

Evil & Suffering . . . Why?

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

When Life Doesn't Seem Fair . . .

If honest, we have all said in our hearts, *Why? It's just not fair! Why would You allow . . . ?* The “why’s” in life are bewildering on this side of heaven. However, when we enter our home in heaven, we will see how our sorrows made us sympathetic toward others—how our tears made us tender—how our dilemmas made us dependent on the Lord.

A student snaps his neck when thrown through the windshield of the car. Paralyzed from the neck down, he is destined to spend the next four decades facing a lifetime of challenges. At times life does not seem fair! In fact, most people have muttered, “Why? Why would God allow something so cruel?” Nowhere in Scripture is the fairness of God more poignantly addressed than in the Book of Job. In spite of his severe losses, Job posed a profound question—a question for all of us to consider in times of tragedy.

*“Shall we receive good from God,
and shall we not receive evil?”
(Job 2:10)*

Q: “Is God always just and right?”

Yes. Always. Righteousness is a part of God’s basic nature.

*“The LORD is righteous in all his ways
and kind in all his works.”
(Psalm 145:17)*

W. E. Vine explains the term *just* in relation to God: “. . . it designates the perfect agreement between His nature and His acts (in which He is the standard for all men.)”¹

Q: “What is the problem of evil?”

The problem of evil has three components:

1. God is all-good.
2. God is all-powerful.
3. The presence of evil exists in the world.

The problem of evil claims that the existence of evil proves that an all-good and all-powerful God does not exist because an all-good God would want to stop evil, and an all-powerful God would be able to stop it.

*“Though he cause grief, he will have
compassion according to the
abundance of his steadfast love.”
(Lamentations 3:32)*

The Problem of Evil

- God is good. (Deuteronomy 32:4)
- God is all-powerful. (Isaiah 46:10–11)
- Evil and its effects (sin and suffering) are present in the world. (Isaiah 53:6)

But . . .

- God sometimes allows and sometimes causes suffering in order to bring about a godly result. (Deuteronomy 32:39)
- In His sovereignty, God allows evil and suffering through . . .
 - the free will of every human being beginning at the Fall (Genesis 3:6–7)
 - natural order (1 Kings 19:11)
- In His sovereignty, God allows evil and suffering in order to . . .²
 - build character (Romans 5:3–5)
 - produce good (Romans 8:28)
 - expose sin (Psalm 119:67)

“After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”
(1 Peter 5:10)

Causes for Feeling God Is Unfair

Job’s perspective of life was thoroughly saturated with physical, mental, and emotional pain. (Read the Book of Job.) Feeling robbed of joy, he saw death as the better option. Did Job see God as fair? Like Job, you may experience . . .

- **Damage** to your reputation—His wife and friends maligned him.
- **Death** of your loved one(s)—His many children died tragically.
- **Destruction** of your property—His property was destroyed.
- **Deterioration** of your physical body—His body was consumed.
- **Disappointment** of your dreams—His future was ruined.
- **Divorce** by your mate—His wife deserted him emotionally.

Key Verse to Memorize

“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.”
(Deuteronomy 32:4)

Key Passage to Read and Reread

Psalm 103

God’s Sovereignty

Seek God in prayer for discernment in your circumstances. (James 5:13)

Open your heart to God with complete honesty about your feelings. (Psalm 55:22)

Verify your belief in God’s love for you. (Lamentations 3:32)

Expect God to change your life through the truth He reveals to you. (Psalm 119:67)

Realize that God is all-powerful and sovereign over your circumstances. (John 19:10–11)

Expect God to work all things together for your good. (Romans 8:28)

Invest time in studying Scripture and in prayer. (Psalm 119:15–16)

Gain an eternal perspective of God’s purposes for your present pain. (John 9:3)

Never allow bitterness to grow in your heart. (Habakkuk 3:17–18)

Turn to the indwelling Christ, who provides you with His power for victory. (1 Peter 5:10)

Yield to God’s sovereignty. (Isaiah 55:8)

Key Questions and Answers

Q: “If God were totally just, wouldn’t my life be much better?”

If God were totally just, giving you what you deserved, you would be without hope. (Ezekiel 18:4)

Q: “Why do people have to go through suffering in this life?”

Through the spiritual death of Adam and Eve, all people have inherited a sin nature. As a result, we are “spiritually dead” in God’s eyes, standing in need of spiritual life. Suffering is the by-product of both our sin and our sin nature. (Psalm 51:5)

“We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”
(Romans 8:28)

Related Topics . . .

- The Bible: Is It Reliable?
Truth on Trial
- Depression:
Walking from Darkness into the Dawn
- Divorce:
A New Beginning from Brokenness
- God: Who Is He?
Who Do You Say That He Is?
- Spiritual Warfare:
Strategy for the Battle

1. W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996).
2. Joel A. Freeman, “*God Is Not Fair*” (San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life, 1987), 130–34.

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