

Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?

- **Freedom to choose:** God made man with a “free will” to love Him or walk away from Him. He created us in His likeness, not as a “robot,” to love Him by our own choice. He could have created pre-programmed beings to obey simply by programming us to do so. Love would not be a choice but a function. With freedom of choice comes RESPONSIBILITY! (See Genesis 2:16-17)
- **God knew we would disobey:** He had already established a plan to bail us out of the mess we would create. *He would pay the price we could not pay for a debt He did not owe!* (See Genesis 3:1-24 [key verses - 15-16]; John 3:16-17)
- **Sin entered the world:** When we turned our back on God, we became the main focus of our lives and not God. When we rejected Him and decided to live for ourselves, pride came into the world. The Bible calls it “sin.” (Romans 3:23)
- **We lost fellowship with God:** Out of His holiness and perfect character, He was unable to maintain an intimate relationship with us; similar to the loss of intimacy between husband and wife when one is unfaithful to the other. Without a deep relationship with God, we lose:
 - His protection (John 17:15)
 - His power (Acts 1:8)
 - His purpose for us (Ephesians 2:10)
 - His guidance (Psalm 139:9-10)
 - His peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - His joy (Psalm 51:12)
 - His provisions (1 Timothy 6:17)
 - His blessings (Matthew 6:33)
- **God's curse:** So why do you think God cursed the world for taking our lives into our own hands causing us to live in a fallen, broken and pain filled world? (hint: Romans 5:3-8)
- **Sorrow as a result:** What is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? Note the painful consequences the prodigal son experienced (Luke 15:11-32) when he took his inheritance, squandered it on wild living, became broke, hungry and sorrowful. He found “godly sorrow” that leads to repentance and not “worldly sorrow” that leads to death. (2 Corinthians 7:10).
- **Some intended benefits of our pain and suffering:**
 - Stronger dependence and reliance on God (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)
 - Develops perseverance, character and hope (Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4)
 - More humility (Philippians 2:5-8; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 - Strengthening of faith (1 Peter 1:6-7)
 - Deeper fellowship with Jesus (Philippians 3:10)
 - Become more like Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:8-10)
 - More compassion and comfort for others (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)
 - Cleanses us from sin (1 Peter 4:1-2; Isaiah 38:17)
 - Greater unity in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:25-27)
 - It gets our attention (Psalm 119:71-72)
 - Discipline from God as His child (Hebrews 12:5-7)
- **Questions to consider:**
 - Describe past or present trials in your life and what God has done or is doing through them.
 - Describe how you have grown in comfortable times or moments of pleasure.

God's motive = LOVE!