

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW HIS CHILDREN TO SUFFER?

Hebrews 12:3-15

INTRODUCTION: Our subject for the next two Sunday nights will answer a perennial question that is constantly asked by both believers and non-believers: “Why do God’s children suffer?” the question becomes more complex because some churches teach that once you receive Jesus, if you only have faith you will never be sick or suffer any sorrow. Biblical salvation does save the sinner: Ephesians 2:1. However, it is a truth of God’s Word that Christians still suffer in this life: Job 5:7; Psalm 34:19; John 16:33. Scripture makes it abundantly clear that God’s children do suffer in this life and it also makes it abundantly clear why God allows His children to suffer in this life. We cannot answer every question as to “Why am I suffering today when I know and am doing my best to walk with the Lord.” But we will look at seven reasons why God’s children suffer in this life.

I. STUPIDITY!

The first reason why God’s children suffer is our own stupidity, our own willfulness, selfishness, and willful ignorance. We try to blame God for our suffering but many times it is our own fault: 1 Peter 2:20. Many of us suffer because of our own stupidity because we choose to ignore our God’s clear commands: 2 Timothy 2:15.

II. WHEN WE TAKE A STAND FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS!

The second reason God’s children suffer is for taking a stand for the truth and righteousness. 1 Peter 3:14-15. If anyone here wants to take a stand for God, His Word, and determines that he or she will live in obedience to God and His Word no matter the cost you will suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12.

III. SIN!

The third reason God’s children suffer in this life is because of personal sin in their lives. When we sin, we can judge ourselves and avoid punishment but if we refuse to take responsibility for our sin and repent of it, God has promised to discipline us. 1 Corinthians 11:30-32; 1 John 5:16

IV. PAST SINS!

The fourth was in which God’s children suffer is for sins done in our past life—sins committed even before we were Christians. Galatians 6:7-8. The principle of sowing and reaping we understand is always at work in the natural world. You plant cotton and you reap cotton. The apostle Paul is a good example of this. He led the stoning of Stephen the first Christian martyr and later he was stoned after he had received Jesus Christ as his Savior.

V. THE HIGH PURPOSE OF GOD!

The fifth reason why God’s children suffer is the lofty purpose of God that He chooses not to reveal to the believer. Job is a good example of this. The apostle Paul also is a good example here: Acts 9:16; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. We have also been called to suffer for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Philippians 1:29; Romans 8:17-18; Colossians 1:24.

VI. FAITH!

The sixth reason why Christians suffer is they suffer in a heroic manner because of their faith. Hebrews 11:33-35. We rejoice with those who have suffered for their faith and been healed however, God does not heal and restore all His servants who suffer for their faith: Hebrews 11:35-38. Isn't it strange that one group of those who suffer for their faith are restored while another group of those who suffer for their faith and not rescued? Is it possible the first group may not have had as much faith as the second group? 1 Corinthians 10:13.

VII. GOD'S DISCIPLINE!

The seventh reason God's children suffer is because of God's discipline. Hebrews 12:5-6. This is not the same as God's punishment. This is training in what is right and wrong for the purpose of correction and the maturing of the children of God. So, what are the benefits of responding properly to God's discipline. First there is **patience** that is produced by our God's discipline: Hebrews 12:7. Patience is the ability to endure suffering and gain the benefit of it. Patience comes through our suffering: Romans 5:3-5.

Next there is the **assurance** that we are sons and daughters of God to be gained through our suffering. Hebrews 12:8. Yet another benefit of suffering for the child of God is our **profit**. Hebrews 12:9-11. The profit here is not material profit but spiritual profit so that we may be partakers of His holiness. The last benefit of God's discipline in our lives is **productivity**. Hebrews 12:12-13. God wants His children to grow up. God wants to make us men and women of faith, conviction, courage, stamina, and strength.

How we chose to respond to the suffering our Lord allows in our lives will determine the outcome of our lives. We can chose to despise God's discipline. We can despise God's discipline by ignoring it. God doesn't want us to become crybabies. "Why did God let this happen to me?" James 1:5 God disciplines us to challenge us to become better people, more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't become super pious saints. They are very passive about suffering. They say "Well this is my cross and I'll bear it." When all the time God wants to use your suffering to change your life: Hebrews 12:11. We are told to endure chastening: Hebrews 12:7. We are to examine our lives and make those stumbling stones stepping stones in our lives. Job 23:10; 2 Timothy 4:7-8. Whether now or later the Lord will reward His faithful children.

When our Lord allows suffering into our lives we can either allow it to make us bitter or better. Exodus 15:22-25; Hebrews 12:1-3.