

Why God Lets You Suffer pt.2

In this series, we are looking at 2 Corinthians 1:3-11, and focusing on the question, “Why does God allow his people to suffer?” In our first message, we covered 10 of God’s good purposes.

- **To reveal his compassion** – In your misery, God manifests himself to you in an intimate way as the *Father of mercies and God of all comfort*.
- **To mold your ministry** – God allows difficulties in your life so that you can learn to help others through the difficulties in their life.
- **To prove your faith** – God tests you with a trial, and yet your faith doesn’t die, proving your salvation to you. An enduring faith is a saving faith.
- **To focus your hope** – God uses suffering to magnify your experience and focus your hope on God and the glories of eternity.
- **To loosen your grip** – God uses lack, limits, or loss to break your attachment to, and confidence in, earthly resources, and worldly things.
- **To reveal your heart** – God brings pain to show you what you love most. Will you find joy in God, or look elsewhere and question his goodness?
- **To teach you obedience** – God uses the effects of sin to discipline the sin out of you. That includes the consequences of your own sin and also the sins done to you by others.
- **To build your character** – The more that you are tested and refined by troubles, the more proven, mature, and useful you become.
- **To demonstrate your witness** – When you follow Jesus despite problems, it stirs up other believers, and it shows the world his worth to you.
- **To satisfy your soul** – Affliction makes you a gift from God, a living sacrifice, gratified with God more than other comforts.

Now let’s discover more of God’s good purposes as we examine 2 Corinthians 1:8-11.

To keep you humble

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 – *For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*

2 Corinthians 12:7 – *So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.*

Why does God let you suffer? To bring you to the end of yourself and your pride so that you will know that you must look elsewhere in humility.

To develop your dependence

2 Corinthians 1:9 – *Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 – *But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Why does God let you suffer? To make sure that you can’t depend on you so that you will depend on him. Dependence on God is more important than strength.

To reveal his power

2 Corinthians 1:9 – *Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*

Judges 6:14-16, 7:2, 7 – *And the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?” And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” And the LORD said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.” 7:2 – The LORD said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ 7:7 – And the LORD said to Gideon, “With the 300 men...I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand...” This was going to be 300 against 135,000 (Judges 8:10). Impossible odds.*

2 Corinthians 4:7 – *But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.*

Why does God let you suffer? God allows you to be vulnerable so that you can know and others can see where your true strength lies. It is the ultimate power of God that you must trust in.

To display his deliverance

2 Corinthians 1:10 – *He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.*

Daniel 3:16-18 – *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” They knew they would be delivered one way or another.*

2 Timothy 4:17-18 – *But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.* By the time he wrote 2 Timothy, Paul realized that his time on earth was done (2 Timothy 4:6-7). And he was right. But with the episode he is recalling in 2 Corinthians, he was still thinking he had work to do, but he felt like it would

just have to be left. Until he realized why God was allowing this depth of despair. It was so he had nothing left to cling to but God alone. Only then would his example be made complete.

Why does God let you suffer? Because he wants you to understand his deliverance. And for other people to see his deliverance, even when that means it's you trusting him in death. This is past, present, and future. God had brought Paul through many other trials and troubles. And God delivered him through this life-threatening, *utterly burdened beyond our strength* situation, for him to learn the lesson that we all need to learn. God will bring me through every situation until it's time to take me home to his heavenly kingdom. And even death is a deliverance in that sense.

To involve other believers

2 Corinthians 1:11 – *You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*

Romans 15:30-32 – *I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.*

Hebrews 13:3, 18-19 – *Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.*

Why does God let you suffer? Because, within the context of your suffering, the community of faith is molded together in common purpose. Romans 12:15 tells you to “weep with those who weep”. But others can only weep with you if you allow them to walk with you as you suffer.

To increase your intimacy

Psalms 23:4-5 – *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

Philippians 3:10 – *that I may know him...and may share his sufferings...*

Why does God let you suffer? Because to know God as you walk in and through pain is a transcendent experience meant to transform your life and vision.

To form his image

Romans 8:18, 28-29 – *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those*

whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Why does God let you suffer? Because suffering places you in the plan of God, as he is using all things for your good and his glory, to make you more like Jesus.

So now, why does God let you suffer? Let's recall all 17 of these biblical reasons, and God's good purposes for your suffering.

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To mold your ministry

To prove your faith

To focus your hope

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To teach you obedience

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To keep you humble

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To reveal his power

To display his deliverance

To involve other believers

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We don't know all that God will allow in our lives. But we do know why he allows it in our lives. He is a good God, proving it in the context of a fallen world through his redemption of sinners. May God bless you to know him in and through suffering. Amen.