



Psalm 10:14 (TEV)

*But you do see;
you take notice of trouble and suffering and are always ready to help.*

Psalm 22:24 (TEV)

*He does not neglect the poor or ignore their suffering;
he does not turn away from them, but answers when they call for help.*

Romans 8:18 (CEV)

*I am sure that what we are suffering now cannot compare
with the glory that will be shown to us.*

Suffering, unanswered prayers, and the unfairness of life lead many people to wonder:

“If God is loving and just, then God must not be all-powerful.
Or, if God is all-powerful, then God must not be loving and just.
For if God were all-powerful and loving and just,
then God would stop the evil, pain and suffering in our world.”

_____ is the attempt to reconcile a belief in a loving and powerful God with the suffering in the world.

THE BIBLE and SUFFERING

When we are disappointed with God in the face of suffering, tragedy or injustice, our disappointment usually stems from our assumptions about how God is *supposed* to act in the world.

False Assumption #1:

If I _____, and

If I try to be _____, God will take care of me and bless me, and nothing bad will happen to me or to those I love.

- The Scriptures DO NOT promise that those who believe and do good will not suffer.
- The Scriptures DO teach that those who continue to trust in God despite their pain and suffering will be comforted, strengthened, and given hope in the face of suffering.

False Assumption #2:

- If everything happens for a reason - meaning that everything is a part of God's plan – then what you are saying is that God planned your tragedy. God willed your suffering, hurt and pain, and if God willed it, then God actually caused it to happen.

So, how do we reconcile a loving God with the presence of evil and suffering in the world?

THREE CAUSES OF HUMAN SUFFERING

1. Suffering Caused by _____
 - God does not bring disasters upon people.
 - God's provision is to send people to bring hope and help to people caught in natural disasters.
 - Much of the suffering in the world is because God's people do not hear or respond to God's call to be His hands, feet and voice in the world.
2. Suffering Caused By _____
 - God does not take our freedom away, nor does God miraculously save us from the consequences of our actions or the actions of others.
 - God can force good to come from the painful things we experience – if we allow Him to do so.
3. Suffering Caused By _____
 - Our illnesses are not punishments from God.
 - Jesus devoted much of His time healing the sick, not making people sicker.
 - Disease, sickness, injury and death are all part of having flesh-and-blood bodies.
 - Rejecting God in the face of suffering does not change the situation; it only removes the greatest source of hope, help, comfort and strength we have.