

# Why Does God Allow Evil and Suffering?

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## I. Introduction

How can there be a God when there's so much evil and suffering in the world? If God exists and He's a God of love, how can He stand idly by and do nothing about all this misery and suffering? Doesn't He see the babies that die and others whose lives are cut short by disease? Doesn't He see man's inhumanity to man? Why doesn't He do something about all the natural disasters that kill thousands every year? Doesn't He care?!!!

## II. Does God Not Care About Our Suffering, if He Does Care, What's He Done About It?

This world is full of tremendous suffering. Everywhere you turn there's death, disease, and destruction not only in our homes and local communities but all around the world. It would be one thing to see the wicked suffer, but it's not just the wicked. Every day thousands of innocent people, including women, children, and the elderly suffer. Why doesn't God stop it? Why does He allow evil and suffering to continue? There are several answers to this question:

**It's harder to explain suffering without the existence of God**, the only way you can say that evil and suffering prove that God doesn't exist is if you make an argument based on justice and fairness. But in a world without God, there is no justice and fairness, in fact, there is no evil. In order to call something evil, you have to appeal to a higher standard other than your own personal opinion. The only place humans can get a higher standard for morality and wickedness is from a God-like being. Without Him, we're either left with our own opinion, which is no standard at all. Or we're left with the theory of evolution, which uses death and destruction to advance the human species. In fact, if you believe in evolution, you must accept evil, death, and destruction as a normal part of life because this is how we evolve into better humans. This is "survival of the fittest" and in that system the strong survive, the weak suffer. **What does this tell us about God? That without Him, we don't have a basis to complain about human evil and suffering.**

**God may have a very good reason for suffering that we're not aware of**, this answer points out a flaw in the argument that says, "An all-powerful, all-good God cannot exist. If He did exist, He wouldn't allow all this evil and suffering to continue." The flaw is this: just because we can't see something (e.g., a good reason for suffering) doesn't mean it doesn't exist. There are many things we can't see, but they do exist, like microscopic bugs. Thus it is with suffering. There may be a very good reason for it, which only an all-knowing God can see...although sometimes God does give us a glimpse into why He does things. For example, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery and he suffered terribly. But God allowed all this suffering in Joseph's life so that he could save countless lives, including the lives of the brothers who tried to kill him, Genesis 37, 39-50 (50:20). And Joseph is not unique in this. There are many people who will tell you that unless they had suffered what they did, they would not be the person they are today. So although they suffered tremendously, looking back they can see that their suffering was the agent that turned them into a better person. **What does this tell us about God? God may have a very good reason for the suffering we go through, even though we may not see it.**

**God did not give us this world of suffering, the world He gave us was perfect**, the LAST thing God wanted for us is a world of suffering. The world He gave us was an awesome world full of love, peace, and harmony, not just between us and God, but between us and our fellow man, Genesis 1-2. The potential for suffering was there, but the starting point God gave us was not a world of suffering. Through Satan's deception, we chose suffering, Genesis 3, and we keep choosing it every day. **What does this tell us about God? He doesn't like our suffering either. What He wanted for us was peace and harmony with Him and each other.**

**God gave man freedom to choose, unfortunately he chose suffering**, when God made us, He made us with the ability to choose. He wanted nothing more than for us to live our lives with Him, but He was not going to force His love on us. Through Satan's deception, we chose to walk away from God's love, to live life without Him. The choice we had was crystal clear: life, Genesis 2:9; 3:22, or death, Genesis 2:17. We chose death and it had terrible consequences. Everything, absolutely everything became much harder: we blamed each other (and God), our world was now filled with suffering, toil, and pain, we fought with each other, even killed each other, Genesis 3-4. And this death and destruction extended to creation so that now instead of creation living in harmony with us, it too causes us tremendous pain because our sinful choice cursed not only us but creation itself, Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 8:18-22. **What does this tell us about God? He was not going to force His love on us. He gave us the freedom to choose and we chose to walk away from His love. This brought terrible suffering which continues to this day.**

