



Step Three: Being Ready

Studying to Give a Thoughtful Answer

to the Disciple, the Skeptic, and the Scoffer

Disciples: _____ of Christ who are looking to learn

Romans 8:18 – “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Note: suffering people need care, comfort, and prayers *first*. Don’t be too quick to offer logic and reason and theology. (**Romans 12:15**)

Skeptics: unconvinced, confused, _____

If I could re-wire my wife’s brain so that she always adored me and did everything I said, I would NOT do it! Her love for me is valuable because it’s voluntary! The Bible says that God has given us free will: we can choose to love and obey Him... or not. And this isn’t a game, the consequences of our choices are real and profound. Human selfishness has released a tidal wave of suffering and grief into the world.

Of course God could end all suffering in the world and make it paradise. But Jesus said the real problem isn’t the suffering in the world. The real problem is that we’ll perish eternally without God! God allows suffering so that we’ll KNOW something is deeply wrong and we need to be saved.

*Jesus didn’t come to save us from suffering – He came to save us from perishing! (**John 3:16**)*

Scoffers: mocking, uninterested, _____

Ecclesiastes 3:19 – “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”



Step Four: Shine as a Light

Living out an Answer with our Lives

If we believe that affliction is allowed for our benefit...

→ We should _____ on what is eternally important

2 Corinthians 4:17 – “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”



Ready to Give an Answer

Answering the tough questions with our words and with our lives

Part 5: “Why Does God Allow Suffering?”

The Text: Psalm 119:65-75

119:65-66 – Trusting that God Knows _____

“Good Judgement” = *ṭa’am* = good reason, understanding, decision

“Knowledge” = *da’at* = knowledge, discernment, understanding

Proverbs 3:5 – “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.”

Psalm 56:3 – “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

119:67 – _____ can put us back on the right _____

Hebrews 12:7 – “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”

119:68-70 – Trusting that God is _____ and does _____

Genesis 18:25 – “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

119:71 – _____ can help us learn the deep _____

2 Corinthians 1:5 – “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.”

“When Christ is all you have, you find that Christ is all you need”

119:72-74 – Trusting that God wants the _____ things for us

Romans 8:28 – “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

119:75 – _____ is allowed by God for our _____

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 – “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”



Step One: Understanding *Honestly Considering the Hard Questions*

→ How can an All-powerful and All-loving God allow such _____ and suffering to exist in the world?

➤ The Bible deals extensively with this 'problem of evil'

Habakkuk 1:2 - "O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!"

Ecclesiastes 4:1 - "So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter."

→ Why are the _____ allowed to suffer?

➤ This has always troubled the people of God!

Job 1:1-2:13 - "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil... So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great."



Step Two: Strengthened Belief *Being Thoughtful About What We Believe*

Faith ~ Reason ~ Experience

Faith: A _____ trust in the _____ of Jesus and the Bible

Trust in Jesus: He said the _____ problem isn't suffering...

Luke 13:2-5 - "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

→ The *real problem* is we need to be saved from _____!

Mark 8:36 - "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Trust in Jesus: He came to _____ our suffering

Isaiah 53:3-4 - "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows..."

→ No intellectual or theological answers will _____ the hurting heart... but there is deep comfort in knowing Jesus understands and is close.

Psalms 34:18 - "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

Trust the Bible: it says God made everything _____

Genesis 1:31 - "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

→ Death and suffering are ultimately a result of people's _____

Romans 5:12 - "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"

→ It's _____ that sin produces suffering! This drives us towards _____!

Romans 8:20-21 - "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Reason: consider the _____ and _____

Evidence:

✓ Pain is our most powerful motivator for _____ and change
"Sometimes you win, and sometimes you learn"

Logic:

✓ **Free Will:** God can either make sin _____, or He can make men free, but not both.

✓ **Genuine Love:** You cannot _____ love someone, unless you're free to NOT love them.

Experience: finding it to be _____ in our own lives

Pastor Josh's experience with suffering:

- The only real options are: Meaninglessness or Jesus!
- My most valuable spiritual growth has come out of suffering
- Jesus has already turned the deepest griefs into the greatest joys