

I don't have enough **FAITH**
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with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

How Does God Use Suffering for Our Good? Personal Life Lessons with Clay and Jean E. Jones

(February 27, 2026)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, how does a couple, a Christian couple, who have been married for 50 years, but have experienced a lot of pain and suffering, including incurable cancer, including five miscarriages, including doubts and disappointments-- How do they remain Christians and say that God is good and that God can use pain and suffering for our good?

Well, if you've ever wondered the answer to that question, my guest today, Dr. Clay Jones and his wife, Jean E. Jones, actually will tell you how, because they got this brand-new book called 'How Does God Use Suffering for Our Good?' And we've had Clay on the show many times before.

In fact, Clay teaches a course for us here at CrossExamined at Online Christian Courses. 'Why Does God Allow Evil?', that book is a great book, and it's a great course as well. But this couple is a couple you want to know, because they've dealt with some of the worst pain and suffering you can imagine, and yet they're saying that God is still good.

So here they are, ladies and gentlemen, the great doctor and Mrs. Jones, all the way from the People's Republic of California. Clay, let me start with you. Give us an update. I know that some of our listeners and viewers know about you. You've been on the program before, and you have your own ministry, but you did many years ago contract cancer, and it's incurable. However, there are some positive signs. Tell us what's going on.

CLAY:

Well, you know, it's interesting because, 23 years ago, I started having lower back pain, and I'd see doctors, and they'd go, you need to do stretching exercises.

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Well, the pain got worse and worse, and worse, and worse. And pretty soon, I couldn't sleep upstairs with Jean E., because I was getting up so much because of the pain. They finally diagnosed it as being, that I had an unusual bone cancer. Thankfully, 22 years ago, they were able to take the can-- I lost my tailbone, the bone above that, and half the bone above that.

The half a bone above that was, they were taking a margin. But I was in a lot of pain. But when Jean E. and I found out that I had cancer, with tears streaming down our faces, we held hands. And I led us in a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

And at that moment, I knew I defeated Satan in the heavenly realms. Well, three years ago-- So I actually, as far as I was concerned, I was cancer free. They took it out, they removed it. Well, three years ago, it turns out the same cancer is back, and now it's metastasized.

And I mean, in my liver, in my lungs, and threw out my bones. You know, by the way, the first thing I did with that is I wrote to the pastor of the church. I said, hey, I've got cancer. I want you, you and the elders to pray for me. Now this cancer that I have is incurable. There's no known cure for it. But I got the elders. They anointed me with oil, and prayed for me, just like the Scripture says. And, now strangely, we are in a situation where my cancer is stable.

In other words, as this one oncologist that we're seeing put it, he says, your immune system is keeping your cancer at bay. So whatever you're doing, keep it up. So it's not growing, but it is there. And then three months ago, I had open heart surgery. That was an interesting experience. They don't have to cut your chest open anymore. They go through your side. But my heart rate's too high. So we're praying about that.

But, you know, in all of these things, we just feel, you know, I mean, like I say, when we first found out I had cancer, and when we've, you know, when I found out I had the same cancer again, I led us in a prayer of thanksgiving to God. And I knew that we had defeated Satan in the heavenly realms because we'd said, you know what?

No matter what happens to me, we're going to honor God through it. And, so anyway, that's where I'm at right now. And I'm thankful, that, well, the Lord has chosen to keep my cancer, you know, to have my immune system keep my cancer at bay.

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It's there, but it's not growing. So anyway, that's where I'm at right now.

FRANK:

By the way, both of you look fantastic for being married for 50 years. We were joking before the show. How old were you when you got married?

CLAY:

I was 18.

JEAN:

I was 19.

CLAY:

And Jean was also. Well, she was 19. There you go. But so she was, we were teenagers when we got married.

FRANK:

Now, Jean E., you've been in ministry for many years. You've written several books yourself. You've got a devotional that I like here. It's called 'Discovering Jesus in the Old Testament', and four other books. Why did you and Clay decide to come together and write this?

And we're going to get to your story, too, a little bit later, the suffering that you've experienced. Why did you guys say, look, we should probably write a book that how God uses, or 'How God Uses Suffering for Our Good.' Why did you decide to do this?

JEAN:

Well, Clay had already written about, how God uses, or why God allows evil. And he'd written on death. And it seemed like, if you're going to talk about evil and then death, well, why not talk about suffering as well? And so, he actually got started on the book before I did because I was finishing up my last book. But I was very eager to jump in on the project and share what I wanted to share about that, too.

