

If God Exists, How Can He Allow
Suffering & Evil
Part 5



Where We've Been

WEEK ONE:

Traditional Christian Explanations of Suffering
Does Free Will Answer the Question of Suffering?

WEEK TWO:

Why Did God Create Us If He Knew We Would Fall?
Why Gives Us Free Will If He Knew Most Of Us Would Turn
Against Him, and Suffer Eternally as a Result?
Is God Culpable for Sin Because He Allows Sin to Exist?

WEEK THREE:

Biblical Explanations of Natural Disasters

WEEK FOUR:

More Biblical Explanations of Suffering

Where We're Going

TONIGHT:

Starting to Put It All Together
Our Response to Suffering

NEXT WEEK:

Continuing to Put It All Together
Responding to Your Questions

FOLLOWED BY:

An Alternative View of God's Knowledge

THEN – NEW SERIES:

November 1 & 8: Women In Ministry – Dr. Sarah Sumner

Starting To Put It All Together

God is Sovereign and Rules Over Everything

Nothing Can Happen Unless God Allows It, Or Causes It

*God Created All Things**

God, For His Purposes, Created Humankind With Free Will

*God Knew** That Given Free Will, Humankind Would Fall*

God Allowed What He Abhorred To Accomplish What He Desired

⇒ What Is God's Desire?

Humanity Choose To Sin, Bringing About The Fall

As A Result Of Evil, Death And Suffering Entered The World

The Creation Was Tainted By Sin And Death

As A Result Of Evil, Death And Suffering Entered The World

The Creation Was Tainted By Sin And Death

*This May Not The Best Of All Possible Worlds,
But This Is The Best Of All Possible Plans To Bring About A Perfect World*

As Humans, We Exercise Our Free Will To Do Evil (Moral Evil)

A Large Part Of Suffering Can Be Attributed To Human Action

*We Do Evil To Ourselves And To One Another,
Which Causes Us All To Suffer*

*We Do Not Act To Help One Another,
Which Causes Us All To Suffer*

But Not All Suffering Can Be Attributed To Human Action

God Must Still Allow All Things – Including Evil

God Also Acts To Cause Suffering

God Must Still Allow All Things – Including Evil

God Also Acts To Cause Suffering

God Punishes Through Suffering

God Disciplines Those He Loves Through Suffering

God humbles Us Through Suffering

God Teaches Us Through Suffering

God Prunes Those Who Abide In Him Through Suffering

*God Works All Things For Good For Those Who Love Him,
Even (Especially) In The Midst Of Suffering*

God Even Works Using Our Evil Choices And The Acts Of Evil Forces

But God Does Not Commit Evil

He Is Not Culpable For Evil Or For The Free Choices Of Evil Agency

But God Does Not Commit Evil

He Is Not Culpable For Evil Or For The Free Choices Of Evil Agency

Natural Evil Accounts For Another Part Of Suffering

Natural Evil Includes Disasters, Illness, Death, and "Senseless" Tragedy

Natural Disasters Are Allowed Or Caused By God

*Although God Has Intricately Designed The Laws Of Physics and Nature,
God Continues To Sustain And Uphold All Things*

God Can Send Natural Disaster As Punishment

God Can Allow Natural Disasters For Their Beneficial Effects

Our Free Will Plays A Part In The Devastation Of Natural Disasters

*We Live In A Fallen World, With All Nature And Creation
Under The Curse Of Sin*

We Should Expect Illness And Death As The Default Standard

*We Live In A Fallen World, With All Nature And Creation
Under The Curse Of Sin*

We Should Expect Illness And Death As The Default Standard

*We Need To Examine Our Own Sense Of Why We Find
Death And Illness To Be Tragic*

*What Seems "Senseless" To Us May Have Meaning
Far Beyond Our Comprehension*

*For All The Suffering That We Do Perceive,
We Have No Knowledge Of What Suffering God Has Prevented*

*God Does Not Owe Us Any Explanation For His Plan,
Or For Why Suffering And Evil Exist*

If God Gave Us The Explanation, We Could Not Comprehend It

*In Almost Every Circumstances, We Will Never Know
Why God Has Allowed Or Caused A Particular Circumstances*

*In Humility, We Should Focus On Our Response To Suffering,
And Not On Explanations For Its Cause*

How Should We Respond To Evil And Suffering?

When We Find Ourselves In The Midst Of Suffering:

Faith
Anticipation
Perseverance
Surrender
Gratefulness

When Others Are In The Midst Of Suffering:

Humility
Help
Love For Others Above Self

How Should We Respond To Evil And Suffering?

Romans 8:18-29

How Should We Respond To Evil And Suffering?



How Should We Respond To Evil And Suffering?

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

How Should We Respond To Evil And Suffering?

"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

How Should We Respond To Evil And Suffering?

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort."

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

How Should We Respond To Evil And Suffering?

*"There is no one righteous, not even one;
there is no one who understands,
no one who seeks God.*

*All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one."*

*"Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practice deceit."*

"The poison of vipers is on their lips."

"Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

*"Their feet are swift to shed blood;
ruin and misery mark their ways,
and the way of peace they do not know."*

"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Romans 3:10-18

How Should We Respond To Evil And Suffering?

If We Deserve Nothing Apart From Death And Then Judgment

If We Cannot Know When Calamity Will Befall Us

If We Will Rarely Understand Why Trouble Has Befallen Us

If It Is Only By The Grace Of God That We Have This Moment Of Peace

Then We Should Never Take Such Grace For Granted

Nor Turn Against God When Such Grace Is Withheld

*But Eagerly Anticipate The Good Things The Lord Has Prepared
For Those That Love Him*

*"No eye has seen,
No ear has heard,
No mind has conceived
What God has prepared for those who love him."*

1 Corinthians 2:9

Next Week

What Is God's Response To Suffering and Evil?

Responses To Your Questions*



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