

WHY GOD ALLOWS SUFFERING

By Dave Arch

<http://askapastor.org>

Although no one except God Himself can specifically tell you why He might be allowing suffering in your life, here are six reasons we can find in the Bible as to why He allowed suffering within the lives of others. By reading the verses listed after each reason, you might be able to see greater purpose in your own pain.

DISCIPLINE (Hebrews 12:6-11)

Here we find God treating us as His children and bringing in hard times with a forward look to what those hard times will produce in our lives not unlike we do with our own children.

DEVELOPMENT (Romans 5:1-5)

There is a real progression given in this set of verses as our sufferings move us through the stages of perseverance, character, and confidence. This development of confidence (i.e. "with God to lean on, we can handle more than we thought we could") can be sensed in those people who have this key piece of personal substance as opposed to those who fall apart at the slightest inconvenience.

DETERRENT AGAINST FUTURE HARMFUL SIN (II Corinthians 12:7-10)

God gave the Apostle Paul no relief from his suffering as a way of preventing additional sin (i.e. in this case pride). Due to the fact that the sin is prevented, it is impossible to know how many times this purpose for suffering has been used to prevent something worse from happening.

DISPLAY OF GOD'S CHARACTER (Job)

The book of Job demonstrates for us how God truly needs no other purpose than that of demonstrating His power to us. As we watch Him work out His plan, we are amazed at His wisdom and creativity and get to know Him better.

DEMONSTRATION FOR OTHERS (II Corinthians 1:3,4)

Here the suffering is not primarily for our benefit but so that we might later be able to relate to and help another.

DEEPENING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST (Philippians 3:10)

When we suffer, we can identify more closely with His sufferings. This understanding of His own sufferings creates a greater intimacy between Christ and us not unlike the

intimacy of two human friends who have been through similar experiences. (also see the article *Learning To Know God Through Our Pain* from the askapastor.org library)

The beauty of the above purposes is that God can combine several within the same situation. The main emphasis for this brief article is that suffering is never without purpose as stated so clearly in the following verses:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose."
Romans 8:28

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:11

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