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CLAY:

I'd like to interject just briefly. I started writing 'How Does God Use Suffering for Our Good?' before I found out that I had cancer again. And I'm glad, because a lot of people are like, yeah, you know, I got cancer and so I need to write a book on it. I started writing it before. Jean E., as she just said, had to jump in later because she was writing her last book. But anyway, so I just wanted to throw that in there.

FRANK:

Clay, why do you think that Christians think that if you just have enough faith, pain and suffering will not visit you? Why do we think that?

CLAY:

Boy, I'll tell you, Frank, you're bringing up something that's really big to me, and that is, a lot of people have misrepresented the gospel, in my opinion, as being, if you come to Jesus, you'll have an improved lifestyle.

And honestly, I think CRU, you know, I've been a big fan of Campus Crusade, and I still am. I appreciate what they're doing. But law one of the four spiritual laws is God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. The trouble is, people can take that—

And I'm not just saying it's all about CRU, but people can take that as going, oh, so I'm going to have an improved lifestyle. No, the Lord does not promise you an improved lifestyle. And I've had people get very angry at me when I've said that. But you know what?

If you're a Muslim in, say, Somalia or Afghanistan, and you become a Christian, and they abduct your daughter, and gang rape her, and force her to sign a confession to Islam, and you and your wife spend the rest of your lives running so that you're not set on fire, that's not an improved lifestyle.

You know, and I think we, unfortunately, Frank, and I'm glad you asked the question. I think we misrepresented the gospel somewhat, anyway, to—

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Now, surely you come to Jesus, you'll have peace with God, and the knowledge that you're going to live forever, and so on. You do have that, but you're not going to—

The Bible doesn't promise you an improved lifestyle. And I think that a lot of people have misrepresented Christianity in that way.

FRANK:

Now, Jean E., we don't have time to tell the whole story before the break, but I notice in the book that both you and Clay wanted to have children so badly, and you went through five miscarriages, and some of your Christian friends said the reason you're having these miscarriages, Jean E., is because you just don't have enough faith.

JEAN:

Yes.

FRANK:

How did you react to that?

JEAN:

Oh, my. I was hurt. I was very, very hurt. But, you know, there's a verse in the Book of Job that addresses that very thing, and it goes like this. It says men at ease have contempt for misfortune as the fate of those whose feet are slipping.

One of the things that happens is people want to think that the tragedies they see happening to others will never happen to them. So when they're in a good place and nothing wrong is happening, they look at those who are suffering and having tragedies or having, in my case, miscarriages.

The second miscarriage was in the second trimester, so we thought we were safe. And everybody knew that I was pregnant and that I'd had the loss. But people want to believe that they can't suffer like that. And so, they look at others and say, there must be something wrong with them.

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FRANK:

Well, we're going to unpack that more after the break. We're talking to both Clay Jones and Jean E. Jones about their brand-new book, 'How Does God Use Suffering for Our Good?' You're going to want to be a part of this conversation because suffering is going to visit all of us. Don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.

If evil and suffering are happening to you, is it because you don't have enough faith? Is it all your fault? That's what a lot of people claim. They say, you know, if you have enough faith, you'll be healthy and wealthy. I think that can be disputed or refuted, I should say with one simple observation.

What about Jesus and the apostles? What happened to them? They were brutalized and martyred. Don't tell me they didn't have enough faith. This false gospel of the prosperity gospel, it's not really a gospel at all.

It's misleading. It's false, and it actually leads people to either think two things. Either everything is their fault when it isn't, or God doesn't exist. Because this preacher told me that if I just had enough faith, all these good things would happen to me.

And now these things haven't happened to me. So it's not that the preacher had bad theology. It's that the God he was talking about actually doesn't exist. Well, actually, that's true that God doesn't exist, but then they think no God exists, and they're disgruntled with the idea that the Bible is true or that Christianity is true.

They don't think it is because they've been fed a false gospel. So, Jean E., when this false gospel was fed to you, basically, people were saying, you know why you keep having these miscarriages, Jean E.? It's your fault. How did you react to that? And then how did you realize that that was not the truth? And what lesson can we learn from that experience?

JEAN:

Right. Well, after the second miscarriage, I had kind of a numbness towards God. I told everybody I was fine and that I was trusting God.

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And I thought that I was. But I was a little concerned because I felt really numb toward God. And one day when I was waking up from a nap, I noticed that a house guest had moved my get well cards, and I grabbed them and slammed them down.

