



**Explore God:  
Why does God allow  
suffering and pain?**

*October 1, 2023*

What makes the issue of suffering so challenging to reconcile?

*Epicurus, Greek philosopher born 341 BC, "Is God willing to prevent evil, but is not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?"*

**1. Suffering is not the \_\_\_\_\_ nature of God, but rather the \_\_\_\_\_ consequence of sin.**

**a. Suffering was not part of God's \_\_\_\_\_.**

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

**b. Sin brought suffering to the \_\_\_\_\_.**

- *Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—*

**c. Sin brought suffering to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- *Genesis 3:16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*
- *17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'*
- *"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 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."*

**2. Suffering and pain challenge our \_\_\_\_\_ of God, but do not change the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.**

**a. God is \_\_\_\_\_.**

- *Exodus 34:6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”*
- *Hebrews 12:5-7 “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?*

**b. God is \_\_\_\_\_.**

- *Exodus 34: 7 Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”*
- *Genesis 6:5 The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the Lord said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.”*

**c. God is \_\_\_\_\_ to suffer.**

- *Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*
- *Luke 24:46 “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day*

*Tim Keller: “If we again ask the question, “Why does God allow evil and suffering to continue?” and we look at the cross of Jesus, we still do not know what the answer is. However, now we know what the answer isn’t. It can’t be that he doesn’t love us. It can’t be that he is indifferent or detached from our condition. God takes our misery and suffering so seriously that he was willing to take it on himself.”*

**3. Suffering and pain are not meant to \_\_\_\_\_ faith but to \_\_\_\_\_ faith.**

**a. I rely on God's \_\_\_\_\_.**

- *2 Corinthians 12:7-10 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. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 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. 10 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.*

**b. I develop strength of \_\_\_\_\_**

- *Romans 5:1-5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

**c. I focus on \_\_\_\_\_.**

- *2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*
- *Revelation 21:3-5 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

**How do I answer this question?**

- a. Empathize with the suffering. Invite them to share their feelings.
- b. Acknowledging answering the question "Why?" can be challenging. Share some of the points above to affirm the nature of God and possible reasons for suffering.
- c. Share a time of suffering you had and what God taught you through it.

*NEXT WEEK: Explore God! – “Is Christianity too narrow?”*

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## **MY PERSONAL NOTES**

## **SERMON REFLECTIONS: Apply to My Life**

**The thought the Spirit is leading me to focus on is:**

**The change the Spirit is leading me to work on is:**

**The action the Spirit is prompting me to take is:**

**My prayers today are:**

**Someone I would like to bless with today's message:**