

Reflections on Suffering

1. Describe an experience in which you have suffered. Though your experience may not be 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. Some suffering is caused by human sinfulness, and some suffering is caused 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. How has your suffering been redemptive for others in some way? If you do not believe this to be true, 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. Have you felt Jesus' presence with you in your time of suffering? in what way? If Jesus were standing next to you in your time of suffering, what do you think he would say or do?