I am so glad she was not there. And I thought, you know, that was kind of an overreaction. And I thought, you know what? I'm beginning to think I actually might be mad at God. And I decided to go outside, and go for a walk, and pray. I really like walking when I pray.

So I headed down the street and I said, you know, God, I think I might be, angry at you over these miscarriages. And at that, oh, wow, the anger just welled up. And I said, God, I am angry. And here are all the reasons why I think you shouldn't have allowed this to happen.

And I just started listing them one after another and including the fact that my church friends were telling me I didn't have enough faith, and Clay didn't have enough faith, and so it was all my fault. But as I went on and told him all the reasons why I thought He shouldn't have allowed it, I said, everybody else can have children.

Why can't I? And at that moment, I knew I'd misspoken. I knew, first of all, that it wasn't true. There are even women in the Bible that couldn't have children. And I had plenty of single friends who weren't even married and didn't have children. And I realized, wow, that was a really big assumption of my own.

I had felt entitled to have children, and I knew I didn't deserve to feel entitled towards anything. I mean, Jesus Christ died for my sins so that I could go and be with Him for eternity. He didn't need to do anything more than that.

As I continued to walk and talk to God about all these things, instead of feeling like I had this huge mountain that was insurmountable in front of me, I felt like I just had a race in front of me with a lot of barriers that I'd have to jump over, but I could do it one at a time.

As I continued, I ended up having five miscarriages. And my gynecologist had told me at five that I would never be able to carry a child to term. And after the fifth miscarriage, as I was praying about it, and I said, you know, Lord, I'm just wondering.

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I'm not sure why you aren't giving me the desire of my heart here when you say that you give people the desire of their hearts if they're walking with you. And I sensed a question, and that is, what is the greatest desire of your heart?

And I knew immediately, Lord, it's to be close to you, to love you, and to follow after you. And that's when I realized that we all have competing desires. I had competing desires, and that for me, my walk with God was going to require letting that one thing go.

And I wanted to show God and tell him that I was all right with that. And so, I've always been a visual thinker, and sometimes I picture my prayers instead of saying them. And so, I pictured in my mind a hill with the cross on it.

And I took all the pain that I was feeling, the loss that I was feeling, the questions of why, the troubles with people blaming me instead of seeing that as part of life sometimes, I took all those things, and I put them in a box.

And then I wrapped the box with pale green wrapping paper and tied it with gold cord, and I put it at the foot of the cross. And I said, God, this is my gift to you. And I pictured it for him because I figured He could see what I was picturing. I said, this is my gift for you.

If you don't want to tell me why in this lifetime, that's fine with me. And I'm sure when I get to heaven, I'll have other things to be thinking about than that, but this is my gift to you. And every time I hurt, every time a friend announced her pregnancy, or I was invited to a baby shower, I pictured that hill with the cross, and the green present lying there at the foot of the cross.

And I said, again, God, this is my gift to you. And that got me through it. That got me to where I could say, honestly, I'm not entitled to this. This is what God has for me. He's got a reason, and I don't need to know what it is.

It turned out there were a lot of good reasons, though, including that we were able to take in abused foster children who had failed foster care and could not be placed in families with other children.

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FRANK:

There's always a ripple effect. Always. And of course, that has to exist when you think about the passage in Romans that all things work together for good, not that all things are good. And, of course, you point that out in the new book. And ladies and gentlemen, the book is called 'How Does God Use Suffering for Our Good?' by Clay and Jean E. Jones, and they're my guests today. Clay, how did that--?

How did miscarriage after miscarriage affect you? Were you mad at God as well? And how did you deal with it?

CLAY:

No, I wasn't mad at God about that. I was just sad because the effect it had on Jean E. was just tremendous. I mean, it made her tremendously sad, to have miscarriage, after miscarriage, and I-- Anyway, and we don't go to that kind-- You know, that was a very charismatic church that we were attending, and we don't go to that kind of a church anymore.

And, well, I was actually out. It was the original vineyard. And by that, John Wimber hired me to be a pastor on his staff.

FRANK:

For those that don't know who John Wimber was, who was he?

CLAY:

John Wimber was the founder of the Vineyard movement. And you know, I mean—

FRANK:

Some don't know the Vineyard movement. What's the--?

CLAY:

Well, there's a lot of Vineyard churches out there now. The trouble is, John came from the Friends Church. That was his background. And the Friends or the Quakers kind of saw biblical revelation on the same par as personal revelation.

