

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

A ONE-PAGE REFERENCE GUIDE TO WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS ABOUT SUFFERING · QUESTION 3 OF 7

Scripture Reference:

John 16:33 (NKJV) "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The Foundational Answer:

God did not create suffering as part of His original design: Creation was "very good." Suffering and death entered human experience through sin and the fall (Genesis 1:31; 3:16-19; Romans 5:12).

God permits suffering, but He is never cruel or indifferent: He may allow what He hates in order to accomplish what is righteous, wise, and ultimately good. His purposes may be visible in time or remain hidden from us (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Christian hope is not freedom from all present pain: It is confidence that God is with us, can redeem what He permits, and will finally abolish suffering through Christ.

Why Does Suffering Occur?

A fallen creation: Disease, natural disaster, decay, and death reflect a creation subjected to futility and awaiting redemption (Romans 8:20-23).

Human choices: Much suffering results from personal sin, the sinful choices of others, injustice, violence, neglect, and systems shaped by human rebellion. Love and moral responsibility involve choices with real consequences.

Spiritual opposition: Scripture reveals an enemy who seeks to devour, deceive, and destroy. Job also shows that spiritual realities may be operating beyond what sufferers can see (Job 1-2; 1 Peter 5:8).

God's refining and discipline: God sometimes uses hardship to mature faith, produce endurance, correct His children, or display His works. This does not mean every instance of suffering is punishment for a specific sin.

<u>1 FALLEN WORLD</u> Creation groans Romans 8:20-23	<u>2 GOD IS PRESENT</u> He is near the brokenhearted Psalm 34:18	<u>3 FUTURE GLORY</u> Pain will end Revelation 21:4
--	--	---

What Suffering Does Not Mean

It does not always identify personal guilt: Jesus rejected the assumption that every sufferer is worse than others or that every affliction resulted from a particular sin (Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-3).

It does not mean God has abandoned us: Nothing can separate believers from the love of God in Christ, and He remains near to the brokenhearted (Romans 8:35-39; Psalm 34:18).

It is not the end of the story: The resurrection of Jesus guarantees that sin, suffering, and death will ultimately be defeated (1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 54-57).

Reference	Connection
Genesis 50:20	God can overrule intended evil and accomplish saving good.
Romans 8:18, 28-39	Present suffering can't compare with future glory; God is at work and His love holds us.
Job 38-42; 42:5	God answers suffering with His presence, not an explanation.
2 Corinthians 12:9	Grace is sufficient; God often meets us in the thorn rather than removing it.
Hebrews 4:14-16	Jesus sympathizes with our weakness and gives grace in time of need.
Revelation 21:1-5	God's final answer is a renewed creation without death, sorrow, crying, or pain.

THE ENDURING LESSON: The Bible does not give a simple explanation for every individual sorrow. It gives something greater: a suffering Savior, a God who is present, grace that sustains, purposes that evil cannot defeat, and the promise that suffering will one day end forever.