

## What Is The Cause of Our Suffering?

The *International Sunday School Lesson* for Sunday June 22, 2008  
Hebrews 12:1-13

*“Consider [Jesus] who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart” (Hebrews 12:3—NRSV).*

*“For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Hebrews 12:3—KJV).*

Everyone goes through periods of suffering. Sometimes this suffering prompts us to ask “why,” to seek a reason or cause for our suffering. Sometimes false comforters, such as those who went to Job while he suffered, will say, “There must be some unconfessed sin in your life. If you repent, God will relieve your suffering. You are suffering God’s punishment for your sins.”

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews was not a false prophet or simplistic comforter. He certainly knew that sometimes we suffer the natural consequences of our own sins. The Bible calls this type of suffering the reaping of what we have sown (Galatians 6:8).

He also wrote that we suffer when sinners afflict us unjustly. When suffering, he wants us to think of Jesus. Jesus, who never sinned, suffered unjustly at the hands of sinners. He suffered unfairly, and sometimes believers will suffer unfairly too. Jesus foretold that His followers would be reviled and persecuted on His account (Matthew 5:11-12). Therefore, believers should not be surprised when they suffer persecution from others for doing the right thing or saying what they must say to right a wrong. Indeed, when suffering for doing what is right in following Jesus, the Bible encourages believers to “not grow weary or lose heart.”

When they sin, believers will sometimes suffer the discipline of their heavenly Father. Though this discipline feels painful, “later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11). Believers can find encouragement from such discipline when they remember that God is treating them as the children He loves.  
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