



Beyond SUFFERING

A CHRISTIAN
VIEW
ON DISABILITY
MINISTRY



Instructor Information

Instructor Name

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General Information

Description

Beyond Suffering: A Christian View on Disability Ministry is a ground-breaking course of study created to transform the way Christians view God's plan for disability and suffering. This course will give the student a solid understanding of the main issues involved in various aspects of disability ministry. This course will cover an overview of disability ministry, the theology of suffering, the church and disability ministry, and an introduction to bioethics.

Expectations and Goals

This course will enhance the student's understanding of God's purpose in suffering and disability, and challenge the student's vision for service in a local or global ministry. Students will be able to:

- Identify some of the most prominent physical and intellectual disabilities.
- Gain an understanding of the theology of suffering and disability and consider perspectives and assumptions about disability.
- Understand Biblical teachings regarding reaching the most vulnerable in communities around the globe.
- Gain practical insight into how the church can implement the Biblical truths of disability ministry.
- Address issues of ethical issues in medicine and become a reliable source of information and guidance for these issues.

Course Materials

Required Materials

Tada, J., Bundy, S., Verbal, P., (2011) *Beyond Suffering Study Guide*, The Christian Institute on Disability, Joni and Friends International Disability Center, Agoura Hills, CA

Brock, B. & Swinton, J. (2012) *Disability and the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI

Course Schedule

Week	Topic
Lesson 1	Why Minister to People with Disabilities
Lesson 2	What Defines a Disability?
Lesson 3	A Historical Perspective on Disability
Lesson 4	The Global Reach of Disability
Lesson 5	God's Sovereignty and Human Freedom: A Scriptural Perspective
Lesson 6	The Problem of Evil and Suffering in Our World
Lesson 7	Hope: A Proper View of Healing
Lesson 8	The Gospel of Luke: A Framework for a Theology of Suffering & Disability
Lesson 9	Major Challenges of the Church on the Path to Maturity
Lesson 10	How to Start a Disability Ministry in the Church
Lesson 11	Ministering to Children and Teens with Special Needs
Lesson 12	Ministering to Adults and the Elderly with Special Needs
Lesson 13	Outreach and Evangelism to Families Affected by Disability
Lesson 14	Networking with Disability Ministries & Organizations
Lesson 15	What is Biomedical Ethics?
Lesson 16	Ethical Issues at the Edges of Life

Assignments, points

1. Personal Starting Points Paper (2 Pages): 20 points

This paper will express the student's own assumptions, initial beliefs and thoughts about this topic. Students should be sure to reflect deeply on their own thoughts, experiences and biases. Though brief, this paper is a very important part of the course.

2. An Exegetical Paper (Inductive Bible Study) (18-20 Pages): 100 points

The Bible is God's instrument to equip his people for every work of ministry he calls them to (2 Tim. 3.16-17). In this paper, you will do an exegesis of a passage(s) related to suffering and/or disability. The goal of this assignment is to allow you to experience Scripture's ability to impact your lives and ministries in a powerful way.

The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to do a detailed study of a major passage of Scripture. The overall objective is to enable you to understand a biblical text in its original context. It is important that you learn how to exegete (explain, interpret) Scripture for yourselves and for others.

In order to do an exegesis, you must be committed to understand the meaning of the passage in its own setting. Once you know what it meant, you can then draw out principles that apply to all of us, and then relate those principles to life. The following simple three-step process can help guide you in your study of the Bible passage:

1. What was God saying to the people in the text's original, situation? You must take into consideration the historical, literary, and cultural context of your chosen passage.
2. What truths does the text teach that is true for all people everywhere, including today?
3. What is the Holy Spirit asking me to do with these truths here, today, in my life and ministry? Once you have answered these questions, you are ready to explain your insights for your written assignment.

Sample Outline for Exegetical Project and Paper Criteria:

1. Explain the main idea of your selected text in its historical, literary & cultural context.
2. Summarize the meaning of the passage.
3. Discuss one to three key insights this text provides concerning some aspect of suffering and/or disability and/or disability ministry and/or God's character.
4. Tell how one or more of these insights may relate to one or more of the following:
 - Your personal walk with Christ.
 - Your life and ministry in your church.
 - Situations or challenges related to suffering and/or disability.

As a reference, please feel free to read the commentaries or Bible dictionaries and integrate insights from them into your work. Make sure that you give credit to whom credit is due if you borrow or build upon someone else's insights. Use references, footnotes, or endnotes. You must be consistent with whatever form of citation you use.

Make sure that your exegetical paper meets the following criteria:

1. It is well written or typed.
2. It is turned in on time.
3. It is at least 18-20 pages in length.
4. It follows the outline given above, clearly laid out for the reader to follow.
5. It shows how the passage relates to disability ministry.

All you need to show in this paper is that you studied the passage, summarized its meaning, drew out a few key principles from it, and related them to your own life and ministry.

3. The Disability Ministry Project (3-4 Pages): 100 points

In order to receive credit for this course, you must gain hands-on experience by participating in some aspect of disability ministry. This ministry project calls for you to spend at least four hours gaining practical experience. You can create your own ministry opportunity or select one of the following:

1. Visit and interact with a church disability ministry.
2. Evaluate and assess your church's interest in beginning a disability ministry or their needs for improving an existing ministry.
3. Interview an individual who works in the field of disability ministry.
4. Interview an individual with a disability or a family who has a member with a disability. Seek to gracefully listen and learn from their perspective regarding life with a disability.
5. Visit a disability-related support group.
6. Shadow a home health RN, physical therapist, or occupational therapist.

Write a three-page paper describing the type of ministry or group you observed, detailing your experience and the lessons you learned. Be sure to include perceptions regarding strengths and weaknesses as well as thoughts and ideas for improvement and growth.

4. Beyond Suffering Lesson Reflection Questions at the End of Each Lesson: 20 points each lesson (320 points total)

You are required to answer the reflection questions at the end of each lesson in the Beyond Suffering Study Guide. These questions are intended to help you reflect on the main themes of each lesson, as well as the arguments and thoughts of the particular reading assignments.

5. Critical Response Essay: *Disability in the Christian Tradition* (5-6 pages): 80 points

Criteria:

1. Select one chapter. (For example, Chapter 1, *The Patristic Era: Early Christian Attitudes Towards the Disfigured Outcast*)
2. Summarize the main contribution that the primary text makes to a Christian understanding of disability.
3. Describe your response to the secondary author's essay and their critique.

4. Assess the significance of the primary text and the secondary author's analysis for your own understanding of the theology of disability. (For example, what difference does Bonhoeffer's reinterpretation of Luther's "Orders of Creation" make for how you think about people affected by disability? What is the relevance of this insight, if any, for contemporary disability ministry).

6. *Disability in the Christian Tradition* Weekly Reflection Questions
10 points each chapter(150 points total)

You will be required to answer two discussion questions each week about one of the essays in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*.

6. Final Reflection Paper (3 Pages): 30 points

Your final reflection paper should include the following:

1. Re-read your Starting Points Paper. How has your perspective on suffering and disability changed or grown through the course of the semester?
2. Reflect on the impact the ministry project has had on your spiritual life— in terms of your view of suffering and disability, the world, and your responsibilities as a follower of Christ.

Grading:

Assignment	Points
Starting Points Paper	20
Exegetical Paper	100
Disability Ministry Project	100
Lesson Reflection Questions (20 Points each lesson)	320

Grading Scale	
A (94%-100%)	752-800
B (86%-93%)	688-751
C (78%-85%)	624-687
D (70-77%)	560-623
F (0-69%)	0-559