

## Why Do We Suffer?

The question of suffering is another gigantic intellectual and emotional obstacle for many, concerning a good God. Those without God are left with only one question— Why? —and it is most unhelpful.

*Attempts to explain suffering:*

1 . Suffering isn't real .

No healing; just denying.

2 . Suffering can be managed by mental strength .

Trouble and pain is a matter of fate; how suffering is managed is a matter of choice.

3 . Suffering can be counteracted by pleasure .

As suffering increases, increase one's intake of pleasure—escape.

4. Suffering is just another proof of the absurdity of life .

“Life is tough and then you die.” Suffering has no end until someone puts you out of your misery.

5. Suffering exists because sin exists and is proof of a good God .

“Why?” is already settled; it's *what?* and *who?* that give meaning and comfort in suffering.

- *Suffering exists because sin exists and because a good God has been rejected .*

- Suffering may be consequential ( Prov 5:22)

- Suffering may be collateral ( Jn 9:2,3; Rom 8:20-22)

- *Suffering forces us to settle up with God—who he is to us in a way that ease never requires (see Job 38f-Job 42:5) .*

- Clarifies priorities

- Forces us to face the authenticity of our faith

- The authenticity of our love for God is put on trial

- Forces us to face our helplessness

- We want pain relief; we need God

- *Suffering seems to be God's finishing school for us (Rom 5:3f, 8:17; Phil 3:10; Heb 2:10) .*

We would never be who we end up being in the absence of all that God has purposed for us along the way .

- *Suffering offers no easy answers, just hard questions and the need to hurt together .*

Suffering requires the comfort of company; the church is made for those moments (Rom 12:15) .

- *Suffering's final solution show down was the cross—our suffering God !*

- Suffering is the currency of our sanctification /redemption from the cross to glory

- Suffering is only redeemed by those who belong to Christ!