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And that has unfortunately led them astray a lot of times. And a lot of Vineyards now are very liberal, and you know, politically, philosophically, theologically liberal. And anyway-- But, you know, but they believed, you know, God wants to heal and wants to do it all the time. Well, there you go. Well, that didn't happen to Jean E. and thereby to me. But that's what they believed at that time. I think they probably still do.

FRANK:

Jean E. you mentioned in the book as well that 2 Corinthians 1 is true, that when you go through pain and suffering, you're able to comfort others who go through it as well. Have you had a ministry to ladies that have lost children?

JEAN:

Yes. For some reason, when I was going through it, I was not expecting that to happen. But oh my goodness, there are so many women that struggle with infertility and miscarriages.

And whenever they find out, they want to talk to me and I end up sitting down with them and talking to them, and they want to talk to somebody who has gone through something similar. So, yeah, that's been a great ministry.

FRANK:

Clay the book talks about the glory of eternity. And by the way, the word glory for me has always been kind of an amorphous word, an ambiguous word. What does that really mean to bring glory to God or the glory of eternity? Start there.

What do you think the word glory means in that context, or the context we're going to bring glory to God, or this is going to, this is going to make, this is going to achieve an eternal weight of glory, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4. What does the word glory mean in that sense?

CLAY:

The word glory is in a class. It's sui generis. How do you like that? It's in a class all by itself.

FRANK:

Thanks, that really helps Clay. [Laughter]

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CLAY:

Yeah. I thought you'd like it. It's in a class all by itself. I mean, there's no word to emphasize that something is just fabulously wonderful. And it also means, the word also means radiance, beauty. If some-- We say something's glorious, we usually mean that it's radiant, and it's beautiful, and it's got a lot of splendor.

For non-Christians, the only time they use it, you'll see gamers, for instance, computer gamers will go, oh, yeah, I just, you know, I just won a glorious battle. It's like on their computer game, you know, and so you'll have people say that kind of thing quite a bit.

Or we will use it sarcastically. If somebody's naked, they'll say, there he is in all his glory. But they don't mean really that he's that glorious. They're being sarcastic. But in the real use of the word, I mean, we're talking about resplendence. We're talking about, you know, I mean, beauty. We're talking about renown, that you're going to be renowned, and I argue, teach, in both of the books, that we're going to be glory in heaven.

We're going to be glorified with real glory. And I do think, by the way, that means we'll also be beautiful and resplendent. And so, I think that I, you know, heavenly creatures are often portrayed as being bright, and yeah, I think we'll, you know-- I mean, in the Transfiguration when John the Baptist was—

Was it John the Baptist? Who was there? Elijah.

FRANK:

Moses, Elijah, and Jesus.

CLAY:

Anyway, when they came down, you know, they were radiant. And I think we will be radiant. And I think people, unfortunately, the biggest problem with heaven is it's gotten a terrible-- Satan has done some of his best work in making heaven look like a place you don't want to go.

In fact, I call it extreme makeover: metaphysical addition. Or he's just making heaven look like, you know, you're going to be sitting on clouds, strumming harps, sporting flightless wings, and

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singing the same songs again, and again, and again. I don't want to go there. But you know what? None of that's true.

FRANK:

That sounds a lot like some churches. [Laughter]

CLAY:

Yes, indeed.

FRANK:

Singing the same songs again and again and again, 7/11 songs. Seven words sang 11 times. Well, we're gonna connect suffering to glory right after the break, so don't go anywhere.

You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network and other stations around the country. We're back after the break.

AD:

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FRANK:

How does suffering actually work out for our good? That's the topic we're talking about today with my guest, Dr. Clay Jones and Jean E. Jones. They have a brand-new book on that topic. But before we talk more about that, let me mention what's happening out there.

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This Monday, March 2nd, Lord willing, we're gonna do another edition of the Bible You Never Knew. We're gonna be talking about Jonah. And we're really going to dive into how so many characters in the Old Testament, in this case particularly Jonah, are foreshadowing what happens to Jesus.

You don't want to miss that. If you're anywhere in Charlotte, it's up in Cornelius, that's north of Charlotte at a church called Freedom House Church. But if you're not in Charlotte, it will be livestreamed, Lord willing, 7:30 P. Hope to see you there. And then, we are going to be in Ohio at the Clear Truth Conference next Friday.

