



## Suffering

Why do people suffer? And why do they die? If God is good and loving, how could He allow that?

Tragedies and suffering often leave us confused, angry, horrified or bitter. They are further proof that Satan is at work in our lives and that evil is no stranger to us.

A great book of the Bible to read about suffering and evil is Habakkuk. It's only 3 chapters long, but it's a book about the prophet, Habakkuk, who asked God why He wasn't punishing evil. God answered Habakkuk, saying that He *would* punish evil, but that He was working in His time to do so.

Sometimes we don't understand God's timing, but we should remember that He did not create evil. God is a just, merciful and loving God who gave humans free will when He created them. Because we are all sinful, we all experience evil and unfairness, yet God is always in control and can use even evil to do good. James 1:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above."

We can also use our time of suffering to look inward. We live in a fallen world where we are all in need of a Savior, and that's just what God provided. God loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins so we can live forever in heaven. Christ was perfect—holy—yet He suffered beyond imagination to pay the price for our sins and give us eternal life. Yes, we experience bad things here on earth, but we can rejoice in the fact that God has provided a place of eternal peace in heaven.

Also remember that because Christ suffered, He understands what we're going through and has compassion on us. Christ not only gives us hope when we trust in Him, but helps us through hard times by comforting us in our grief, surrounding us with supportive people and allowing us to feel His presence in our lives.

## Why Do Godly People Suffer?

Having a relationship with God doesn't mean we won't suffer. Sin affects everyone, and because of that, we all experience pain and hardship. The difference is that God promises to be with those who trust in Him. Psalm 34:19 says, "A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all." That doesn't mean life will be easy, but that we will have help overcoming difficult times.

God is with us through all the obstacles we face so we don't have to face them alone. We can lean on Him in tough times because we know He cares for us and will help us through any sorrow, grief or frustration we are dealing with. That gives us hope because even when we don't understand why things are happening, we know that in God's infinite wisdom, He can bring good out of bad situations. He can

strengthen our faith or work things out behind the scenes that we don't see or understand. Suffering also allows us to help others in similar situations and pass on the hope that we have in Christ.

If you have accepted Christ as your Savior, be assured that He is always with you. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 31:6 that the Lord "will never leave you nor forsake you." He understands our struggles and wants to help us if we will trust in Him. As 1 Peter 5:7 says, "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."

## Why Do People Die?

When God created the world, He created it perfect. There was no death. But when the first two people on earth, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God, sin entered the world, and we have all continued to sin since then. The Bible says that the price of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Unless Christ returns before we die, we will all die a physical death.

But it doesn't end there. Although our bodies will die, our souls will live forever. They will live in one of two places—heaven or hell. Heaven is a glorious place in God's presence where there is no suffering, pain or death. We will also have new bodies free of any ills or pains. Hell, on the other hand, is a place of torment and punishment where "the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48). Both places are eternal; we will live there forever.

If we have accepted Christ into our lives, we have no reason to fear death. Although our bodies may succumb to illness or deformity, nothing can separate Christ's followers from Him. Matthew 10:28 says, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." Physical death is only a transition from life on earth with Christ to life in heaven with Christ. As John 11:25 says, "He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live." We can also look forward to the day we will see in heaven our loved ones who also accepted Christ.