

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

There is suffering on a global scale with floods, famines, drought, earthquakes, etc. We call these, “natural disasters”. They cause enormous suffering on those directly affected.

There is suffering on an individual scale through death, disease, accidents, broken relationships, additions, abuse, poverty, injustice, etc.

This is not an issue with all religions but is an acute problem for Christianity.

C.S. Lewis said it this way, “If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy and if God were almighty, e would be able o to what He wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore, God lacks either goodness or power or both.”

The Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-fold Path

The Four Noble Truths are:

- Life is suffering
- The cause of suffering is desire
- The end of suffering comes with an end to having desires
- There is a path which leads one away from craving and suffering

The Eight-Fold Path

- Right View
- Right Intention
- Right Speech
- Right Action
- Right Livelihood
- Right Effort
- Right Mindfulness
- Right Concentration

Hindus believe that your current life was determined by your previous life (karma) so suffering is explained in that way. Reincarnation is just another life cycle that you endure as you move toward perfection.

God’s Original Creation was without suffering. – Genesis 1-2

- God gave us free will – choice.
- God gave us one commandment – don’t eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- We rebelled against God
- Two results – sin entered into the world and death passed on to all men. (Romans 5
- Three curses – serpent, woman, man (and indirectly the earth/natural order)
- So in a very real sense, there was no suffering until there was sin.

Personal Sin and Suffering

Some of our suffering is a direct result of our own poor choices. We break God's laws and the laws of our society we usually suffer consequences.

Sexual sin produces disease, unwanted pregnancies, broken relations/homes/marriages and deep emotional problems for many.

Unhealthy lifestyles – smoking causes cancer, obesity causes diabetes and heart disease, alcohol abuse causes liver problems, etc.

Unforgiveness results in judgment, hatred, bitterness, resentment, anger, vengeance, etc. Very destructive to your soul.

God's law tells us about "sowing and reaping". Galatians 6:7-8

"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

What are you sowing and what are you reaping? If you are suffering because of poor choices you are to examine yourself and confess and repent of any known sin that may be related to your suffering.

Suffering Caused by the Sins of Others

- Companies go bankrupt because they were poorly managed, and you lose your job.
- Your spouse is unfaithful, and your marriage is ruined by another.
- A drunk driver kills your child in an accident.
- A false testimony (lie) is spoken against you and your life is destroyed
- Your identity is stolen, and you suffer financial hardship and loss

Suffering Because We Live in a Fallen World

Who is the God of this world? Luke 4:5-7

And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Acts 10:38 "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

Luke 13:16 *And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?*

Satan uses these tactics to bring suffering into your life

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| • Lies | Doubt | Deception |
| • Condemnation | Temptation | Fear |
| • Harassment | Discouragement | Accusation |

Redemptive Suffering

Suffering for and with Christ for His glory, His Kingdom and His purposes.

Joseph Genesis Chapters 37 – 50

1 Peter 1:6-7 *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

- 1 Peter 2:19-23
- 1 Peter 4:12-19
- 1 Peter 5:9-10
- Romans 5:3-5
- Romans 8:18-19
- Romans 8:28
- 2 Corinthians 4:17
- Acts 5:40-45
- Acts 9:15-17
- 2 Timothy 3:10-12
- Phil 1:29
- Phil 3:10
- Hebrews 12:7-11

God With Us In Our Suffering

Hebrews 2:17-18

John Stott “I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the Cross.” God is not a God who is immune from suffering but in Christ He suffered for us to be free from sin.