

FAQ

“Questions about Suffering”

June 20, 2010

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Selected Passages (ESV)

QUESTION:

If God is loving, then why does he allow suffering?

THE CAUSES OF SUFFERING

1. Suffering because of _____ foolishness or evil choices.

- The consequence doesn't disturb your sense of fairness or justice because there is a true sense in which you deserve what happened to you.

2. Suffering because of _____ foolishness or evil choices.

- When a person suffers at the hands of a perpetrator, you feel a deep sense of injustice, even betrayal by God – if not for yourself, then on behalf of the other.

3. Suffering where there is _____.

- Illness is the most frequent offender in this category but it also includes such things as natural disasters. This category raises questions about God's love, goodness, and power.

THE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

How can an entirely good God who is all-powerful allow any suffering to exist? This statement operates under a false premise that the infinite goodness and omnipotence of God are incompatible with the existence of suffering. That is, if God is entirely good and all-powerful, then he should _____.

WHAT PREVENTING SUFFERING REALLY MEANS

1. It means that God is not to _____.

- Being loving sometimes means using pain in order to achieve a greater good in our lives. (Romans 8:28)
- Despite the darkness, it is reassuring to know that when God allows suffering, which He could prevent, He is accomplishing something good. We may not see the good that God is accomplishing, but we can be confident that His eternal purposes are being fulfilled through our trials.

2. It means that God is to _____.

- When God created human beings, he gave them freewill. God does not grant freewill, then eliminate the consequences of freewill. This is an impossibility.
- God created us to live in a universe of cause and effect and the consequences of certain causes are inescapable. Therefore, our responsibility for what we do and the effects of our actions are equally inescapable. Without consequences, there would be no responsibility. But, God makes us responsible beings with freewill to choose how we will act.
- Freewill that is prevented from being exercised whenever it is going to be misused simply isn't freewill.
- The consequence of the use of freewill to commit sin changed every relationship – with God, with ourselves, with others, and with nature. (Genesis 3:17-18)
- Why did God give us freewill in the first place? Because God created us to love and be loved by him, and love always requires freewill.

THE PERSONAL PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

Why God? Why?

Key Thought: Don't reject the _____ just because you can't understand the explanation.

The solution is the future eternal weight of glory that Christ has awaiting us. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

CENTRAL TRUTH

God is infinitely good and all-powerful
even in the midst of suffering.

** LifeGroup Study questions are available for pick up at the Information Center located in the lobby. They are also available online at www.ynccla.org.

** CDs of today's message as well as previous weeks' sermons are available in the YNCC office. Sermons are also viewable online at www.ynccla.org/sermons.