That's March 6th. That's on our website as well. It's not far from Detroit, just south of Detroit. And then the following week, Lord willing, we're going to be at Christopher Newport University, and that is in Newport News, Virginia.

That's the 11th of March. And we have several other college events coming up after that. But that'll sort of give you the lowdown of what's happening for the next couple of weeks. So if you want further info on that, go to our website, crossexamined.org and you'll see the events there.

The Change My Mind college tour rolls on. We've so far, been to five colleges, and we've got several more coming up in the ensuing weeks. Let me go back to my guest, Clay and Jean E. The book is called 'How Does God Use Suffering for Our Good?' This couple has experienced a lot of suffering in their own lives, and they're using that experience and also the Scriptures to help others through it.

Clay, let me start with you. We talk about, and Paul talks about at the end of 2 Corinthians 4, that our light and momentary afflictions are achieving for us a greater weight of glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, for what is seen as temporary. We fix our eyes on what is unseen, for what is unseen is eternal. How does suffering lead to glory?

CLAY:

One of the biggest things, of course, is that I know that Christianity is objectively true because Jesus was raised from the dead.

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In fact, I used to Talbot School of Theology, I used to teach the course in defense of the Resurrection. Christianity is objective. That's how I know Christianity is objectively true, because Jesus really was raised from the dead. The reason I know that Christianity is subjectively true, at least the biggest reason, is that as I've seen God take me through periods of suffering, once that period of suffering ends, and sooner or later, it usually does, might take a long time, but I go, you know what?

I'm more like Jesus than I used to be. And so, Paul says in Romans, chapter five, he says, and we rejoice in our suffering because we know that suffering produces perseverance. And perseverance produces character, and character produces hope.

And I'll tell you, as I've gone through suffering, I've gone, you know, I'm more like Jesus than I used to be. We wish that it could be by sitting on the beach that we would really grow in Jesus by sitting on the beach or having a nice dinner out with friends and whatnot. No, I just—

That's not how you grow up. I'll just briefly talk about my first major trial in life. I became a Christian at 13. And my first major trial in life was that I was going to— Is that I thought I'd committed the unpardonable sin of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

And I was devastated. Here I'm only 14 years old, and I was devastated. I thought, this can't be. Now, I hadn't, but I thought I had. But the way I got myself out of it is I memorized the verses that assure us of salvation, like John 5:24.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my words and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He will not be judged but is passed from death to life. And I'd go, anyway, at the end of that trial, I started going, you know what? Two things occurred. Two major things. Well, one major thing is his internet froze.

JEAN E:

Yes.

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FRANK:

So jump in, Jean E. What was he going to say? You know your husband, you're married to him for 50 years.

JEAN:

Yes.

FRANK:

Where was he going with that?

JEAN:

He ended up memorizing all of these verses. And the discipline that he got from memorizing all these verses, it was hugely helpful to him. It helped him to begin to do better in school. It helped him to eventually be able to be a professor, even. But he learned to discipline his thoughts and control his thoughts.

And you know how Scripture says that we need to take every thought captive? And that's what he was learning to do. He was learning to take every thought captive. So that by the time he experienced cancer for the first time, for instance, he had the experience of controlling his thoughts, and relying on verses and the truth of verses, to help him through it.

FRANK:

Jean E., how does embracing the idea that suffering is part of life, and it's even part of the Christian life, and even Jesus himself learned obedience through suffering. Here is a human being in his human nature anyway, that, learned obedience through suffering.

He did not have a sin nature, yet he learned obedience through suffering. How does this acceptance of the fact that suffering is part of the Christian life and does have value, how did that help you to get through the suffering that you've been through?

JEAN:

It is absolutely essential.

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We have to be able to come to the point where we can say, hey, I know God is good, and if he's allowing this, he has a purpose for it, and he's going to work it for good. And because we know that, and because we know also that suffering is the way that God molds our character and makes us more Christlike, we can welcome suffering and even give thanks in the midst of it because we know God is changing us.

Clay said earlier about how he knew that God was subjectively real because of the character that he developed in him through suffering. It's the exact same for me. My life has changed so much, and my character has changed so much because of the suffering that God allowed and even brought into my life because he wanted to make me into a Christlike person.

FRANK:

Clay, when you froze there earlier, Jean E. completed your thought because she's been married to you for 50 years and she knew exactly where you were going, so.

CLAY:

Well, you know. Yeah, I'm sure she did. She's heard me say it many times. We complete each other's sentences all the time.

