

LISTENER GUIDE

A Different Kind of Freedom

by Joni Eareckson Tada (True Woman '14)

Freedom for me has never been—and it continues not to be—an easy thing to pursue.

While God did not grant Joni freedom from her physical problems, she still wanted to know what the Bible had to say about healing.

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons (Mark 1:35–38).

The people’s _____ problems weren’t Jesus’ main focus—the _____ was.

Whenever people started coming to Jesus just to get their _____ fixed, the Savior would always _____.

To me, healing had always been the big deal; freedom from this physical problem had always been the big deal. But to God, my soul was a much bigger deal. That’s when I started searching for a different kind of freedom, a deeper kind of healing.

Joni’s prayer: Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (Ps. 139:23).

God will _____ in your _____ the things from which you really do need to be set free.

Sometimes, God does not _____ hardships, but instead _____ them our way to _____ the sin in our hearts.

And pain and problems and paralysis become the lemon that He squeezes to reveal the spitefulness and the selfishness.

Joni realized that God had delivered her from the only kind of suffering that could ever harm her—separation from Him.

Every trial, every test, every ounce of suffering that touches our lives is designed by God to in order to enlarge our soul’s capacity for Jesus.

_____ is the textbook that will show you the stuff of which you are really made.

It is worth any amount of suffering to be Jesus' _____.

As Christians, we are called to suffer.

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps (1 Pet. 2:21).

If Jesus learned _____ through the things that He suffered, then we should follow in His steps. We are not above our Master.

What is the key to freedom?

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God (1 Pet. 4:1-2).

The key— 1) having the same _____ toward suffering as Christ; and 2) living for the _____ of God.

God's "no" answer to Joni's request to remove her from her circumstances has

- meant a deeper empathy for other people who suffer.
- forced her to depend on His grace.
- increased her compassion for others who hurt.
- put complaining behind her.
- stretched her hope for heaven.
- pushed her deeper into God's Word.
- given her a lively, buoyant life of prayer.
- drawn her much closer to Jesus.

God may grant you _____ from suffering. But if not, He will use it to _____ anything and everything that stands in the way of His _____ with you.

Jesus is heaven-bent on getting as close and intimate and personal with you as He possibly can. And He's going to squeeze that lemon so that your soul, sin-free, can be better bonded to His heart. And you will enjoy ecstasy beyond compare . . . ecstasy that will see you through any and every disappointment. That's what freedom feels like.

LISTENER GUIDE - ANSWER KEY

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And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons (Mark 1:35–38).

The people’s physical problems weren’t Jesus’ main focus—the gospel was.Whenever people started coming to Jesus just to get their problems fixed, the Savior would always back away.*To me, healing had always been the big deal; freedom from this physical problem had always been the big deal. But to God, my soul was a much bigger deal. That’s when I started searching for a different kind of freedom, a deeper kind of healing.***Joni’s prayer: Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (Ps. 139:23).**God will expose in your heart the things from which you really do need to be set free.Sometimes, God does not remove hardships, but instead pushes them our way to reveal the sin in our hearts.*And pain and problems and paralysis become the lemon that He squeezes to reveal the spitefulness and the selfishness.*

Joni realized that God had delivered her from the only kind of suffering that could ever harm her—separation from Him.

Every trial, every test, every ounce of suffering that touches our lives is designed by God to in order to enlarge our soul’s capacity for Jesus.

Suffering is the textbook that will show you the stuff of which you are really made.It is worth any amount of suffering to be Jesus’ intimate friend.

As Christians, we are called to suffer.

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If Jesus learned obedience through the things that He suffered, then we should follow in His steps. We are not above our Master.

What is the key to freedom?

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