

## Pain Loosens Our Grip on This Life

*Our Daily Bread University*  
This course was developed by  
*Our Daily Bread University.*



Pain and suffering. Common denominators of human experience. For some, pain seems to awaken belief in God. For others, suffering looms as troubling arguments against His existence. Pain and suffering. How could a good God allow the kind of disaster that no human parent would willingly permit? Reasons for doubt. Reasons for faith. “Faith on Trial: Ten Reasons to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering, Part 3,” on this Day of Discovery.

### SUMMARY

In parts 1 and 2 of “Ten Reasons to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering,” we’ve explored these seven reasons.

The First Reason to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering: Suffering Comes with the Freedom to Choose

**R. Douglas Geivett:** You cannot do good without freedom. On the other hand, you can do evil if you are free.

A Second Reason to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering: Suffering Reveals What Is in Our Hearts

**Gerry E. Breshears:** I think of people like hot chocolate with whipped cream on it. When you look at the cup and it’s covered up with whipped cream, you don’t know what’s in that cup until somebody bumps the cup and you see what slops out. In a similar kind of way, we can’t tell what’s in people’s hearts until their cup is bumped.

A Third Reason to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering: Suffering Takes Us to the Edge of Eternity

**Kerby Anderson:** I think we have to recognize that if there is no life after death, then some people were really dealt a bad set of

cards.

A Fourth Reason to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering: God Can Turn Suffering Around for Our Good

**Ravi Zacharias:** Time and time again, history is replete with examples of what God has done in the midst of a people's pain.

A Fifth Reason to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering: Pain Can Warn Us of Danger

**Luis Palau:** Doctors appreciate the nerve endings that warn a sick person of a disease and infection and danger. So God has built in physically pain to warn us of something wrong.

A Sixth Reason to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering: In Times of Crisis, We Find One Another

**Vernon Grounds:** When we suffer, we are grateful for the ministry, not only of doctors and nurses, and not only for the availability of alleviating medication, but we're grateful for sympathy where... we're grateful for other human beings who will stand with us to comfort us, and to give us the blessing of their presence.

A Seventh Reason to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering: 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.

And now part 3...

## Reason 8: Pain Loosens Our Grip on This Life

In time, our work and our opinions are sought less and less. Our bodies become increasingly worse for the wear. Gradually they succumb to inevitable obsolescence. Joints stiffen and ache. Eyes grow dim. Digestion slows. Sleep becomes difficult. Problems loom larger and larger while options narrow.

**Vernon Grounds:** Because I am on in years, and because my wife and I are living in a facility for aged people, I'm very much aware that there are those individuals around us who literally long for release from the bodily distress and weakness which they are

experiencing.

Yet, if death is not the end but the threshold of a new day, then the curse of old age is also a blessing. Each new pain makes this world less inviting and the next life more appealing. In its own way, pain paves the way for a graceful departure [see Ecclesiastes 12:1–14].

**Vernon Grounds:** Pain makes us realize that we're living in a world where suffering and disease and heartache are sooner or later inescapable for all of us. Not to the same degree, but to some extent, we're going to experience these troubles and aches and distresses of body and mind.

**Kerby Anderson:** We have to recognize that suffering is a very difficult question for Christians. And one of the things I see in terms of suffering is...Number one, it helps us to be sensitive to other individuals who are going through suffering. The New Testament talks about that. Number two, in a sense it gets us ready for heaven; it gets us ready for eternal life. If everything was just wonderful here, we wouldn't really want to leave this life, but in a sense it prepares us for the future.

**Vernon Grounds:** We begin to long for that world in which there are no more tears and where pain is gone forever. And we wonder how long it may be, depending on the intensity of our suffering, before we are set free from this world and enter into that other world.

### Isaiah 40:6–8 (NKJV)

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah sensed the brevity of our life when he wrote:

*“The voice said, ‘Cry out!’*

*And he said, ‘What shall I cry?’*

*‘All flesh is grass,*

*And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.*

*The grass withers, the flower fades,*

*Because the breath of the Lord blows upon it;*

*Surely the people are grass.*

*The grass withers, the flower fades,*

*But the word of our God stands forever.’ ”*

**Vernon Grounds:** So it seems to me that C. S. Lewis was right when he talked about how God shouts at us in our pain. He whispers to us in our pleasures. He talks to us in the ordinary ongoing of life. But then through pain, He is, as it were, using a megaphone and shouting and getting our attention. And we realize that this world is thankfully not our permanent home.

### **John 14:1–3 (NKJV)**

With that eternal perspective, and just before His own death, Jesus said to those who believed in Him, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”