Anyway. Yeah, you know, I mean, the two major things. And I'm sure Jean E. said this, so I'll go fast. But was that I got an assurance of my salvation. And once you know you're saved, wow, that's huge. But the other thing is, I was a terribly undisciplined person and all of a sudden, I realized I could control my thoughts. Anyway.

FRANK:

Because you memorized a whole bunch of verses.

CLAY:

And whenever I'd get afraid that I'd committed the unpardonable sin, I would recite those verses in a loop, and that would cause me to go, I feel better now. But then I learned, you know what? I can take my thoughts captive and make them obey Christ.

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So that was really, that was valuable. Then it turns out for the Christian Research Journal, I wrote an article on what is the unpardonable sin. That was many years later, of course. But so there was, you know, I mean, there's—

I could go on, but I won't. So, there's a lot of blessings that came out of it.

FRANK:

By the way, if we can find that article, we'll put it in the show notes. We don't want to go down that rabbit trail right now, but we'll find that article about the unpardonable sin and put it in the show notes. But you also point out that it's important for us to remember times in the past where God has delivered us through suffering. Why is that important, Clay?

CLAY:

That's colossal. You know, the Lord constantly chides Israel when they're in the desert. He says, don't you remember how I brought you through the Red Sea, and I dried it up, and you walked through it, and then I killed Pharaoh's army?

Don't you remember when I brought water out of the rock? Or I brought, you know, and on and on. He says, you should remember, remember, remember. And because they wouldn't, they didn't remember. And then they just go, where's God? How come he's doing this to us? Nothing encourages me more that Christianity is true, than going, you know, seeing the Lord constantly deliver us.

Now, I'm talking subjectively of course, constantly deliver us from the sufferings that we're in. Jean E., by the way, three years ago, they wanted to put me into all these tests or clinical trials, and it turned out my ejection fraction was too low.

It was at 50, and it needed to be at 55 and my heart needed to be at 55 for me to be in these clinical trials. And Jean E. and I were really disappointed. Now we're thrilled because those trials, the Lord is keeping-- I don't have to take all these different drugs.

And in fact, my chief oncologist who is at Cedar Sinai, used to be at Harvard. He says, do not get into a clinical trial. He says, it would be harmful and they would think it was working.

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FRANK:

Yeah, well, thank God for unanswered prayer. I think that's a Garth Brooks song, right?

CLAY:

Well, that's true.

FRANK:

Too often we pray for things we think we know what we need and want, and in reality, it's the opposite.

CLAY:

Yeah, that's absolutely true.

FRANK:

Jean E., you write in the book, God's plan A for your life is to take you through regular periods of suffering, and there's no plan B.

JEAN:

Yes.

FRANK:

So unpack that. Why do you say that?

JEAN:

Oh, goodness. We don't grow very well when we're just sitting on the beach. We live here in sunny California. We've got beautiful beaches, and we can lounge all day by these beaches if we want.

But that's not how we grow in the Christian life. We have to go through regular times of suffering in order to grow our character. We also have to see others go through suffering so that we will reach out to them and help them. God wants us to be ministering to and taking care of the people around us that are suffering as well.

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FRANK:

Clay, how often do you think we learn valuable life lessons and character building lessons from pleasure?

CLAY:

It's close to zero. I mean, you can learn some things. You can go, you know, the Lord has given us-- You know, one of the things about heaven is, I mentioned about the angels. We're going to be sitting on clouds, sporting flightless wings. And none of that's true.

Not any of that that I mentioned earlier is true. We're going to the Lord-- Most often, or the Scripture most often compares heaven to a banquet. In Isaiah, it says we're going to be eating fatted meat.

And I'm thinking, like wagyu, fatted meat and aged wine. We're going to be eating and drinking the good stuff. And let me-- You know, I'm always hesitant to say this, but I do have a blog out entitled 'The Lord Made Orgasms Possible.' And my first two sentences after that are, you probably think that I wrote this to shock you, and I did, to shock you out of your satanically inspired stupor, that heaven is a place you don't want to go.

And so, we need to understand God is pro pleasure. And the things that we eat and drink here that are pleasurable is a little bit of a, you know, what's going to happen in heaven.

FRANK:

Yeah. People always ask, if there's a good God, why does He allow evil? We can deal with that in this podcast, but people never ask, why does God allow pleasure? They never complain about that, do they?

CLAY:

That's right.

FRANK:

Anyway, a lot more with Clay and Jean E. Jones right after this. Don't go anywhere.

