

# Why does God allow evil & suffering?

The Big Seven, part 3  
Pastor Bob Johnson, May 12th, 2019

## Five Truths from Romans 8 About Suffering:

1. **God didn't** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Romans 8:20-22; Genesis 2:16-17)
2. **God will** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17-18)
3. **God will** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Romans 8:28, Proverbs 20:30)
4. **God will** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Romans 8:31-32)
5. **You will** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Romans 8:35-37)

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## This Week's Discussion Guide:

**Welcome to week 3 of our spring small group season! It is our prayer at GPC for our Sundays and small groups to provide the encouragement we all need to support each other as we desire to grow closer to God and build friendships in the coming weeks. This small group season will be for 7 weeks and wrap up the week of June 9th. In the weeks ahead, we'll be discussing some insights from our current series "The Big Seven".**

**May God stretch, encourage and equip us as we discuss these questions related to how we view God, ourselves and our world.**

### Getting Started:

This past Sunday, Bob's message addressing, "Why does God allow evil and suffering?" We all are reminded daily that this world is full of wrong doing and suffering. To start our discussion this week, we're going to watch two videos and discuss them. The first one is the video 2 1/2 minute video that was shown last Sunday and the second video is an 8 minute video that displays various questions and perspectives related to suffering.

Watch 1st video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCY8UKeQ5ek&feature=youtu.be>

Did you identify with anyone's expressed views in this video? If so, who and what resonated with you?

What other thoughts do you have regarding this video?

Watch 2nd video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjcpW\\_kPYq0&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjcpW_kPYq0&feature=youtu.be)

In what ways can you identify with any of the stories that was shared? What did you find intriguing or compelling?

On a scale of to 10, how difficult is it for you to reconcile the existence of both suffering and God? (1 = easy; 10 = impossible) Why?

From this second video and last Sunday's message and other Biblical insights you might have, how would you answer the question, "Why does God allow evil and suffering in the world?"

## **Reflecting on Last Sunday's Message:**

Last Sunday, Bob shared five truths from Romans 8 related to suffering. Which of the five was most interesting to you or raised some questions for you?

Bob shared that for a loving relationship to be possible between God and us, He had to give us the capacity to reject His love and choose to go our own way. Mankind's choice to sin and act independently from God resulted in our 'sin condition' (see Romans 5:12). Did that prompt any thoughts or questions for you?

Rather than prompting negative consequences as a result of our sin, God honored mankind's desire to lead their own lives and pulled back from fully sustaining the world similarly to a parent honoring a child's wish for them to 'let go' when riding a bike. Do you have any thoughts or questions related to this explanation of why there is tragedy and suffering in the world?

Does it matter to you if God causes negative consequences or allows them to occur by releasing us to live independent from him?

The 3rd and 4th point regarding pain and suffering is that God promises to use them for good in our lives (Romans 8:28) and promises to provide the strength we need to grow through whatever circumstances that show up. (Romans 8:31-32)

For further insight on these two truths, read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Who gave Paul his 'thorn in the flesh?' Is this the cause of all suffering?

Can you think of a 'thorn in the flesh' that you are suffering with? Can you share it with our group?

What can we learn about prayer from this passage? How did God use the 'thorn in the flesh' in Paul's life?

Can you think of a time that God used a hardship to grow you spiritually? If so, please share with our group.

Paul claims to 'delight' in trials. Is it realistic for us to find joy in hardships? If so, how?

What is the difference in finding joy and smiling all the time?

Knowing pain and suffering to show up in all of our lives, as a small group, how can we practically support each other in the days ahead?

Before we wrap up, let's share some prayer requests and pray for each other?