

## Why do we suffer? *Because it is part of God's Plan...*



## Suffering

When we think of suffering, images of physical and emotional pain often come to mind. Most of us, at one time or another, have endured a period of intense pain in our lives. During the challenges you faced, you may have even wondered why God allowed you to experience something so difficult.

Just look around you, this world is filled with people who are suffering. The man on the corner begging for money, the single mother who doesn't have enough money for her kids to have food and shelter, the teenager who feels so alone that they are contemplating taking their life... We've all seen and heard the stories of how difficult life has become for people in our communities and around the world.

This lesson in our bible series seeks to give some insight to what the Bible has to say about the topic of suffering. We hope that we all might learn the purpose of suffering, how to better deal with it and ways that we can make better life choices that might limit the degree to how much we suffer in this life.

## Bible Question: Why do we suffer?

- Bible Answer: We suffer because it is part of God's plan.
  - I know that it is difficult to accept, but suffering is part of God's plan. As children of God, we should expect that we will suffer in this life. In several places in scripture, the Bible shows us that suffering is to be expected and it is a normal part of life.
  - In the new testament of the Bible, we are given the life of Christ as an example of how we should live. Christ, himself, suffered in His life and on the cross and therefore, we should not be alarmed when we experience suffering in our own lives. [Mark 8: 31](#), [Romans 8:17](#)
  - Suffering, while difficult, has its benefits. Suffering brings us closer to God. Think about a tough situation that you have dealt with... If you are like me, the tougher the situation became, the tighter you held onto God. The Lord wants us to be close to Him. He wants us to understand that we need Him and that through Him we can overcome the situations that cause us pain and learn to be stronger and have more faith. [Matthew 11: 28-30](#), [Romans 5: 3-5](#)

*When we suffer, but are able to  
get through the situation, it  
makes us stronger and deepens  
our faith and trust in God.*

## Bible Question: Why do bad things happen to good people?

- Bible Answer: Good people suffer so they can be an example to others. People watch how Christians handle their suffering and they learn from us.
- In God's Word, we are reminded that good people suffered. Job suffered, Paul suffered, Christ suffered... Job suffered because he was being tested. Paul suffered for the cause of Christ. Christ suffered so that we might not be condemned because of our sin. He stood in our place.
- Sometimes, good people, like us, suffer because we are being tested, because we are Christians or because of our love and connection to the people we care about.
  - God still allows us to be tested. Like He did with Job, He allows pain to come into our life to see what our response will be. [Job 1: 6-11](#)
  - Sometimes, we suffer because we are trying to live our lives for God. Godly men and women are a target for the Enemy. [1 Peter 4: 12-16](#)
  - So many of us are in pain because of someone we love and they either cause us pain or we are in pain because we hurt for them. Christ, too, suffered because of His love for us [1 Peter 3: 17-18](#)

If you suffer...it should not be as a murderer, thief or any other kind of criminal or even as a meddler...

[1 Peter 4: 15](#)

Sin causes some suffering and "bad people" suffer too. Ridding ourselves of sin in our lives can prevent some of our suffering.

Question for Thought: Have you ever known someone who suffered because of sin in their life?

## Bible Question: When will the suffering in my life end?

- Bible Answer: Our lives will endure periods of suffering, but those times are not meant to last permanently. We suffer, and then things get better, and then we suffer again...and things get better again.
- The Enemy attacks us, but when we hold onto God and stand firm in our faith, the Lord will **restore us** and **make us stronger**. [1 Peter 5: 6-11](#)
- Ultimately, we can look forward to peace in Heaven. [John 14: 1-4](#)

*Your **strength** and your **peace** will come from God.*

[Psalm 29: 11](#)

[John 16: 33](#)

Bible Question: What should my attitude be like during my times of suffering? How do I cope with what is happening?

- Bible Answer: Rejoice in your suffering!
  - I know that is a difficult answer to accept, but it is the bible answer to the question. Over and over again, the Word tells us to rejoice in our suffering because when we suffer, we share something in common with Christ because He, too, suffered.

- [Romans 5:3](#), [I Peter 4:13](#)

*When we suffer, we share something in common with Christ...*



*Don't allow the difficulty of your life to cause you to be unhappy. Focus your thoughts on that which is good...*

[Philippians 4: 4-9](#)

Let us learn to try to control the things that we spend our time thinking about. If we think "good thoughts", the difficult things we deal with in our lives will have less power over us.