

Why Do Bad Things Happen?

Intro: Probably the most prevalent question asked of both the unreached *and* Christians is, “Why do bad things happen?” and it’s sister question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” This is always a relevant question, especially in the face of blatant evil, natural disasters, and unfortunate accidents. Although the Bible offers a number of explanations for the presence of evil and even for the good that comes from persevering through suffering, most of us can relate to the story of Mother Theresa shaking her finger at the heavens saying, “I don’t know why there’s so much suffering, but God’s got a lot to answer for!” This week’s study will help you learn to articulate some of the reasons for suffering, but in the end, we may have to simply confess, as Isaiah did, that we are not God.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

What the Bible Teaches: Break into Groups of Four, read the following Bible verses, and discuss the questions. You may want to jot down notes and thoughts on the back of this page.

For each of the following Scripture passages, answer the question: “According to this passage, where does suffering come from?”

Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:19-22; James 1:13-15; 1 Peter 5:8; Luke 13:15-16; Luke 21:12-19; Mark 10:29-31; John 15:20-21

For each of the following Scripture passages, answer the question: “What is the ‘purpose’ of suffering?”

Romans 5:3-5; 1 Peter 1:6-7; James 1:2-4; Hebrews 12:5-11

For each of the following Scripture Passages, answer the question, “What is the Scriptural teaching about suffering in this life?”

2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:7; Romans 8:32; Hebrews 2:17-18; 1 Peter 4:12-19

What I Believe: Take ten minutes for silent reflection and thought. Ask yourself what you believe about why bad things happen. Use the back of this page to formulate a response to the question:

“Why do bad things happen?”

Write your final response here: _____

Articulations: Pair up with one other person and share your response with one another. Take five minutes each. Try to *not* look at your written statement; instead, try to tell your beliefs from your heart. This will prepare you to share whenever you are asked about what you believe.

Therefore: Jesus said His followers should Go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). One of the first steps in making disciples is being ready and able to share the reason for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15), in other words, knowing what we believe, why, and then being able to share it. Sharing your faith is important. This week, find someone—it can be *anyone*—and articulate your belief about this issue. If you have an unchurched/unreached friend whom you can share with, all the better (you can always say you have a homework assignment from church and you’d like to share it with them). Be ready to talk about your experience next week over the meal at your House Church.