

The Problem of Suffering

I sometimes believe that the first word our children learn is “Why?” As mothers and fathers, we have to provide an answer to that question more times than we can count. It shows an inquisitive nature that continues on into our adult years.

This is also true regarding spiritual considerations. There is no spiritual situation in which this question is asked more often than when trying to come to grips with the problem of the child of God who is suffering. There is no greater source for our answers than the scriptures and no other book provides more answers than the book of Job. Job suffered tremendous loss (family and livestock, and eventually abandonment by his wife) and even suffered pain and discomfort like many of us have never experienced. However, the greatest “pain” he endured was apparently the constant badgering of his three friends in their insistence that he had sinned. Job is eventually vindicated, especially in the fact that his three friends were proven wrong.

We share Job’s confusion. He did not know why he was suffering, but he knew that it was NOT because of a single sin worthy of such things. We sometimes wonder why we or someone near and dear to us suffers. We may never know the answer to that question. Sometimes we suffer due to our own poor choices. At other times it may be the result of poor choices of someone else. We must also see that sometimes it is due to something that is a part of the natural order of things.

May we never fall into the trap of blaming God. Rather, may we lean on him and our fellow Christians for support in such difficult times.

Outline: The “Problem” of Suffering

1. The Problem Stated
2. The Problem Addressed
3. Different Aspects of Suffering
4. Benefits of Suffering