

## **Tough Stuff: Barriers and Bridges – Having a Theology of Suffering**

Yancey Arrington

January 3, 2010

1. Read Job 5:7. Do you believe that suffering is an inherent part of human existence? What evidence do you see that this is true?
2. How has your awareness of suffering changed over the course of your life? Has it lessened or intensified as you have gotten older?
3. How do you tend to respond to suffering: denial, hopelessness, bitterness, anger, faith?
4. How have you seen suffering acting as a barrier between others and God? In what areas has suffering been a barrier in your relationship with God?
5. How have you seen others' suffering provide them with a bridge to a deeper relationship with God? In what ways have you experienced this?
6. Read Psalm 51:8, Psalm 119:71, Romans 5:2-5, and James 1:2. Do any of these verses exemplify your typical response to suffering? How do you need to shift your mindset to adhere more closely to the truth in these verses?
7. Read Acts 5:40-42. In what ways does this passage highlight your need to grow in faith?
8. What suffering have you experienced (or are you experiencing) in your life? How can you allow that suffering to be a bridge to rejoicing rather than a barrier?
9. How can your group pray over each other in the midst of suffering, not simply that suffering be removed but that our suffering becomes a bridge rather than a barrier? Please spend some time sharing and praying together.