

How Can a Good God Allow Suffering?

John 16:33 –

Understanding the Options

- A Legalistic World
- A Wicked World

HARD ANSWERS

1. Some of the harsh things in this world are initiated by a God who simply enforces justice.
 - Noah and Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. God doesn't violate the "law of the harvest." Our choices have consequences. It's called free will.
 - Galatians 6:7

HEAD ANSWERS

1. God is not the creator of evil and suffering.
 - It's impossible to truly love unless you have a choice.
 - A. *Manmade evil*, where we do things that hurt others.
 - B. *Natural evil*, things like earthquakes, tornadoes, outbreaks of disease, and such
 - Romans 8:19-21
2. Though suffering is not good, God can and does use it to accomplish good.

A. *God can use pain to draw people to Himself.*

- Romans 9:35-36
- C. S. Lewis. “God whispers to us in our pleasures, He speaks to us in our conscience, but He shouts to us in our pain. It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

B. *God uses terrible circumstances to bring about good ends.*

- Romans 8:28
- Genesis 50:20

3. Any suffering we experience in this life pales in comparison to the good God has in store for His followers.

- 2 Corinthians 11:23–27
- 2 Corinthians 4:17
- Romans 8:18

4. With free will, you and I decide whether our pain in this world will harden or soften us.

HEART ANSWERS

1. Even though this world contains pain and suffering, God promises to walk with us through it if we let Him.

- Psalm 34:18a

WEEKLY APPLICATION POINT

Seasons of suffering can lead to us doubting God. What if our mental model switched? Instead of asking, “Why me, O Lord?” What if we prayed, “God, use my present time of difficulty for YOUR good? Please turn this **mess** into a **message** that helps to draw people to you.”