

Discipleship

2477

Session 8 Experiences

Experiences are the joys and trials that shape us for ministry

“²Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4

“³...but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope.” Romans 5:3 - 4

Maturing through Experiences

“³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3 - 4

Allowing God to comfort us means that we receive strength, encouragement and hope to deal with our troubles.

Who knows better how to comfort someone who's grieving the loss of a husband or wife, than someone who's lost a husband or wife?

Who can relate better to someone with an alcohol problem than a recovering alcoholic?

Who can relate better to someone going through a divorce than someone who's been divorced?

What are Your Experiences?

Spiritual – write down the times with God that have meant the most to you. Maybe this was when you were baptized, when you committed your life to Christ, a devotional time with your family, a conference or seminar that was life changing. Write down your spiritual experiences.

Painful – write down your painful experiences. These are problems, hurts or trials that have taught you to lean on Christ. You can't be effective in ministry unless you're willing to talk about these things. But once you're honest with them you realize that everybody's hurting in some way. The experiences you've gone through, God wants to use in your life to help other people. *Be fully transparent with yourself.*

Educational – write down your educational experiences. Where did you go to school? What were your favorite subjects? What did you really like in school?

Work – write down your work experiences. List the different companies you have worked for over the years. What were your achievements?

Ministry – write down your ministry experiences. How have you served in the past? What did you do in the past in church services? For some, that may be nothing, because you've never serviced before. Some of you may have one or two things on your list. Others may have a list that spans fifteen or twenty years of service.



...remember, if you're still breathing, He's not done with you yet...

For Reflection and Conversation

1. Pray that God will reveal the lessons He wants you to learn from your life.
2. Pick an experience in your life and determine how you might use it to minister to someone that is suffering a similar trouble.
3. He longs to use everything in your life. What's holding you back from becoming a conduit for His love?