

## If God is good, loving, ... Why... evil, pain, suffering...

### The Question:

1. Takes many forms, but often: "**If God is whatever**, then why..."
  - a. As written, this sentence questions God's love, His goodness, or other attribute of God.
  - b. God is good:
    1. "**You are good**, and **what you do is good**; teach me your decrees" (Psalm 119:68).
    2. "Give thanks to the LORD, for **he is good**; his love endures forever" (Psalm 107:1).
    3. "The LORD is **good to all**; he has compassion on all he has made" (Psalm 145:9).
    4. "**Every good and perfect gift is from above**, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who **does not change** like shifting shadows" (James 1:17).
    5. "**Taste and see that the LORD is good**; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him" (Psalm 34:8).
    6. "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the **goodness of God leads you to repentance?**" (Romans 2:4, NKJV)
  - c. God is loving:
    1. "Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. (Psalm 36:5)
    2. How priceless is your **unfailing love!** Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. (Psalm 36:7)
    3. But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, **abounding in love** and faithfulness. (Psalm 86:15)
    4. Give thanks to the God of heaven. **His love endures forever.** (Psalm 136:26)
    5. The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an **everlasting love**; I have drawn you with loving-kindness." (Jeremiah 31:3)
    6. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)
    7. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)
  - d. Foundational truths that we must lay hold of firmly as unchangeable and unquestionable.
  2. Given the above, we must change the question to "Since God..."
    - a. Phrasing the question in this way might be the most important part of finding *the answer* we seek. Trusting God no matter what.
    - b. Whether the question is our own... or from someone else, this is the first Ground-Truth that we must establish.
  3. If the question is "why is there so much evil out there (i.e. in the world)"... and why doesn't God do something about it?
    - a. God **has** done something about it... John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9

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- b. Again, the question needs to be modified to... "why is there so much evil in me?" The question becomes personalized, rather than out there.
- c. If God did respond immediately and judge sin, what would result? Who would remain?
- d. God's long-suffering and patience are proof/evidence God's love & mercy (Rom 5:8)

4. Consider that the questioner might not truthfully be looking for an intellectual answer to their question:

- a. Might simply be expressing their grief, trial, and need for help.
- b. Opportunity, for us to demonstrate God's love... so they can **see** His love.

### Our Response

1. John Bishop story – “Not right to question God, but always good to ask God questions”
  - a. “Not that I don’t still get down, but I don’t stay down”
2. David - Psalm 86 – Wonderful response to trial & suffering.
3. Job - Job 13:15 “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”
4. Paul – Eph 3:1, 13, 17-19, 20-21
5. Much blessing has come through intended evil - Rom 8:28 and Gen 50:20 (Joseph)
6. Auca (Huaorani) people of Ecuador killed five missionaries in 1956, but ultimately many of them were saved (e.g. Dayuma, Mincaye)

## WHY DOES GOD ALLOW PAIN AND SUFFERING?

### A. The Christian and Suffering

Why does God allow His people to suffer?

1. That we might be partakers of Christ’s sufferings (Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:21; 4:12,13).
2. That we might be purified and partakers of God’s holiness (Job 42:6; Psa. 119:67,71; Heb. 12:10; 1 Pet. 5:10).
3. That we might learn more of God’s grace and goodness and manifest the works and goodness of God (Psa. 107; John 9:3; Rom. 8:28).
4. That we might glorify God (Psa. 50:15; John 11:4; 17:5; 1 Pet. 4:14,16).
5. That we might be kept from dishonoring the Lord (2 Ki. 20:1,17).
6. That we might demonstrate the superiority of the power and grace of God to the power of Satan (Job 1,2; Mark 5:1-15; Rev. 2:10).
7. That we might learn patience (Rom. 5:3; Jas. 1:3).
8. That we might realize our own weakness and learn to depend more upon the Lord’s strength (2 Cor. 1:9; 12:8-10).
9. That we might give God an opportunity to demonstrate His approval of us (Job 23:10; Psa. 66:10; Zech. 13:9; 2 Cor. 8:2; 1 Pet. 1:7).

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10. That we might be drawn closer to one another as children of God and members of the body of Christ (Acts 12:5,12; 2 Cor. 1:9).
11. That we might be able better to comfort, encourage, and empathize with others in their suffering (2 Cor. 1:3-7).
12. That we might be a testimony to the unsaved (Acts 16:25,30).
13. That we might be weaned from this present world and provoked to yearn for the next world (2 Cor. 4:17; 5:4; Phil. 1:23).
14. That we might smite the consciences of evildoers by returning good for evil (2 Ki. 6:21-23; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:19-21; 1 Pet. 3:6).
15. That we might be awakened to our sin or judged for our lack of repentance and persistence in sinning (1 Cor. 11:30).
16. That we might have impressed upon us the seriousness of sin, even after we have confessed it to the Lord (2 Sam. 12:7-15).
17. That we might receive the natural and just consequences of our sinful behavior (Gal. 6:7).

### B. The Non-Christian and Suffering

1. Introduction: Attempts to find both God's love and God's omnipotence in the suffering in this world.
2. God is the Creator: dare we complain? (Rom. 9:20).
3. God is holy and righteous as well as loving (Psa. 73:1-19; 89:32; Isa. 6:1-5; Amos 3:2; Rom. 1:17,18; 12:19); therefore, we might as well ask the question, "Why is God so patient and longsuffering with the people of this world?" in place of, "Why does God allow evil and suffering in the world?"
4. God allows evil to exist *because* of His goodness (2 Pet. 3:9).
5. All suffering is related in some way to the Fall:
  - a. Our own sins and bad habits.
  - b. The sins and crimes of others.
  - c. War, terrorism, pollution, economic collapse brought about by man's sin.
  - d. "Natural" calamities—God's megaphone to call sinful man to Himself.
6. "Untimely" deaths vs. eternity (2 Sam. 12:23; Psa. 90:10; Matt. 18:10,11; 2 Cor. 4:17).
7. Man's suffering compared with Christ's suffering (Psa. 22: 40; 69; 88; Isa. 53).