

# Source night

## Suffering

The question of suffering is an old one Judges 6:13— Gideon's question, Psalm 10 :1 Job 3 :23-26  
People ask 'If God is all good, and all powerful, why does he allow suffering?

The Atheist answer is, there is no reason to life, and no reason for suffering. The weak don't survive  
We must be honest, at times we do not understand and maybe shouldn't understand here on Earth.

1 Corinthians 13 :12 Even the souls 'under the altar' (intermediate state?) didn't find answers Rev 6: 9-10

### The two categories of suffering.

- A) Moral evil (Roman 3 :23) e.g. Crime, cruel dictators,
- B) Natural evil ( Romans 8 :22 ) e.g. Earthquakes, disease

### Some types of suffering

1. Directly as a result of the Fall Genesis 3

There was no suffering before the fall. God created man 'able to sin'.

When humans did sin, it affected them personally but also out as far as the whole planet. 3 :17-18

2. Punishment sin can lead to suffering 1 Corinthians 11 :30

3. Consequences of our actions Humans were told of the consequences of sin Genesis 2 :17.

4. Collective suffering, a whole nation or people suffer e.g. Jews taken to Babylon, famine in Israel

5. Demonic suffering (Cannot be blamed for all, but it is real) Acts 5 :15 John 8 :44

The absolute **root of all suffering is sin**, however it does not mean in an individuals life, suffering is a result of their own sin John 9 :1-3, James 5 :15, Matt 5 :45

### Why does God allow suffering to continue? Some of these points go towards an answer.

1. God develops our faith through suffering. See the people of faith in Hebrews 11
2. God allows us to live with the consequences of our actions. Galatians 6 :6-7 Sin has changed everything. A World without choice, would be worse than a World without suffering.
3. God's uses suffering as a way of getting our attention e.g. Jonah Psalm 119 :67 & 71
4. Suffering can bring us to brokenness, and make us totally dependant on Him.
5. People as a whole, learn things through suffering e.g. Titanic, medicine
6. The time is not yet, but will happen when God will say enough is enough, and wrap things up.
7. Our inner most character is God's prime concern, not our comfort here on Earth. Character is shown in the worst of times.
8. To set our heart and focus on our real home and hope 1 Peter 4 :13, Philippians 1 :23
9. At times of crisis people find one another, and bond, and the best of us can come out. 2 Cor 1 :3-4
10. Suffering makes us realise the frailties of life, and loosens our grip on the present. Ecclesiastes



## How we regard suffering depends on how we view our relationship with God



We are not God's pets, where he is just concerned we have a happy, fun-filled life.

Do we feel sub consciously feel that if we're good, God owes us?

God wants a real relationship, but do we want God to be fair as we see fair?

God is sovereign. Ephesians 1 :11, Proverbs 21 :1, Isaiah 40 :15-17

### Jesus, the greatest sufferer of all

God became man John 1 :14 He understands our suffering Hebrews 2 :18

He suffered in some of the following ways;

1. Family relationships John 7 :3-5
2. Rejection by his peers Luke 4 :28-30
3. Living conditions Matthew 8 :20
4. Laughed at Matthew 9 :34
5. His disciples often failed him and misunderstood him Mark 6 :52, 8 :14
6. Humiliation Matthew 27 :28-31
7. Unfair trial Matthew 26 :59-60
8. Emotional torment Matthew 27 :40
9. Physical pain Matthew 27 :32-35
10. Spiritual separation from father Matthew 27 :46



### Our response to suffering

Many scriptures point out the end results of trusting God and enduring through difficulties. Like the refining process for precious metals, the heat of trials produces beautiful, Godly character that can be achieved in no other way.

1 Peter 1:6-7 James 1 :2-4

Suffering is a tool to teach us things.

The Bible tells us that even Jesus Christ learned through the things He suffered (Hebrews 5:8-9).

“ Jesus does not promise to take us out of the fire,  
But promises to get the fire with us” - Charles Coulson

### Our strength in suffering

God promises to be with us always and to provide us with what we need.

1 Corinthians 10 :13, Matthew 11:28-29, 1 Peter 5 :7, Romans 8 :18 & 28

### Our challenge in the face of suffering

Suffering is also a test for those not suffering. Matthew 14 :14, Luke 4: 18-19, Galatians 6 :2

We can use our suffering experiences to help others through our identification with them.

### Common misunderstandings about suffering

1. Suffering can be avoided by having a lot of faith
2. Suffering makes us a victim
3. Suffering is a punishment for my sin
4. Suffering is to be pursued
5. Suffering can be fully understood in this life

### How will it all end?

Revelation 21 :3-4



**Do we ask why, because we feel we are entitled to a trouble free life?**

**How often do we ask, why Grace?**

**Why does God bless us, when we don't deserve that either?**

