



Why Does God Allow Evil & Suffering?

"We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright!" 1 Corinthians 13:12 (The Message)

Light in the Fog #1:

God is not the _____ of _____.
"God saw all that He had made, and was very good." Genesis 1:31

"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 —" Romans 5:12

Two kinds of evil in the world:

- _____ evil
"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23
- _____ evil
"We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." Romans 8:22

Light in the Fog #2:

Though suffering isn't good, God uses it to _____.

- God uses pain to _____ toward Christ.
"For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation..." 2 Corinthians 7:10a (NASB)

- God uses pain to _____ our _____.
"We also rejoiced in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character, and character, hope." Romans 5:3

"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from what he suffered." Hebrews 5:8

- God uses pain to lovingly _____ His children for their own good.
"Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on,

however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:10-11

- God will accomplish something _____ out of the _____ of life.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28 (See also Genesis 50:20)

Light in the Fog #3:

The day is coming when suffering will _____ and evil will be _____.

"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

Light in the Fog #4:

Our suffering will _____ in _____ to what God has in store for His followers.

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." 2 Corinthians 4:17

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." Romans 8:18

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9

Light in the Fog #5:

We decide whether to turn _____ or to turn to God for _____ and _____.

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (NASB)

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18

Books

- Where Is God When It Hurts*, Philip Yancey
- Holding On To Hope*, Nancy Guthrie
- Why? Trusting God When You Don't Understand*, Anne Graham Lotz
- The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis
- Much of today's message inspired by ideas in Lee Strobel's, *The Case for Faith*

Daily Meditations

Here's a chance to spend some time each day this week meditating on today's topic!

This week's memory verse:

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Monday

Look back over the message notes and Bible verses from this past weekend. What point "jumped out" at you?

How would you summarize the Bible's answer to the question, "If God is all-loving and all-powerful, why is there still suffering?"

What is the Bible's immediate answer -- and long term answer-- to suffering?

Read Psalm 10:1, 14-18. How does it help to know that all the questions we have today about suffering were asked by Bible writers already?

Thank God today that He is a God of love and comfort. Thank Him for giving us hope. Ask Him to help you sense His care for you today!

Tuesday

Read Romans 5:12, John 16:33 & Revelation 21:1-5. These verses assure us that we will have trouble in this life-- but they also comfort us that eternity will not be like this. Describe a point in your past (or maybe right now) when you've blamed God's will for what was actually the result of man's free will.

How does the principle that "we have a broken world, not a broken God" help you face the "whys" in life?

Thank the Lord today that He has given you a free will - that He didn't just make a world full of robots. Thank Him that He is not a broken God and that in the end He will make all things new.

Wednesday

Read Isaiah 30:18, Psalm 96:13 & Acts 17:31. We mentioned Sunday that believing in God's ultimate justice is a foundation for living sanely in an unjust world. Why is this so?

What is the most reassuring thing to you about God's justice?

What situation are you facing where you find it difficult to wait for or trust God's justice?

Thank God today that He has taken ultimate justice in to His hands and not left it up to us. Ask Him for the patience and trust to wait for His justice to come.

Thursday

Read Romans 8:28. What is the promise in this verse?

How is the cross itself an example of the power of God to turn tragedy into triumph?

Read Romans 8:36-39. These verses clearly point out that absolutely nothing in the whole world can separate us from God's love. How does God's constant love encourage you in the midst of suffering?

What can you do to remind yourself that you are never out of His loving care?

Thank God today for His never-ending love for you. Thank Him that you are always in His care. Ask Him to help you remember through the day and when the tough times come He loves you!

Friday

Read Philippians 2:15. What practical things can you take today to "shine like a star" where God has placed you?

What principle from this week's study do you want to put into action?

Ask God today to be the Light that shines through you. Thank Him that we have no reason to fear to this world because He is in total control.

Saturday

Please polish up the memory verse and finish any devotions you may have missed. Pray that you'll apply the lessons from this week -- and pray for the church services and various activities this weekend: That God would be honored in everything.