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How does God use Suffering for Our Good? That's the brand-new book I endorsed, and several others endorsed because it's a great book for all of us, because we're all going to go through suffering at some point. You know, there's an old saying, what's the best time to get a friend? Before you need one.

What's the best time to prepare for pain and suffering? Before you go through it. This book will help you. Now, one of the techniques that you use, or you say is very valuable, Jean E., when you're going through pain and suffering is what you call a truth journal. Can you tell us about that?

JEAN:

Sure. When I was first a Christian as a teenager, I started keeping lists of scriptures that were really helpful and that spoke truths that I needed to learn because I didn't grow up in a Christian home.

So I had a lot of false beliefs. So I would just write them out. And that was the very start of what we now call is a truth journal. One of the things that are in the truth journal when we're going through a time of suffering is we write out scriptures that have to do with whatever it is we're going through.

Truth statement, such as God loves Jean E. Jones. Everybody has to go through something like this. So we've got scriptures, we've got truth statements, and then we have a page for remembrances. And this is essential.

We list the past times when we went through difficulty and suffering, and then the good that God worked out for it. This is taught in the Psalms. Psalm 71, for instance, is an example of where somebody is suffering, and potentially is going to lose his life.

But he starts out his prayer by remembering the ways that God helped him in the past. And by doing that and seeing how God helped us in the past times during difficulties, it causes us to have greater hope and assurance that He's going to help us as well in this time.

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And then we also include our prayer requests along with the answers yes, no, or still waiting to find out. And then I also like to write out prayers. I write out prayers based on Psalms, and on Philippians 4:4-7, which is rejoice in the Lord always.

Again, I say rejoice. And it gives me a time of really refocusing my mind on the goodness of God and all the good things he's done in the past, and that it gives great assurance for whatever we're going through at the time.

FRANK:

Jesus said, if they hated me, they're going to hate you. If they persecuted me, they're going to persecute you. Paul said, anyone who lives a faithful life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. And you both say this. Quoting Philippians 1:29.

You say, Paul writes this, quote, for it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake. Unquote. Clay, granted for us that we suffer? Is this God evil? Is He torturing? What's going on here?

CLAY:

Doing us a favor. But we don't often see it that way, right? Hebrews 11:12, you know, actually where it says, you know, at the time, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant. Later, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. And, you know, one day, as Jean E. mentioned, we weren't able. We took in abused foster children. And one day, we had three preteen teenage girls living with us at the same time.

One day, I thought they were being particularly rude, and I just left the house and went outside and was praying. Where I live in Laguna, Niguel, where I lived at that time, was just being built. A lot of houses were under construction, and I teared up.

And I said, Lord, why did none of these girls come to know you? You know, we're putting our lives into them. We had the police at our house seven times in two and a half years. And I said, Lord, what if they don't come to know you? And immediately the words came to mind, then you'll know the fellowship of my suffering.

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And I went, I get it. I understand that now. I didn't, you know, I mean that, you know, because the Lord, what, He sends His Son to be tortured to death on the cross for us, and most people reject Him. They don't want Him.

And so, it made me understand Jesus and the Father just a little bit better. And I could, you know, obviously there's not time for it, but I could go through one after another after another, where I went, well, this was really hard, but I went, okay, I get it. You know, I mean, thank you for that. I've learned I know you better than I used to know you, and that's extremely valuable.

FRANK:

Yeah. Talk about a ripple effect. That's the greatest ripple in history, where the innocent Son of God is tortured, murdered for our benefit. It leads to the salvation of anybody that wants salvation. So there's good coming from evil in the biggest way. And of course, if evil never entered the world, there wouldn't be any need for Jesus. Christianity is the answer to the problem of evil.

If we had never sinned, Jesus wouldn't have had to come. But we did sin. And so, out of his love for us, He did come to save us. Because God's infinite justice demands punishment. And if He doesn't want to punish us, He'll punish Himself in our place, which is exactly what happened. And there's more in the book, 'How Does God Use Suffering for Our Good?' Jean E., also in the book, you talk about how we're going to ultimately reign with Christ. What does that even mean?

JEAN:

Well, that's the interesting thing. You know, Clay talked earlier about how Satan has done this makeover, of heaven, making it look super boring and everything like that. But that's nothing like what the Scripture talks about. Instead, the Scripture talks about a new heaven, and new heavens and earth, and it talks about God, and Jesus having their thrones there with people, about a river, about fruit trees, about all these glorious things.

