

God Can Turn Suffering Around for Our Good

Our Daily Bread University
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Reason 4: God Can Turn Suffering Around for Our Good

This truth is best seen in the many examples of the Bible. Through Job's suffering we see a man who not only came to a deeper understanding of God but who also became a source of encouragement for people in every generation to follow. Through pain and suffering, through loss of family, through loss of health and wealth, Job finally came to the place of trusting an eternal God for the things he could not understand.

Jimmy De Young [at Yad Vashem]: Yad Vashem speaks volumes of the suffering of a people, the Jewish people. Ironically, the Holocaust, which took the lives of six million Jewish people, one third of their population at the time, resulted in the rebirth of nation. World War I had prepared a land for the people by giving the British control over the Holy Land. And World War II, through the fires of the Holocaust, prepared a people for the land by placing in their hearts a desire for a—their—own homeland.

Through the rejection, betrayal, enslavement, and wrongful imprisonment of a man named Joseph, we see someone who eventually was able to say to those who had hurt him,

“You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good”[Genesis 50:20 NKJV].

Vernon Grounds: Can God actually bring good out of what we would call evil? The great example of this is the Joseph story, you know, Joseph hated by his brothers, sold into slavery after they had decided they would not themselves murder him. And he goes through all of the affliction of being a slave, and he's falsely accused in Egypt. And there's that whole story; it's all evil, evil, evil. But in the end as Joseph, having saved the people of Israel and saved much of the population of that ancient world by his

God-given wisdom, as he confronts his brothers, he makes the statement, “You intended it for evil, but God meant it for good to bring to pass as it is today, that I’ve been able by my wisdom to save multitudes of people from famine. You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.”

R. Douglas Geivett: It’s very possible that God produces good from the sufferings that we experience, and we don’t know what the goods are. We don’t have to know. God can produce good out of something that we don’t understand. If we have independent reason to believe that God is good and that He can be trusted, we don’t have to know what good is being produced. But sometimes I think that we can think of good that is produced through suffering. We hear of stories of people who come to faith in God because of their personal disappointments in life, and have realized that their sufferings are an indication that they are utterly dependent upon God and that they owe their very lives and whatever good things they enjoy to the mercy of God in their lives. This is just one of the goods that God can bring about through pain and suffering. Now I’m not saying that God causes us to suffer so that He can produce good. What I believe is that because God cares to give us freedom, which sometimes results in suffering, He wants to bring good out of those sufferings that do come our way even though He doesn’t specifically intend the suffering itself.

Michael Blackler: I may never know what He’s doing, but when God says that He is working, even though I may not exactly understand it or realize it or comprehend it, that He is indeed working.

A friend of mine gave me the book, *God Is Working the Nightshift*, the other night, the other day, rather, and God indeed works the night shift, that even when things are completely dark and there seems to be no hope that God is working behind the scenes and accomplishing so much.

Ravi Zacharias: I remember talking to a well-known Christian leader once when I was first getting into the ministry. I said to him, “What advice would you give to me?” He said, “I’m not qualified to give you advice. But if you’re looking for wisdom, always go to somebody who has suffered through much and whose faith still remains strong.”

And I think that kind of molding and shaping is only done by the Spirit of God. The sovereign work of God in our lives. I could take

my own example, as tragic as my suicide attempt was and the pain through which I went. It was only a sovereign and a merciful God who could take that embittered spirit, that lonely moment, that desolating experience, and bring something marvelous and something beautiful out of it. Time and time again, history is replete with examples of what God has done in the midst of a people's pain.

Jerry Solomon: I found through years of experience that the people who seem to have the most wisdom and the most in-depth insights into life seem to be those who have had to deal in a very profound way with suffering. Either suffering in their own life or the observation of someone they love very dearly. The things they learn from them tell them worlds about God, about His character, about His love, His compassion, His mercy. And it tells them worlds about themselves in light of who God is. So suffering seems to continually teach things that nothing else can.

Psalm 42 (NKJV)

“As the deer pants for the water brooks,

So pants my soul for You, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

My tears have been my food day and night,

While they continually say to me,

‘Where is your God?’

When I remember these things,

I pour out my soul within me.

For I used to go with the multitude;

I went with them to the house of God,

With the voice of joy and praise,

*With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.
Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
For the help of His countenance.
O my God, my soul is cast down within me;
Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan,
And from the heights of Hermon,
From the Hill Mizar.
Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls;
All Your waves and billows have gone over me.
The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime,
And in the night His song shall be with me—
A prayer to the God of my life.
I will say to God my Rock,
'Why have You forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?'
As with a breaking of my bones,
My enemies reproach me,
While they say to me all day long,
'Where is your God?'
Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?*

Hope in God;

For I shall yet praise Him,

The help of my countenance and my God.”

CLOSE

“Ten Reasons to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering, Part 1.” We’ve considered the first four of ten converging lines of evidence that support the claim that a good God would allow the kind of suffering we see in the world.

1. Suffering comes with the freedom to choose.
2. Suffering reveals what is in our hearts.
3. Suffering takes us to the edge of eternity.
4. God can turn suffering around for our good.