

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW PAIN AND SUFFERING?

(Genesis 3:1-7; Acts 7:54-60)

Why God allows pain and suffering in some ways may be a mystery to us until we get to heaven because 1 Corinthians 13:12 says the following – *“Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely”* (NLT). We may not know why God allows pain and suffering in all cases but the Scriptures share many reasons why God allows pain and suffering. There are some “hard truths” we must grasp from Scripture regarding why God allows pain and suffering. In Philippians 1:29 - enveloped in the “book of joy” is the following verse, *“For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”* God sometimes allows pain, suffering, and evil to temporarily occur because a worldly Christian is no threat to Satan’s domain of darkness. God will use pain and suffering to draw us to Him to shape and mold our character. You must understand that you can be a Christian and for a season be homeless; you can be a saved, sanctified, holy spirit filled and baptized yet, be raped...you can be a pastor or a missionary yet, have to file bankruptcy...you can visit the sick & shut in or prepare meals for the elderly but yet, you can still be diagnosed with cancer...John 16:33 clearly says *“In the world you will have tribulations; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”* When God allows pain and suffering it takes our eyes off of earthly comforts, it weeds out superficial believers, and it strengthens the faith of those who endure. When God allowed the pain and suffering to occur at Emanuel AME Church in S.C. they became a shining

example to the world we are to pray for our enemies and forgive them even if they don't ask for forgiveness. Finally, some pain and suffering is the direct result of "reaping what we have sowed" as stated in Galatians 6:7. Now most often we do not receive chastisement immediately after we sin. God knows if we were chastised immediately after sin we may not be able to bear the punishment and/or He desires we confess and repent first. At the time we confess and repent we may not be spiritually mature enough yet to handle reaping what we have sowed. But when we become more spiritually mature we may be months if not many years removed from the sin. Now God will not bring up a sin in judgment with us after we genuinely confess and repent but we will reap what we sow and it can often times be after we are spiritually matured that we receive the just chastisement – the just pain and suffering for our sins. But even in God exacting chastisement He does it in mercy. Most often we don't receive all the just punishment for our sin because when we learn our lesson – after we have repented God often times will relent (God is not changing His mind – He is acting in accordance with His character of love, compassion, and mercy) An excellent example is Jonah 3:10.

For the Christian, all pain and suffering will be temporary because this earth is not our final resting place. If we can hang on in there we will experience weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning...if you confess and repent of sin and ask God to experience His sufficient grace, we will experience the peace that surpasses all understanding. TMFBC family, a hard truth is - some measure of pain and suffering is a part of being a Christian because God says so. Allow your pain and suffering to draw you to Christ and draw you away from Christ and His church.