

Explore God: Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?

God made everything perfect.

Genesis 1:31 (NIV) *God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.*

God had only one rule for mankind.

Genesis 2:16,17 (NIV) *And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

Mankind disobeyed God and brought pain and suffering into the world.

Genesis 3:17-19 (NIV) *“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”*

God made a promise to redeem the world through the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus.

Genesis 3:15 (NIV) *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*

What do you do when you suffer?

1. Ask God for wisdom and perspective.

James 1:2-8 (NIV) *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.*

Ask God...

- a. "Did I do something wrong?" If so, confess and repent as fast as you can.
- b. "Are You at work in this?" If so, then stand strong and let God do His work.

If you don't understand why you are suffering, trust God that He loves you and that He is with you.

Proverbs 3:5,6 (NKJV) *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*

2. Ask the Father for strength to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV) *No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

3. Ask the Father for peace in the midst of it.

Philippians 4:4-8 (NIV) *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

Jesus knows what you are going through...

Hebrews 4:15,16 (NIV) *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Philippians 3:10-12 (NIV) *I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*