Lesson Five—Part 1

Fr. Robert J. Spitzer, S.J.

Happiness, Suffering, and the Love of God
Happiness, Suffering and the Love of God

How to Suffer Well

Prayer

By Claude LeBlanc, M.A., © Magis Center, 2017
Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we have learned many ways to pray, but still we want to pray better. May we come to understand the true simplicity of prayer and the beauty that having a conversation with you can be. Amen.
LEsson Five, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

Take It Home Review: Large Class Sharing

1. Share your answers to the ‘What is Prayer?’ assignment.
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Supplemental Video 1: “What is Prayer?”
Watch at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LG_3pX88fM
“At its essence, prayer is simply talking to God.”

(From: “What is Prayer?”)
Take It Home Review: Large Class Sharing

1. What do you think about the video, ‘What is Prayer?’
Take It Home Review: Large Class Sharing

1. What do you think about the video, ‘What is Prayer?’
2. Do your assignment reflections agree or disagree with it? If they disagree in any way; how, and why?
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

1. What are the four steps to suffering well that Fr. Spitzer presented?
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a) Remembering essential points about God and suffering.
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

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   b) Using spontaneous prayer as a conduit of grace.
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c) Developing useful natural principles and virtues, and
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

1. What are the four steps to suffering well that Fr. Spitzer presented?
   a) Remembering essential points about God and suffering.
   b) Using spontaneous prayer as a conduit of grace.
   c) Developing useful natural principles and virtues, and
   d) Learning to follow the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
2. Who is God according to Jesus?
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

2. Who is God according to Jesus? 
He is the father of the prodigal son, with unconditional compassion, patience, affection, and mercy for us, his children.
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

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3. What do we need to do if this is not our understanding of God?
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He is the father of the prodigal son, with unconditional compassion, patience, affection, and mercy for us, his children.

3. What do we need to do if this is not our understanding of God?
Let go of our misconceptions and come back to Abba—Jesus’ revelation of who God is.
4. What view of suffering is incompatible with Jesus’ revelation of God?
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

4. What view of suffering is incompatible with Jesus’ revelation of God?

That God causes suffering directly as retribution (punishment) for sin.

GOD IS LOVE
Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.
1 JOHN 4:16
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

5. What view of suffering is compatible with Jesus’ revelation of God?
5. What view of suffering is compatible with Jesus’ revelation of God?

God allows suffering to occur through human beings (by creating us in his own image—with freedom), and through nature (by creating an imperfect world) because he wants us to pursue virtue, work for a better world, and participate with him in building the Kingdom of God.
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

6. What does God want us to use our freedom for?
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

6. What does God want us to use our freedom for?
   To self-define our identities out of love.

God whispers to us in our pleasures, but shouts in our pains; it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

C.S. Lewis
6. What does God want us to use our freedom for?
To self-define our identities out of love.
7. Why is it necessary for God to allow suffering?
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

6. What does God want us to use our freedom for?
To self-define our identities out of love.

7. Why is it necessary for God to allow suffering?
There are some things we can learn, and some ways we can change, only through suffering.
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: *How to Suffer Well—Prayer*

8. Does God, then, want us to suffer?
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No! But, as a loving Father, he shared it with us and wants us to ask that it be alleviated. Jesus asked the Father for this very thing in his prayer at Gethsemane.
8. Does God, then, want us to suffer? No! But, as a loving Father, he shared it with us and wants us to ask that it be alleviated. Jesus asked the Father for this very thing in his prayer at Gethsemane.

9. What can suffering accomplish that nothing else can?
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

8. Does God, then, want us to suffer? No! But, as a loving Father, he shared it with us and wants us to ask that it be alleviated. Jesus asked the Father for this very thing in his prayer at Gethsemane.

9. What can suffering accomplish that nothing else can? The best chance of our being the loving and compassionate people God wants us to be in this world, and having eternal salvation and union with him in the next.
10. What are spontaneous prayers and how do they help us?
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They are short prayers, easy to remember and easily repeated, that when repeated with trust, are not only calming during times of suffering, but also excellent conduits of grace. They help us get into a very productive mode of prayer quickly.
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

11. What are some of the best and most common spontaneous prayers, and how can we benefit from them?
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a. “Help!” This is to the point, and not beneath using to approach our loving Father.
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b. The Hail Mary. We can benefit immediately from Mary’s intercessory prayers to the Father. (continued)
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: *How to Suffer Well—Prayer*

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LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

11. What are some of the best and most common spontaneous prayers, and how can we benefit from them?

   c. “Lord, snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.” When defeat seems immanent, beg God for victory over it.

   d. “I give up Lord; you take care of it.” Give all your worries, concerns and problems to God for him to deal with. This allows you to more fully trust in God. (continued)
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

e. “Lord, make optimal good and salvation come out of this suffering.”

Trust that God only wants good. This prayer helps us accept God’s will and “offer it up” no matter the situation.
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

e. “Lord, make optimal good and salvation come out of this suffering.”

Trust that God only wants good. This prayer helps us accept God’s will and “offer it up” no matter the situation.

f. “Lord, make optimal good come out of whatever harm I might have caused.” As we pray this, the Holy Spirit works in those we have harmed, and us as well. (continued)
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   g. “Lord, push back the foreboding.” When we feel there’s evil and darkness coming upon us, we can say this prayer and push back at the same time. (continued)
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h. “Lord, forgive my sins”, or the prayer of the tax-collector, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man” (of whom Jesus said he went home justified) followed by, “I accept your forgiveness, Lord.” (continued)
11. What are some of the best and most common spontaneous prayers, and how can we benefit from them?
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i. “Thy loving will be done.” We need to remind ourselves that God’s will is ultimately loving, so that we can accept his will no matter what. St. Ignatius’ prayer, “Take, Lord, Receive” is an extended example of this. This is especially useful during times of anger and temptation.
Take, Lord, & Receive
all my liberty,
my memory,
my understanding
and my entire will,
all I have & call my own.
You have given all to me:
to you, Lord, I return it.
everything is yours.
do with it what you will.
give me only your love
and your grace.
that is enough for me.
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

Supplemental Video 2: “Take, Lord, Receive”
Watch at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pfxzb72fV3E
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

Small Group Activity
Discuss the Reflection and Discussion Questions chosen by your teacher, then share your thoughts with the class.
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Take it Home
Complete the handout, What is Virtue?, for the next session.
LESSON FIVE, Part 1: How to Suffer Well—Prayer

Closing Prayer

Lord, I thank you for being so readily available to me in prayer. May I never forget that you desire a relationship of trust and support even more than I ever would. Amen.
Next time we’ll cover
Lesson Five, Part 2:
How to Suffer Well—Virtue

See You Then!