

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW HUMAN SUFFERING?

- A. **This** may be one of the first & most important questions ever considered by man.
1. The question has many answers, but most people won't accept them, because they are found within God's holy word.
- B. **I will** state the question in a couple of ways, & you may have heard someone ask these questions.
1. "Why does an all-loving, all-powerful God allow human suffering, even among His own children?"
 2. "If God wants us to believe that He loves the world, why does He allow so much human suffering, even among the innocent."

C. **Job** wondered about his own case of suffering, but God didn't give him the answer he expected.

1. But thanks to the divine record, we know a little more about Job's case than he knew.
2. But like Job, we still have our questions about suffering don't we?

D. **Suffering** takes many forms.

1. Persecutions

1 Pet 2:20-23 – For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good & suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

Heb 12:3-5 – For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary & discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

Ready To Suffer: Ready to suffer grief or pain, ready to stand the test; ready to stay at home & send others if He sees best. (**Chorus**) Ready to go, or ready to stay, ready my place to fill; ready for service lowly or great, ready to do His will.

2. Natural disasters (tornados, earthquakes: **China**, cyclones: **Myanmar**, hurricanes, tsunamis).

3. Mental illness (various facets) & physical diseases (all sorts).

4. Mental anxiety (internal & external causes) & physical distresses (aging body).

a. At times we would all like to sing, “No body knows the trouble I’ve seen.”

E. **There** are at least two reasons people cannot accept the concept of an all-powerful & all-loving God allowing human suffering.

1. They don’t understand the nature of God:

a. He can be severe on those people & nations that propagate sin.

b. Because He is HOLY or righteous; He is separated from sinners.

Rom 11:22 – Therefore consider the goodness & severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

Heb 7:25-26 – He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, & has become higher than the heavens.

2. A second reason people cannot accept a God of love & power who allows suffering in the world He created is that people don’t understand the nature of this world.

a. God didn’t design this world to fulfill all of our pleasures, but that’s how man tries to use it.

- b. This earth is a fallen world, a decaying & dieing world; it is a world that *is “up against the ropes & about to go down for the 10 count”*.

2 Pet 3:7 – But the heavens & the earth which are now preserved by the same word [of God], are reserved for fire until the Day of Judgment & perdition of ungodly men

- c. “We are marching through Immanuel’s ground, to fairer worlds on high.”

- d. And while we’re on Immanuel’s ground we need to be doing Immanuel’s business.

[But as with every difficult issue, only God’s word can clear up the muddy water of our confusion.

The purpose of this series of lessons on human suffering is two-fold:

- **To** let God explain from His word why He allows suffering to occur
- **To** explain how we can keep a reverent attitude toward Him & to have positive outlook on life when we are subjected to suffering.]

{Why does God allow suffering?}

- I. **TO DIMINISH THE APPEAL OF PHYSICAL LIFE**
{He does not want us to find life here all that appealing}

- A. **This point** will only mean something to those of us who know there is a life after death.

1. Paul said, “Life & immortality” have been brought to light through the gospel (2 Tim 1:10).

2 Cor 5:1-5 – For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, ~~having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.~~ 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

Heb 13:14 – For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come

1. If you could live without ever suffering, & if you never saw suffering in others, then you would be content to remain here, because you would see no need to prepare for a better place –
God does not want that to happen to anyone.

2. No, it is not God's desire that we eke out a miserable existence each day, but human suffering is one way He can get our attention in hope of leading us to His heavenly home.

{Why does God allow suffering?}

II. TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN US

{He want us to be like His Son}

- A. **You've** heard the saying, "Adversity builds character".
 1. One who is subjected to hardships in life can develop many great qualities, like *honesty, perseverance, leadership, compassion*.
 2. But God wants to do more than build character in us; He want to form His Son in us (**Rom 8:29; Gal 4:19; Col 1:27**).
 3. To be like Jesus, we must go through some of the same trials He went through for us: *hatred & rejection for standing on God's truth*.

- B. **Have** you noticed that natural disasters bring out the best in people?

1. In places where there are great losses & serious injuries & disease people will come from all over the world to relieve the suffering.
2. Many of those people may do that work for reasons that have nothing to do with God.
 - a. In fact many often blame God for being helpless to avert the tragedy.

- C. **But** when a Christian helps someone through a time of suffering, he is not carrying-on where God has failed; he is striving to be Christ like, to excel in love & compassion for others.

Acts 10:38 – God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit & with power, who went about doing good & healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

1. God could have prevented bad things from happening when Jesus walked the earth, but He did not. Why?

a. To bring out the best in His Son Jesus Christ.

2. God could have commanded Jesus to heal the whole world, but He did not. Why?

a. To demonstrate, through personal contact with Jesus, that God is a compassionate God (Heb 5:1-10).

b. To draw attention to the fact that we are living in world of sin, sickness & death (Rom 3:23; 6:23).

c. To point man to the better life in heaven promised in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Col 1:5; Heb 10:34; 1 Pet 1:4).

3. Paul stated that our personal suffering can bring out the very best in US (God's people) too.

Rom 5:3-4— we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 & perseverance, character; & character, hope.

a. I have had the pleasure of getting to know some of my brothers & sister in Christ BETTER because someone dear to them was suffering.

b. Now I don't enjoy sickness & death, but I have seen Christians achieve their greatest potential for love, compassion & faithfulness to the Lord during those times.

c. God wants to see those qualities in all of us because they remind Him of His Son — the express image of His person.

d. But how do our tribulations produce "hope" in us?

Answer: Can you think of anything that has a greater potential to build in YOU the confident expectation of going to heaven than to know that all YOUR suffering is not in vain.

Suffering serves a purpose in the life of a Christian, it is a constant reminder that OUR heavenly Father wants to take US to a place where suffering cannot exist.

CLOSING

- A. These are just the first two reasons why an all-loving & powerful God, a righteous & merciful God allows so much suffering in the world.

- B. We could never understand this subject from our human point of view, but as we allow God to explain the matter from His word, the clouds of our doubts & uncertainties will begin to fade away.

Isa 55:8-9 – “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, & My thoughts than your thoughts.”