There is going to be a new earth, and that's where eternity is going to be. And not only that, the Scripture tells us that our occupation is not strumming harps and singing, although if that's

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what someone wants to do, I'm sure they can. Instead, our occupation is going to be reigning with Christ. Reigning with Christ.

CLAY:

The first verses of Genesis, when God creates Adam and Eve, it says, and they shall rule. And so, the first thing we're told about humankind is, and they shall rule over the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, and over all the animals that are on the land. The last verse of the last--

So that's in Genesis 1:26. So the first verse we know about humankind is, and they will rule. That God created humans to rule. The last verse of the last chapter, the last book of the Bible before the epilogue in Revelation-- The epilogue is, you know, don't add to these things or take away from them.

And I'm coming quickly. But before that, the last verse before that is Revelation 22:5, and it says, and they will reign forever and ever. So the first thing we're told about humankind is that we're going to rule. And the last thing we're told about humankind is and we're going to reign, forever, and ever, and ever.

That's our occupation. It's not sitting around, and strumming harps, and singing nonstop. It's not. That's not what God has planned for us. He talks about our reigning over cities. He talks about, you know, I mean, giving us true riches to be in charge of. That's what we're going to be doing. And not just anyway, like I say, singing, and playing harps.

I mean, as Jean E. said, I guess if you want to sing and play, well, we will be singing, there's no doubt. You know, I mean, that's just, everybody does that when they're happy, and we're going to be happy. But that's not all we're going to be doing. And anyway, so Satan—
Go ahead.

FRANK:

As you think of all the lessons that you've learned going through pain and suffering, name one or two other than the ones we've already spoken about that you think are very helpful for people, and that are contained in the book so when people get the book, they can go further.

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JEAN:

I think probably the biggest one is to stop chasing after people's approval. That's been huge. I thought I could love God with all my heart, and follow him with all my heart, and still be able to seek acceptance from people.

And it doesn't work that way, especially if you're seeking acceptance from somebody who's not Christlike, and who might be manipulative, and unkind, and just really happy to mistreat somebody who really wants approval. That's been a big one.

FRANK:

I guess if you really want approval and you don't get it, that's going to create your own level of pain and suffering.

JEAN:

True.

FRANK:

Yeah. When in reality, you don't need their approval. I know this sounds idealistic, but it's true. We really have an audience of one here.

JEAN:

Yes.

FRANK:

You know, we're to follow what Jesus wants us to follow. Not that we don't care what other people think. We do. But if it's about making them think well of us or following Jesus, we follow Jesus.

JEAN:

Exactly.

CLAY:

I'm glad you used—

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JEAN:

I was just going to say, if you're a people pleaser, it is so easy for others to manipulate you into all kinds of things.

CLAY:

I like the fact that you use the term, the phrase audience of one. Because that, I use that phrase all the time, too. And it's interesting that you would use it because, that's all. There's only one person's opinion at the end of the age that matters, and that's going to be the Lord's. What other people think doesn't matter. It's not important. It's all—

And Paul says as much. In 2 Corinthians, chapter four, he said, men ought to consider as servants of Christ and those entrusted with the secret things of God. He says, I've got to be faithful.

He goes on and talks about how I've got to be faithful over the things the Lord has entrusted me with, and then he will judge me at the last day. And I just can't emphasize that enough. And suffering is actually good because you begin—

The more you suffer, the less you go, you know, people's opinion of me is that important. It's just not.

FRANK:

I remember Peter Kreeft saying, I'll paraphrase what he said. He said, your life is not about happiness, or fulfillment, or any of these things. He said, your life is about training. And he said, this life is an awful resort, but it's a great, great gymnasium.

CLAY:

Yes.

FRANK:

Where you're going through difficulty because you're being prepared to reign with Christ. You're being prepared for the next life. And—

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CLAY:

And I'm ready to go. I mean, the only thing that's-- The only thing that's keeping me here, frankly, Paul said it perfectly. And that is, you know, for me to live is Christ, to die is gain. Life in the flesh, that proves fruitful labor. But He says to depart and be with Christ is much better.

FRANK:

Amen to that. Thank you, Clay and Jean E. Ladies and gentlemen, get the book 'How Does God Use Suffering for Our Good?' There's so much more than what we could talk about here on the program.

Obviously, it will help you. It might help somebody else that's going through pain and suffering right now that you know. Get the book. It'll be helpful. And Lord willing, we will see you here next time. God bless.

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