

## Good Reasons for Suffering

People often say, “Why doesn’t God put an end to evil?” I respond with a mirror.

If someone asks, “Why doesn’t God do something about suffering?” The God of love and mercy through the cross of Jesus Christ has put an eventual end to suffering.

Evil and its resulting suffering aren’t permanent but they do serve God’s purposes.

### 1. Evil and suffering turn people to God

Far better to suffer now and live eternally than live well now and suffer forever.

Suffering makes us long for what only Christ can provide. The Gospels provide multiple accounts of people who came to Jesus for release from physical suffering only to be saved.

In the interim, understand that God suffered on the cross, enduring His own wrath; a wrath no human being could endure, hence, **God has suffered more than anyone (Heb 2:10; 5:8)**. And, since everyone deserves God’s eternal judgment, and Jesus is the only innocent person to ever suffer, it’s difficult to question God’s fairness when it comes to suffering.

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*“And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong” (Job 1:21-22).*

- a) Job ascribed the death of his children to God, not to nature, to an accident, etc but to God.
- b) He did not sin doing so with the implication that to charge God with wrong in causing his or his children's suffering would have been sin, also confirming #1.

People often want to deny this but forget the flood, God sending Nebuchadnezzar into Jerusalem, etc. Scripture clearly teaches that God directly and indirectly causes suffering but since God is sovereign and, as sovereign, could eliminate all suffering, it is correct to say that God is behind all suffering.

- 3. God chooses who will suffer, when they will suffer, how long they will suffer and to what degree they will suffer.

Exodus 3:7 – *“Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings...”*

God created the famine that sent Israel into Egypt, gave power to the Egyptians, watched Israel suffer, was fully aware of all their sufferings, and determined to end it according to His will. (There are multiple scriptures on this)

Nehemiah 9:27 – *“Therefore you gave them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer. And in the time of their suffering they cried out to you and you heard them from heaven,*

*and according to your great mercies you gave them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies.”*

4. God intends to magnify His grace in suffering.

*“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor 12:9).*

Paul’s response was to cease praying for the thorn to be removed and Christ’s presence to be magnified.

5. Christians rejoice in suffering because we know God loves us.

Romans 5:3-5 – *“we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”*

The Scriptures teach us to hope in God while suffering.

*“Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.” (Job 5:11).*

6. God has eternal purposes in suffering which are for the good of His people.

Romans 8:28 should not be employed without its context of suffering.

*“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

***19** For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. **23** And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. **24** For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. **26** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. **27** And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. **28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. **29** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”*

7. Suffering witness to the world of God’s reality, redemption and all-sufficient grace.

*“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church...” (Colossians 1:24).*

### 8. We willingly suffer because of the gospel

*2 Timothy 1:8 - Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God*

*v 12 - which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me*

*2:3 - Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*

9. God will one day, in His time and way, put an end to all suffering.

*Revelation 21:4 – “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*