

# Sierra's Weekly Message Action Plan



This week's Action Plan will be a little different in that it is mostly for those of you who are suffering . . . especially if it isn't obvious to you why you are suffering.

I listed Six Steps on the Path to Wisdom, from John Walton's commentary on Job (see below):

1. Trust God rather than blame him or make demands of him for explanations.
2. Trust God for strength to endure.
3. Don't expect it all to make sense.
4. Channel resentment toward the fallenness of the world, not the God who has given all to initiate its redemption.
5. Resist succumbing to the temptation to believe that you could run this world better than God does.
6. Above all, trust that he is wise.

I shared the story of a young woman who has, and is still, enduring painful suffering as a result of an auto accident when she was 12-years-old. I'm including a small portion of her testimony. If you are suffering . . . read her words and allow them to sink into the deepest part of your heart and mind. Then begin taking her advice and join her on the Path of Wisdom.

*Walton asks Kelly:* As you read Job 28 and the present chapter (in the commentary) and reflect on the list above, what makes sense and what doesn't? Have any of these worked for you as you have tried to struggle through your circumstances? We would even like to know specifically which ones work and maybe which ones don't.

*Kelly:* After reading Job 28 and meditating on the meaning of the text and then reading the list above, I think to myself there is so much depth and truth in each point on the list, but how do I convey to the reader the magnitude of each step without appearing clichéd? I guess I can start with stating that when I look at this list, I think every point is a great step on the path to wisdom, but so many of these points seem almost impossible without God's power.

I know if I had looked at this list in the spring of 2009 . . . I would want to trust God and have strength, not demand an explanation, or not have resentment, but I would feel helpless and feel as though I did not have the power to do so.

When you are in a place of brokenness, you desire to feel close to God, to trust him and his will, but so many times the cycle of destructive thoughts wins the battle and brings you back to a place of frustration. Well, I shouldn't say frustration, because I was once told that "frustration" is a secondary emotion to either anger or sadness. So I guess it is more accurate to state that *when destructive thoughts won the battle over wisdom, it brought me back to a place of sadness.*

So I think a key component to following these points *as you seek wisdom, is first and foremost to pray and ask God to help you each step of the way*. Now as clichéd as that may sound, the power of prayer is vital, especially during a period of great suffering.

I remember distinctly when I started to heal and get back on my own two feet, while still dealing with the same trails and pain, I had to *let go fully of any type of control*, which also relates to *point 5*, because it was not going to be by my strength or power that I was going to get through this.

So if you're angry with God, turn *to* him and start approaching him—even in your anger. Start spending time in the Word and making time for the Lord, to get to a place where you can reach the goal of *point 4*, “*Channel resentment toward the fallenness of the world, not the God who has given all to initiate its redemption.*”

So I think what makes sense to me is making point 4 the first point on the list. I say this because in my experience, *I don't believe that you can get to a place of fully trusting God if you have not first dealt with your anger and resentment toward him*. After getting to a place where you have realized that your anger needs to be channeled toward the fallenness in our world, you can begin the process of fully trusting him.

So the process of pursuing wisdom in light of my trials started with praying for the power to do so: *praying for the power to trust God and for the strength to endure*, to *let go of control*, and to *realize you can't run the world*; and *praying for faith and trusting that he is wise*.

For me, when I am in this process of struggling with my circumstances and trying to trust God, I have had a hard time with the second part of *point 1*, to *not “make demands of him for explanations.”*

We know God can bring good from our suffering, but *it is important to differentiate between having hope that God has a reason and purpose, and being content not knowing what it is*. This is the process of simply trusting that God is good and wise rather than demanding the reason, or manufacturing a reason to “satisfy our desire for coherency.”

When our focus is solely on the pain and “figuring out” the trial we are in, *our prayer life can become a desperate plea for an escape*. We can get consumed by praying for God to remove this thorn from our life instead of *praying and trusting God for the strength to endure it*.

So I would say each point makes sense and is one that I have wrestled with throughout the process, and I think that it is important to recognize that *it is a process*. It is *not* a “six easy steps to wisdom” crash course. It is a continual struggle, but God does reward you with wisdom and perspective the more time you spend meditating on those things.

*JHW*: Is there anything you can add to the list?

Kelly: After thinking about my struggle to follow the path of wisdom while in the fire, I decided that a couple more points or additions might be helpful for some. I would add a *second part to point 3*. “Don't expect it to all make sense, *and pray for a heavenly perspective.*” Oftentimes when we are in a hardship, as I mentioned before, it consumes us and our thoughts. All we see, think, or feel is related to the pain or struggle we are in. We need to take a step back and look at this experience from a wider-angle view. When we come to terms with the fact that we cannot expect everything to make sense, we need to pray for a heavenly perspective to be at peace with that uncertainty, which also relates back to trusting God and his will.

The one other point I would add is to *be sure to stay connected and spend time with godly people and/or mentors*. When my left arm was losing feeling and strength daily, I went through a period where I didn't want to be around my friends, mentors, or community, and it was in that period that I felt the weakest. When we are alone, we can dwell on the pain that we are experiencing and often get into a dark downhill spiral of thoughts. God can use those people to remind you of truth and help you get out of an unhealthy thought pattern. But as we learned in Job, your friends do not always offer the best advice or encouragement, so *be wise with the people you chose to play that role in your life*.

May God meet you on the path and lead you to a place of trust and greater confidence in his wisdom and love for you. May he grant you “heavenly perspective” and peace in your circumstances.

Pastor John