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## God does mean well, but it's really all up to you

*(How to make sense of suffering in light of the goodness of God)*

(SERIES: **7 LIES OF ORGANIZED RELIGION: 07 of 07**)  
by Dr. David Foster

"At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. HE DOES AS HE PLEASES with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?" (Daniel 4:34-35 NIV)

### 9 Reasons God Allows Suffering

#### Suffering is the **downside of choice**.

"... You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Gen 2:16-17 NIV)

#### Suffering is the **great revealer**.

"Then Job replied to God: 'I know that you can do anything and that no one can stop you. You ask who it is who has so foolishly denied your providence. It is I. I was talking about things I knew nothing about and did not understand, things far too wonderful for me.'" (Job 42:1-3 TLB)

#### Suffering is the **great reminder**.

"Don't let the excitement of being young cause you to forget about your Creator. Honor him in your youth before the evil years come--when you'll no longer enjoy living. It will be too late then to try to remember him when the sun and light and moon and stars are dim to your old eyes, and there is no silver lining left among your clouds. For there will come a time when your limbs will tremble with age, your strong legs will become weak, and your teeth will be too few to do their work, and there will be blindness too." (Eccl 12:1-3 TLB)

"... man is destined to die once, and after that to face **judgment**," (Heb 9:27 NIV)

#### Suffering is the **opportunity to trust God**.

"Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." (Psa 100:3-5 NIV)

"**Trust in the LORD** and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for

him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret--it leads only to evil. For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land. A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace." (Psa 37:3-11 NIV)

#### Suffering is the **great teacher**.

"Moses answered the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. **THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU**; you need only to be still.'" (Exo 14:13-14 NIV)

#### Suffering is the **way we grow**.

"What a wonderful God we have--he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of every mercy, and the one who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us in our hardships and trials. AND WHY DOES HE DO THIS? So that when others are troubled, needing our sympathy and encouragement, we can pass on to them this same help and comfort God has given us. You can be sure that the more we undergo sufferings for Christ, the more he will shower us with his comfort and encouragement." (2 Cor 1:3-5 TLB)

#### Suffering is the **pathway to power with God**.

"I will say this: because these experiences I had were so tremendous, God was afraid I might be puffed up by them; so I was given a physical condition which has been a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to hurt and bother me and prick my pride. Three different times I begged God to make me well again. Each time he said, 'No. But I am with you; that is all you need. **MY POWER SHOWS UP BEST IN WEAK PEOPLE. NOW I AM GLAD TO BOAST ABOUT HOW WEAK I AM; I AM GLAD TO BE A LIVING DEMONSTRATION OF CHRIST'S POWER.**'" (2 Cor 12:7-10 TLB)

#### Suffering is the **price of sin**.

"For all creation is waiting patiently and hopefully for that future day when God will resurrect his children. For on that day thorns and thistles, sin, death, and decay--the things that overcame the world against its will at God's command--will all disappear, and the world around us will share in the glorious freedom from sin which God's children enjoy. For we know that even the things of nature, like animals and plants, suffer in sickness and death as they await this great event. And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us--bodies that will never be sick again and will never die." (Rom 8:19-23 TLB)

#### Suffering is the **place of conversion**.

"**CREATE IN ME A NEW, CLEAN HEART**, O God, filled with clean thoughts and right desires. Don't toss me aside, banished forever from your presence. Don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach your ways to other sinners, and they--guilty like me--will repent and return to you. Don't sentence me to death. O my God, you alone can rescue me. Then I will sing of your forgiveness, for my lips will be unsealed--oh, how I will praise you." (Psa 51:10-14 TLB)

*"We cry out for reasons. God offers Himself instead."*