

Why suffering?

I. Introduction-

<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/5271/god-doesnt-waste-pain>

1. We all experience pain and suffering-

Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. I Pet 4:10

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. I Cor 10:13

Suffering= to endure death, pain, or distress, to sustain loss or damage

2. Pain and suffering tempts us to sin-

Recommendation to read- Timothy Keller, Walking with God through pain and suffering

II. Decide who or what is control our lives and our world-

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Rom 12:2

A. Atheist worldview of pain and suffering-

"The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation.... In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference." Richard Dawkins, *rive out of Eden: A Darwinian view of life*

B. Christian worldview of pain and suffering

1. There is a sovereign God who controls everything-

The LORD has made the heavens his throne; from there he rules over everything. Ps 103:19

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. ⁵ God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. Eph 1:4

God= the supreme or ultimate reality, The Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshipped as creator of the universe

2. God allows or ordains pain and suffering as part of His plan for our lives-

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. Jam 1:2

We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. Rom 8:28

"to those who seek Him, His sovereignty is exercised in a way of Grace. All shall work together for good; to those who seek Him Everything is needful that He sends; nothing can be needful that He withholds."

John Newton

3. Pain that God allows for good should not be ignored-

"Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world." C. S. Lewis

III. Philosophical responses to pain-

A. Argument against God because of the existence of pain and suffering-

1. A truly good God would not want evil to exist: an all-powerful God would not allow to exist.

2. Evil exist-

3. Therefore, a God who is both good and powerful cannot exist.

B. Argument for God and the reason for pain and suffering-

Argument for God and the reason for pain and suffering

1. God is truly loving, sovereign and all powerful

2. Evil, pain and suffering exist-

3. God has a rational reason to allow evil, pain and suffering

"God might have reasons for allowing evil to exist that, in His mind, outweigh the desirability of the non-existence of evil"

How great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways! ³⁴ For who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice? Rom 11:33

C. Argument for the existence of God and for the existence of evil because of pain and suffering-

The existence of irrational evil that is in the world far exceeds the explanations of atheists and evolutionists of the survival of the fittest or humanists psychologist blaming mental illnesses caused by the dysfunction of the natural processes of rational human beings.

We are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Eph 6:12

IV. Reasons for pain and suffering-

A. Pain and suffering come from our choices-

Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. ⁸ Those who live only to satisfy

their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. Gal 6:7

B. Pain and suffering come to discipline us to help us grow and mature

For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child." ⁷ As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Heb 12:6

C. Pain and suffer happen for no apparent reason-

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone. Rom 5:12

There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. Job 1:1

Then the LORD said to Job, ² "Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God's critic, but do you have the answers?"

³ Then Job replied to the LORD, ⁴ "I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand. ⁵ I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say. Job 40:1

V. Don't waste our pain and suffering-

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. ⁶ But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Jam 1:5

A. Ask: why are we suffering?

1. Suffering can lead to death-

Just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. Heb 9:27

Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. Ps 23:4

2. Suffering can be for discipline –

My suffering was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your decrees. Ps 119:71

"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reproved by Him; ⁶ For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives. ⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons. Heb 12:7

B. Our suffering can prepare us to help others

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. II Cor 1:3

Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested. Heb 2:18

V. Application-

A. Focus on the finish line-

For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! ¹⁸ So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. II Cor 4:17

"At some point, for all eternity, there will be no more unmerited suffering: this present darkness, "the age of evil", will eventually be remembered as a brief flicker at the beginning of human history. Every evil done by the wicked to the innocent will have been avenged, and every tear will have been wiped away" — **Peter van Inwagen**

VI. To prepare us for communion

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krMXoK8MA2E&t=19s>