

Common Suffering

Does the existence of Evil preclude the existence of God?

If evil exists, is He unwilling to prevent it? Is He incapable of preventing it? How could an all wise, all powerful, and good God allow such evil?

Is God's love incompatible with our suffering? NO!

John 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. **3** Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." **4** When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." **5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

Is our suffering without purpose?

NO!

John 9:1 Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. **2** And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" **3** Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

Is suffering always the result of our sin? NO!

Luke 13:4 "Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

Does our suffering always have a purpose?

YES!

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Suffering is common to all men because...

- **All have sinned.**
 - **Galatians 6:7** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.
- **Men choose to sin against one another.**
 - **1 Thessalonians 2:14** For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, 16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

- **Believers will suffer discipline.**
 - **Hebrews 12:6** For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."
 - **1 Corinthians 11:28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.
- **Because believers choose to live godly lives.**
 - **2 Timothy 3:12** Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.
- **Because believers will be tested.**
 - **1 Peter 1:6** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,
 - **James 1:2** My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Because God will use suffering to...

- Share a testimony.
 - **2 Timothy 2:8** Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. 10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. **2 Corinthians 4:12** So then death is working in us, but life in you. 13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak,
 - **1 Peter 3:13** And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

- **Provide comfort to others.**
 - **2 Corinthians 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.
- **Remove pride.**
 - **2 Corinthians 12:7** And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

- **Teach obedience.**
 - **Hebrews 5:6** As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek"; 7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Sustain spiritual growth.

·2 Corinthians 11:24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness -- 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? 30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. 31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;

God uses suffering to...

- Share our testimony
- Provide comfort to others
- Remove pride
- Teach obedience
- Provide spiritual growth

Suffering is...

- Real
- Personal
- Painful
- Perplexing
- Progressive
- Powerful

1 Peter 3:13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

What are we to
do?

- ***Don't try to make sense of the evil.***
- ***Remember suffering brings blessing***
 - **Philippians 2:17** Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.
 - **Philippians 2:18** For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.
 - **Colossians 1:24** I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,
 - **1 Peter 1:6** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,
 - **1 Peter 4:13** but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Do not be afraid.

John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

Matthew 10:25 "It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!

Matthew 10:26 "Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

- ***Sanctify the Lord God in your heart.***
- ***Be ready with an answer.***
- ***Have a clear conscience.***
- ***Let God take care of the persecutor.***
- ***Chose the better way to go.***
- ***Rest in His plan, His will.***
 - 1 Peter 4:19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

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- *Remember suffering brings blessing*
- *Do not be afraid.*
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