that the Thessalonians might be tempted by the tempter (v. 5). Why can suffering make us especially vulnerable to temptation, doubt, fear, or discouragement?
8. When you are going through a difficult trial, what truths about God do you need to remind yourself of? Consider God’s sovereignty, goodness, faithfulness, and promises.
9. How can we help another believer who is suffering without offering shallow answers or minimizing their pain?
10. Think about a current or past affliction in your life. How has God used that trial to strengthen your faith, deepen your dependence upon Him, or make you more useful to others?