

"WHY DO YOU LOOK ON"

[When Christians Suffer]

(Habakkuk 1:12-13)

- Introduction:
1. There really are no easy answers to the question regarding why good people suffer in this life.
 2. To the atheist, there is no answer how an all good, all knowing, and all powerful God can coexist with human suffering.
 3. However, there are sufficient answers to this question, but they are rooted in eternal things, not temporal things.
 4. Let us examine several avenues that help us arrive at a solution to this problem.

I. Remember That Suffer Is Ultimately The Result Of Sin

- A. Before man sinned, God's creation was perfect (Genesis 1:31).
- B. Suffering was brought into the world by man, not by God.
- C. Who is to blame when someone sits on a freshly painted park bench that was marked off by "*Wet Paint*" signs?

II. Realize The Nature Of God's Omnipotence

- A. God is all powerful, but He can only do the things that are subject to power.
- B. God cannot do things that are logically opposed to His nature or to each other.
 1. God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18).
 2. God cannot make a round square.
- C. Neither could God have made man with the freedom of choice without allowing for the possibility of suffering.
- D. God could no more make a round square than He could make a free man without allowing the possibility of suffering.
- E. In order to do away with suffering, God would have to do away with our personal freedom of choice.

III. Realize Suffering Is Not Always Evil

- A. We have generally given suffering a negative value, but it rather should be measured by God's standard in light of eternity.
- B. If suffering brings a man closer to God, can we really call it an evil thing?
- C. Sometimes the things we place positive values upon (riches, fame, health...) need to be reconsidered in light of where it takes one in relation to God.

IV. Realize That Suffering Is Remedial

- A. Many have little disposition to give up sin when things are going well.
- B. It is when a man is hurt that he often sees his need for God.
- C. Things that looked so glamorous before, lose their appeal following a crisis that brings one face to face with the real issues of life.

D. (Psalms 119:67-71).

V. Suffering Helps Build Character

- A. Suffering can make a man compassionate, kind and more understanding.
- B. Who knows better how to help one who is suffering than one who has also suffered?
- C. (Romans 12:15).
- D. (Galatians 6:2).

VI. Advice For When We Are Called Upon To Suffer

- A. Don't charge God foolishly.
 - 1. (Psalms 100:5).
 - 2. (Job 1:21).
 - 3. The problem is not with God's goodness, but our limited understanding.
- B. Change what you can change.
- C. Accept what you cannot change.
 - 1. (II Corinthians 12:8-9).

- Conclusion:
- 1. Remember that this world is not our home (II Corinthians 4:16-17; 5:1).
 - 2. If it weren't for the hurts, heartaches, and sufferings of this world, we might forget the greater destiny that lies ahead of us.
 - 3. Suffering should cause us to lift up our eyes toward a more wonderful world that is yet to come.

"The hammer is a useful tool, but the nail, if it had feeling and intelligence, could present another side of the story. For the nail knows the hammer only as an opponent, a brutal, merciless enemy who lives to pound it into submission, to beat it down out of sight and clinch it into place. that is the nail's view of the hammer, and it is accurate except for one thing: The nail forgets that both it and the hammer are servants of the same workman. Let the nail but remember that the hammer is held by the workman and all resentment toward it will disappear. The carpenter decides whose head shall be beaten next and what hammer shall be used in the beating. This is his sovereign right. When the nail has surrendered to the will of the workman and has gotten a little glimpse of his benign plans for its future, it will yield to the hammer without complaint."

*A.W. Tozer
"The Root Of The Righteous"*