



# James 1:1-12 – Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?

ADAM LONG | Week of September 30th, 2018

## SERMON OVERVIEW //

This week we continued in our seven week series **exploreGod** by taking a look at the third question in the series: **Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?**

## SERMON TEXT // James 1:1-12

There is perhaps no greater challenge to life than understanding the presence of pain and suffering in the world around us. When pain and suffering come our way - our response is pivotal! Instead of attempting to answer the question of **Why does God allow pain and suffering** - let's answer two questions that will better serve us next time pain and suffering comes to us: 1. | **How should we respond to pain and suffering?**

2. | **How did God respond to pain and suffering?**

To answer our question: **how should we respond to pain and suffering?** *How should we respond to trials?* James says that believers should **count it all joy**. This answer in itself brings with it more questions than answers, specifically: **How?**

**OUTLINE //** James teaches we are to count our pain and suffering as a joy by:

### [1] Recognizing they serve a purpose. (vv.1-4)

Pain and suffering serves the purpose of producing steadfastness – a life of enduring. Trials are designed to produce spiritual maturity and should be counted as a joy.

### [2] Relying on the Lord through prayer. (vv.5-8)

Praying for wisdom and faith to better understand the **attributes** of God rather than **answers** for our pain will ultimately bring more stability in future situations of pain.

### [3] Regaining the right perspective. (vv.9-11)

Without Christ – we have nothing regardless of worldly status. The opposite is true with Christ: if we have Christ nothing else around us matters. He is the reason for joy.

### [4] Remembering God's promises. (v.12)

The picture here of the crown is not one of a Kings crown encrusted with jewels, no. But of a laurel wreath given to the winners in an athletic game of that time period. It is not a symbol of status or power – it is a symbol of perseverance and completion.

We should respond to pain and suffering by counting it a joy. **How did God respond?** God responded to pain and suffering with **the cross**. The cross of Christ shows us that God cares about our pain. He cares about our sufferings. He cares about our trials.



## Discussion Questions – Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?

COMMUNITY GROUPS

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### Question 1

If you were at church, listened to the sermon online, or read the Overview this week - what was something that resonated with you or something you wrote down from the sermon?

### Question 2

The Barna Group conducted a research survey which simply asked: "If you could ask God any one question, what would you ask? The top response: "Why is there pain and suffering in the world?" **Are you surprised by that answer? Why or Why not? Just for fun – what would be some of the questions you'd ask God?**

### Question 3

A thought often shared is, "Some of the best lessons I've learned in life came from very painful times." In what way have you seen in your own life 'good' coming from 'bad'? Briefly share...

### Question 4

James tasked us with counting our pain and suffering as a joy (Read **James 1:1-12** together). We walked through four ways we can count trials as a joy: [1] Recognizing they serve a purpose. (vv.1-4)

[2] Relying on the Lord through prayer. (vv.5-8)

[3] Regaining the right perspective. (vv.9-11)

[4] Remembering God's promises. (v.12)

Which of these four do you find the easiest for you in times of pain and suffering?

Which do you find most difficult for you in time of pain and suffering? Explain briefly...

### Question 5

On top of answering the question of how we should respond to pain and suffering we also looked at God's response: God responded to pain and suffering with **the cross**. The cross of Christ shows us that God cares about our pain. He cares about our sufferings. He cares about our trials.

**How do you personally rely on this truth when walking through pain and suffering? Are there particular Bible verses you go to for refuge? Please share briefly with the group...**

### Question 6

How do we address the reality of pain and sufferings in the lost and dying world around us as believers? First, individually, then as a community group, and lastly, as a church?