**God can't get rid of suffering without getting rid of the people who cause it**, some people say, "If God has the power to end evil, why doesn't He?" The problem is that none of us would be left. In order for God to stop all evil and thereby suffering, He would have to get rid of not just people who are committing evil now, but people with the potential to commit evil later. This means the entire human race. God did this once with Noah's Flood. That is, He got rid of all the people committing evil. The problem was that there were still people left after the Flood with the potential to commit evil and eventually they did, Genesis 9:20-27. So it's not that God is blind to the suffering and evil in this world and it's not that He's not all-powerful or all-good, He is, Psalm 33:6; Leviticus 19:2; Romans 1:18-32. He wants to end suffering, in fact, one day He's going to end evil and suffering and restore peace forever, Revelation 19:11-21; 21:1-4. But God had to find a way to eliminate evil without killing us in the process. He found that way in His Son. When His Son, Jesus Christ, died on the Cross, He defeated evil, death, and Satan, 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 1:18. **What does this tell us about God? God wants to end our suffering. But instead of killing us, the ones responsible for the suffering, He sent His Son to die in our place.**

**The consequence for sin is terrible suffering but even God has to obey this rule**, God would love to stop everyone's suffering by waving a wand and making it all go away, but His justice won't allow Him. In order to get rid of suffering, you have to get rid of evil. But to rid the world of evil, someone has to pay for it. And instead of making us pay for it, God paid for it Himself. So even God cannot escape the payment for sin which is suffering. And His suffering was greater than ANY human ever faced before Him or after Him. On the Cross, God the Son died a slow three-hour death by suffocation and blood loss, Mark 15:33-37. There have been others who've suffered a worse death. However, Jesus' suffering went beyond the physical and psychological. We see His psychological pain during the last moments of His life. His psyche was so affected that it threw His body into physical shock. He was sweating blood and was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, Mark 14:33-34; Luke 22:44. But this was nothing compared to what was coming. In fact, Jesus' psychological suffering was due to the unimaginable loss He was about to experience. This is why He asked His Father if there was any way out of it, Matthew 26:39. But there wasn't; He had to face what was coming.

Jesus could undergo the physical and psychological suffering connected to His death. But what made Him stagger and sweat great drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane was the reality that He was about to be separated from His Father's love for the first time in His life. For all eternity Jesus had been in the bosom of the Father, surrounded by His love, John 1:1-2, 18. But now, He was about to taste the wrath of His Father as He poured out His judgment for the sin of the world on Him. This was the suffering that He could not imagine, but there was no way out of it so Jesus said, "...nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done," Luke 22:42. That's not all, it wasn't just the Son who suffered. Imagine being the father of a son who had never sinned in his entire life but you had to brutally kill him for the evil of others. That's what God the Father had to do. **What does this tell us about God? He's personally acquainted with suffering; He suffered more agony and despair than we will ever know. But instead of making us suffer for our sins, He took our suffering upon Himself.**

**Whatever answer we give to this question, we cannot say, "Because God doesn't care."** No matter how people answer the question of why God allows evil and suffering, the answer cannot be that He doesn't care. God is not indifferent or detached from our suffering. He's so concerned about it that He gave up His life to stop it. Thus, everything we know about God screams out, "I do care! And even though you walked away from My love, I'm going to make it available to you again, even if it costs Me My life!!" Therefore, if God didn't care, if He was OK with all the suffering in the world, then He would have NEVER become flesh, suffered a brutal death on a Cross, and the unbearable separation from His Father's love. His death on that Cross screams out to mankind in the loudest possible way, "I do CARE!!!!....Let Me SAVE YOU FROM YOUR SUFFERING!!" God could have let us rot in hell forever, Revelation 20:11-15. But instead Jesus' death and suffering enables each one of us to end our suffering now and forever, Galatians 5:16-24; John 5:24-29. **What does this tell us about God? Though it seems like God doesn't care about our suffering, He cares deeply, so much that He gave up His own life in order to stop our suffering.**

**One day God will remove all suffering and the suffering you did experience will not have been in vain,** some believe that there is no future; after we die, the lights simply go out. Others believe that one day we'll all die and become part of the universal consciousness and we'll finally be rid of this material world and all its suffering. God, on the other hand, says that suffering is real but He promises to do something about it. One day He will remove all evil, suffering, and death forever. He promises to make all things new again, the heavens, the earth, even us, Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 21-22. That's not all, God will reward us for the suffering we're going through right now, Matthew 25:14-23. In one of the Psalms God says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints," Psalm 116:15. Why, why is our suffering and death so precious to God? Because when we're willing to give up our lives for God, we're fulfilling His original mandate to bear His image and be like Him (we do what His Son did for us), Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 16:24-25. And just as He rewarded His Son for giving up His life, Philippians 2:9-11, He will reward us for our suffering, 2 Timothy 4:6-8. **What does this tell us about God? God will one day end all our suffering and the suffering we're going through now, He will use to reward us.**

### III. Conclusion

*Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all,....*