



A. Brief Review

He is able [lit., powerful (we get our word *dynamite* from this word)] **to help** [lit., “to run toward those who cry out”] **us when we are being tested** [lit., when we are tempted to “give up on Jesus or our faith”].

B. Q and A

Why do bad things happen to good people?

1. Christianity is not a vaccine that immunizes us to problems and difficulties in life.
2. One who follows Christ must beware of the reality of suffering.
3. One who follows Christ must beware of the reason of suffering.

James 1:2, NASB - Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials....

James 1:3, NASB -knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

4. One who follows Christ must choose their reaction to suffering.

James 1:2-4, NASB - Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5. One who follows Christ will never fully understand all of God's ways.

Romans 11:33-36, NIV - Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has ever given to God, that God would repay him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen!

6. One who follows Christ must understand suffering is impartial.

Matthew 5:45, NIV - It rains on the just and the unjust.

Six Reasons for Suffering/Adversity in our lives:

1. The natural consequences of foolish actions and/or decisions.
2. The attacks and/or temptations of Satan.
3. The discipline of God as a consequence of sin.
4. The testing of God is designed to cause spiritual growth.
5. The consequences of other people's sin in our lives.
6. “Stuff Happens.”

7. One who follows Christ must understand God is always with them.

Isaiah 43:2, TLB - When you go through deep waters and great troubles, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up—the flames will not consume you.

8. One who follows Christ must know that **what God allows, He redeems**.

Study Verse Section: Romans 8:28, NASB95 - **And we** as Christians **know** intuitively and can experience personally **that God causes** lit., “harmonizes” **all** ie., every single one—all—good and bad **things to work** We get our English word “synergy” from this word, **together for good** lit., “the good” **to those who** (1) **love God, and** (2) **to those who are called according to His eternal purpose**.

There is something **CONFIDENTIAL** about suffering. “*We know*”

There is something **COMPREHENSIVE** about suffering. “*All things*”

There is something **CONSTRUCTIVE** about suffering. “*For good*”

There is something **CONDITIONAL** about suffering. “*Love God, called*”

Why do bad things happen to good people?

My quick answer to unbelievers: “Thank you so much for asking such a great question—one that’s been debated forever. The reason we can’t be completely certain is because the Bible doesn’t answer it specifically. I believe you have asked the second most important question of all time. If you’re a good person, thank you for making this world a better place. When I was a young man, most anyone could have said, “Oh, Joe, he is a good ol’ boy.” But I realized I wasn’t good enough without God. I realized that God made the world perfect, and all mankind left the perfect garden of Eden—saying, “We don’t want anything to do with God.” I, personally, was one of the good guys but, I realized I wasn’t good enough to make it to Heaven without God. I was good, but I wasn’t perfect. You have to be perfect to get to Heaven.

Seeing that you asked the second most important question of all time, I assume you’ve been hurt by someone or something? May I ask what that was?

With every trial, we will either run to God or away from God. The trials and difficulties we face in life should be a reminder to us all that it was never what God intended it to be. Suffering is a witness that we (all mankind) left the perfect Garden (of Eden). God didn’t make us like an android; He made us free to follow Christ or reject Him. God will one day make the world perfect again. And I don’t want you to miss that.

God said, “In this world, you will have tribulation.” God never promised us there would never be *storms*. He did promise that, if we believe in Him, we would never be alone in the midst of *storms*—our God will be with us!”

Would you like to know the most important question one can ask? Job, a man who suffered so much asked in Job 14:14, “If a man dies, will He live again?” Centuries passed before we would have a certain answer. But, Jesus, gave us a certain answer in John 11:25, Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.”

[If possible, I then share a simple gospel presentation: God loves you and He wants to help you through the storm you’re facing. Your sin, like my sin, separates us from God. That’s why Jesus died for us on the cross—to pay for our sins. We have to surrender our lives to Jesus Christ. There is no other way. (I then share my testimony, ending with the story of me praying to receive Christ.) I then ask, what would keep you from receiving Christ today?]

My quick answer to believers: Dear friend, God is in the business of sustaining, not explaining. It’s a hard question to answer, isn’t it?

Have you been hurt by someone or something?

Humbly, when someone asks this question, they are assuming that all people are good. If we were so “good,” what was the cross all about? How do we handle the verse that says, “No one is good...but God.” (Luke 18:19). Have you ever heard the phrase, “He’s a good ol’ boy.” That was me, but I realized I wasn’t good enough without Christ in me.

If things were too good here on earth, I believe we might say something really stupid like, “You know, I love this place; I wish it could stay just like it is.” (In other words, we would long to stay here rather than go to Heaven.) We will never have heaven on earth—only Heaven in Heaven.

The better question is, “Why do good things happen to bad people?” I also think the best question is, “Why did such bad things happen to the only perfect person that ever lived?” (Jesus).

“God is too loving to send people to hell... right?”

- **Don’t assume that God is just as tolerant of sin as our society is—He isn’t!**
Psalm 50:21, NIV -²¹ When you did these things and I kept silent, you thought I was exactly like you. But I now arraign you and set my accusations before you.
- **Don’t assume that God’s only attribute is “love”—it isn’t!**
Habakkuk 1:13, NIV -¹³ Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.
- **Don’t assume that “we” are not really that bad—we are!**
Romans 3:23, NIV -²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- **Thought: If there really was no hell, then what was the cross all about?**
John 3:16, NIV -¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Closing Thought about Suffering:

While growing up in Texas, I enjoyed my mother’s buttermilk biscuits made from “scratch” every morning for breakfast. But there was not a single ingredient in those biscuits that I would have enjoyed by itself. And even after they were mixed together, I would not have cared for the raw biscuit dough. Only after they were mixed together in the right proportions by my mother’s skillful hands and then subjected to the fire of the oven, were they ready to be enjoyed for breakfast.

The “things” of Romans 8:28 are like the ingredients of the biscuit dough. By themselves they are not tasteful to us. We shun them. And we certainly shun the heat of the oven. But when God in His infinite skill has blended them all together and cooked them properly in the oven of adversity, we shall one day say, “It is good.”

- Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God Even When Life Hurts*, pp. 151-152