

"God's Use of Suffering"

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- 1. Our Suffering Creates Empathy and Compassion for Others.**
"(Jesus) comforts us in all our troubles so we can comfort those in any trouble." **2 Cor. 1:4**

- 2. Our Suffering Helps Us Put Our Trust and Focus on God.**
"This (suffering) happened that we might not rely ourselves, but on God." **2 Cor. 1:9**

- 3. Our Suffering Breaks our Pride and Arrogance.**
"To keep me from being conceited ... there was given me a thorn in the flesh." **2 Corinthians 12:7**

- 4. Our Suffering Builds Perseverance.**
"Consider it pure joy, brothers, and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know the testing of your faith develops perseverance." **James 1:2-3**

- 5. Our Suffering Can Deepen Our Faith.**
"For a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials ... so that your faith may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."
1 Peter 1: 6-7

- 6. How We Go Through Suffering May Be Our Greatest Witness to Others of the Reality of Jesus Christ.**

THE THREE FALSE ASSUMPTIONS

A common thought among many people goes something like this:

"There is no God (or loving God) because innocent people suffer."

This thought has kept many from seriously considering God and has even troubled believers through the centuries. The above thought can be very distressing for even Christians because it makes sense. However, there are three assumptions in this thought, all which Christians reject.

False Assumption #1: People are Innocent

Christian faith believes that, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)," and "The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)." We should actually be surprised God continues to bless humanity as He does by providing all things needful for life. We believe we are not innocent at all. We deserve to lose our life with God.

False Assumption #2: Happiness is the Main Goal of Human Life

Life is a failure if happiness is the main Goal of our lives. Suffering is just a great obstacle to that. If God was really there and loved us, we think, He would want to make us/allow us to be happy. Christianity rejects this. Doing what is right even if it hurts, obeying God and serving others are the great goals of life. Happiness should be embraced and enjoyed when we have it, but it is not the primary goal of our lives.

False Assumption #3: Suffering is Always Bad.

Again, Christianity rejects this notion. Suffering is one of God's greatest tools in His dealing with people. Suffering is necessary to turn many people toward God, mature believers, and deepen character, etc. (see other side).