

Reflections on Suffering

1. Describe an experience in which you have suffered. Though your experience may not be nearly as challenging as Wolterstorff's, it should be substantive enough to merit serious attention and reflection. Describe your experience in as much detail as you are able.
2. Earlier in this unit, you learned about the causes of suffering—namely that some suffering is caused by human sinfulness and some by the natural cycles of life and death. What do you think was the cause of *your* suffering? Explain.
3. What kinds of responses to your suffering (from other people) have you found to be most helpful? least helpful?
4. How has your suffering changed your relationship with God (e.g., your image of God, your beliefs about God, or the depth of your faith in God)?
5. Drawing on Wolterstorff's insight, what kinds of things have you been able to see "through your tears" that you would not have been able to see "dry-eyed?" In other words, how has your suffering changed your perspective on the world or some aspect of it?
6. Has your suffering been redemptive *for others* in some way? If so, explain how; if not, explain why you think this did not happen.
7. Has your suffering been redemptive *for you*? For example, has it helped you to grow or change in a way that you would not have been able to any other way? If so, explain how; if not, explain why you think that this did not happen.
8. If Jesus could say something to you in your time of suffering, what do you think he would say?

