

## WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?

### John 3:16

**Introduction:** "If God loves us as everyone says He does, then why does He allow so much pain and suffering? What kind of God would do that?" Christians hear remarks like these often when witnessing and often Christians, themselves, ask similar questions when they suffer, "I've given my whole life to serving the Lord, why now am I suffering? Why do I have this disease? Why this, why that?" If a person believes in the Bible, believes in God, believes in Jesus, then why would God allow the hurt, the suffering, the pain, the grief, the misery, the injury, the harm, the loss to all those who belong to Him? Why does God allow such suffering?

#### 1. Suffering comes with the freedom to choose.

- Loving and wise parents want to protect their children from unnecessary pain, yet they also know the danger of over-protection because their children must learn how to choose.
- Too often there are people who make wrong choices without caring or feeling any remorse or pain, such as liars, thieves, and murderers.
- God made Adam free to choose and the rest as well, and often choices bring suffering.

#### 2. Pain can be a warning of danger.

- Without discomfort, even pain, one might not go to a doctor, tired, worn out bodies would not get the needed rest.
- Criminals would not fear the law, children would laugh at any correction efforts.
- The pain of a guilty conscience has given many a sleepless night and has brought one back to God.

#### 3. Suffering reveals what is in one's heart.

- Often suffering comes at the hand of others but still it has a way of revealing what is in one's heart.
  - Capacities for love, mercy, anger, envy and pride often are quiet until awakened by suffering.
  - Strength and weakness of heart are not found when everything is going right, but when suffering and temptation come, one is tested and the true condition of the heart is revealed.

#### 4. Suffering takes one to the edge of eternity.

- If death is the end of everything, then a life of suffering ISN'T fair. However, if the end of life brings one into eternity, then the most blessed people are those who discover through suffering that this life is not all there is and their suffering has not been wasted for they have left all that behind to enter an eternity free from all the pains of an earthly life.

#### 5. Pain loosens one's grip on this life.

- In time one's opinions and presence are needed less and less. One's body increasingly begins to wear out, joints stiffen and ache, eyes grow dim, hearing more faint, digestion slows, sleep more difficult, problems become larger and solutions more narrow.
- Each new pain or difficulty makes this world and life less inviting and one begins to look forward to departing this life for the eternal one promised by the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **6. Suffering gives opportunity to trust God.**

- Remember "Job?" God never told Job why it was all happening. God never told about Satan's challenge to Job's motives for serving God, nor did God ever apologize for allowing all that to happen to Job.
- Job was reminded of WHO did what and left to conclude that if God had the power and wisdom to create all that there was, then there was plenty of reason to trust that very same God in times of suffering.

## **7. God suffers along with His who are suffering.**

- No one has suffered more than the Heavenly Father and no one has paid more dearly for what sin has done in the world, nor grieved more over the fact that the human race has gone bad.
- No one has paid more for sin than God's own Son, Jesus.
- It is this God who asks one to trust Him when he/she is suffering and his/her own loved ones cry out in pain and suffering.

## **8. God's comfort is greater than one's suffering.**

- Remember Paul pleading for God to take away his "thorn?" Remember what God told Paul?
  - *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness..."*
- Paul answered back: *"Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong..."*
- It is better to be with Christ in suffering than without Christ in good health and pleasant conditions.

## **9. In times of crisis, people find one another.**

- No one in their right mind would choose pain and suffering, but when it does come, there remains consolation.
- Natural disasters such as hurricanes, fires, earthquakes, floods, riots, illnesses, accidents, all these have a way of bringing people to their senses. One can remember that he/she does need each other and above all God is the first person one can call upon.
- Each time one discovers God's comfort in his/her own suffering, his/her own capacity to help others is increased. *"...Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God..."*

## **10. God can turn suffering around for one's own good.**

- Through Job's suffering, he came to have a deeper understanding of God and in turn became a source of encouragement for people in every generation that followed, even today.
- Through Joseph's rejection, betrayal, enslavement, and wrongful imprisonment, he learned that what others meant for evil, God meant it for good.
- When everything in a person screams at God for allowing suffering, one has reason to look back at the eternal outcome and joy of Jesus who, in His own suffering, cried out: *"...My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?..."*

## CONCLUSION:

1. Suffering is not something anyone looks forward to, yet suffering is something that every person will experience sooner or later. How one handles it will reveal one's true relationship with the Lord.
  
2. Remember that:
  - Suffering comes with the freedom to choose.
  - Suffering and pain can warn of danger.
  - Suffering reveals what one's heart is like.
  - Suffering takes one to the edge of eternity.
  - In times of crisis, people find each other.
  - Pain loosens one's grip on this life.
  - Suffering gives opportunity to trust God.
  - God suffers when His Child suffers.
  - God's comfort is greater than one's suffering.
  - God can turn one's suffering around for his/her own good.