

**O MY STRENGTH, I WILL SING PRAISES TO YOU:
HOW TO SING WHEN YOU SUFFER
EPHESIANS 5:18-21
JULY 20, 2008**

Questions for Study and Reflection

1. Ponder this quote from Richard Baxter (cited in John Piper's *When the Darkness will not Lift*): "Resolve to spend most of your time in thanksgiving and praising God. If you cannot do it with the joy that you should, yet do it as you can. You have not the power of your comforts: but have you no power of your tongues? Say not that you are unfit for thanks and praises unless you have a praising heart and were the children of God: for every man, good and bad, is bound to praise God, and to be thankful for all that he hath received, and to do it as well as he can, rather than leave it undone... Doing it as you can is the way to be able to do it better. Thanksgiving stirs up thankfulness in the heart."
2. Pastor Charlie said that 35 of the first 50 Psalms (70%) deal with suffering in some way. Why do you think so many of these songs arose out of suffering?
3. Do you struggle with the difference between the way our culture thinks about suffering and the way the Bible thinks about it? Why or why not?
4. Read John 16:33, Luke 9:23-24, 1 Thessalonians 3:1-4, Romans 6:5, and Philippians 3:7-11 in context and discuss how Jesus and Paul want us to think about suffering. How does this point of view relate to singing praise to God?
5. Pastor Charlie said that in suffering God reveals himself to us and shapes our character to be more like Christ. Do you agree with this? If so, how does this relate to singing the praises of God?
6. Do you tend to have faith in God when you suffer, or do you begrudge God for it? How can you grow in this?