

# Let's Discuss...Prayer

## PART 7\_Suffering, When We Don't Understand & Affirmations



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### Scriptures mentioned:

*Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.*

James 1:2-3 NASB

*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

James 5:16b NKJV

### Episode Summary

In this episode we discuss the reality of suffering, even in the lives of Christians, and try to reconcile this with the idea that God is sovereign. Niki shares how even in her experiences of suffering and abuse, she believes that although God never wanted for those things to happen to her, He was with her through it all and has turned those situations around to the benefit of herself and those around her. Tito mentions how important it is to be mindful when interacting with others, so as not to just drop a verse or insensitive prayer on someone for whom it may have no meaning (or possibly even leave them in a worse place than before we interacted with them). We also shift to talking about the difference between affirmations and prayer, highlighting that prayer is more than just a helpful phrase. It is a conversation with God, is not focused on us, and has supernatural power to help us beyond what we could do on our own.

### Definitions

**intercede:** to pray for someone else or on someone else's behalf

**omnipresent:** all present; present everywhere at once

**omnibenevolent:** all goodness; having and extending perfect and unlimited goodness

**omniscient:** all knowing; knowing all things

**omnipotent:** all powerful; having unlimited power

**sovereign:** having power and authority over all things

### Let's Discuss...

- Colossians 1:16 NIV says, "For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him."
  - » How do you reconcile the idea of God's sovereignty with the suffering and pain that we experience as humans? Have experiences in your own life, or realities you've witness caused you to wrestle with God's sovereignty?
- Isaiah 55:9 NIV reads, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."
  - » Are you comfortable with trusting God even in situations that you don't understand? Is there a better alternative?
- Romans 8:28 NLT says, "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them."
  - » Can you think of a time when you went through a difficult situation, but looking back on it, can now see how God worked it out for good?
- When encouraging and praying for others, how do we discern whether a scripture or belief (i.e. "they're in a better place now") that has been helpful to us will be helpful to them in that moment?
- How would you describe the difference between faith, affirmations, and manifestations? How do we approach prayer accordingly?

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- When you think of God's omnibenevolence, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, how does this affect your mindset as you approach prayer?

## Let's Pray...

*Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.*

Romans 8:26-28 MSG

- Take a moment to quietly sit and meditate on this verse. Rest in the knowledge that God knows what you are going through, and even when we don't have the right words, He is moving in and through us. Let Him wrap His arms of love around you. Our words or thoughts don't put a dent in God's glory, so speak freely with your Creator. If no words come to mind, don't fear, all He wants is to be with you, so take some time to simply be with Him.

## Let's Go Deeper...

- **Book Overview: Job** by BibleProject [video]
- **Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering** by Timothy Keller [book]
- **A Grief Observed** by C.S. Lewis [book]
- **Trusting God in Difficult Times** by Tim Keller [videos]