

Our Daily Bread University
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Reason 7: Suffering Gives Opportunity to Trust God

Dr. Paul Brand: One of the great things about pain is that it so often brings us back to God. Here again, I don't want to say that one should assume that pain was sent to bring us back to God. That this is one of the ways that God uses the things that happen to us as a means to fulfill His spiritual purposes in our lives. And this is very real and I have experienced it many times in my life. That it does give people pause, you have to pause, you have to stop, you're not able to do the things that you were planning to do that day, because you're overwhelmed with pain. But the net result would be that you turn to God.

Psalm 77:2-3, 7-12 (NKJV)

Psalm 77 traces this process of finding God in the midst of our suffering.

"In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;

My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;

My soul refused to be comforted.

I remembered God, and was troubled;

I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. . . .

Will the Lord cast off forever?

And will He be favorable no more?

Has His mercy ceased forever?

Has His promise failed forevermore?

Has God forgotten to be gracious?

Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah.

And I said, 'This is my anguish;

But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.'

I will remember the works of the Lord;

Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.

I will also meditate on all Your work,

And talk of Your deeds."

ROMANS 8:28 (NKJV)

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Dr. Paul Brand: In everything that happens, God is working for good with those who love Him.

In all things God works with me for good. You know, we use a word in science called "synergism." Synergism refers to two forces or two activities that work together. And together produce a result which is better than the sum of what they could do separately. And it's a wonderful thought that that verse [Romans 8:28] indicates a synergism between God and me.

The old, some of the old, translators of the Bible in the first place were so scared of that concept they were willing to think of humans as being servants of God and ministers of God but not as fellow workers. And . . . but this indicates that God is working with me. And if I trip on something and fall and break my nose and have a lot of pain, I don't say, "Why me, Lord?" I say, "Look what's happened, God. Look what's happened. What are we going to do about it?"

And God working with me, His Holy Spirit working in my life, helps me to do the right thing about the pain that has happened to me. You see, we doctors, most sicknesses, most cancers we can

track them back, we can know that a certain type of cancer comes to a person who's done a lot of smoking. Another type of cancer comes to somebody who's taken something unwise in their diet, and so forth. And so the direct result, the direct cause behind many, many pains are things, and they happen equally to good and bad, and so forth.

God, who's working in the background, helps me to know how to handle it. And to know how to bring good out of it. And He often, we look back over something very painful, and we realize what a blessing it's been. Not necessarily because God sent it to me in order that I should have a blessing, but that as that pain has happened from an ordinary accident in the road, working together with God has become a blessing because it fits into a pattern for good.

I think this is tremendous and I believe that Christians should not too frequently ask the question, Why me? But ask the question, What now, Lord?

How could a good God allow suffering? With the wisdom of Dr. Paul Brand, we've examined three reasons which form at least part of the answer:

5. Pain can warn us of danger.
6. In times of crisis, we find one another.
7. Suffering gives opportunity to trust God.

Dr. Paul Brand: I think when I meet with people in the extreme situations, of pain and of fear, I try to introduce them to my God, to Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit and particularly to grace. Philip Yancey has just written a book called *What's So Amazing about Grace?* A powerful book—that brings out there how so often Christian teachers and preachers concentrate on the wickedness and the wrong and the failings and say, You must do better. But these central truths of God is love. And that He is open, not primarily to be critical of the things that you are now seeing in your patient, the things that have been wrong. And things that perhaps have led to bad things. But He's there to understand. He has been human. He has known temptation. And He's experienced suffering. And He's experienced suffering deliberately to know what you're going through. This is a powerful reality. And He's a God of love and of grace. Of mercy and of truth.

Romans 10:11–13 NKJV

“For the Scripture says,

‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ ”

“Ten Reasons to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering, Part 2.” In parts 1 and 2, we’ve now considered the first seven 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.
5. Pain can warn us of danger.
6. In times of crisis, we find one another.
7. Suffering gives opportunity to trust God.