



# ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION “WHY GOD?”

A question that has been asked throughout history is, “Why does God allow problems or trials to come into our lives?” Whether we are reading about the historical Job and learning of the horrible ordeal he went through or we see modern day Job’s who are facing the loss of a job or a mate through divorce or the loss of a loved one to a disease, we ask, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” Sometimes it is not the trials others have that cause us to ask this question, but it is for ourselves as we face life. We may face financial trials, family trials, social and relationship trials, business or professional trials, and even spiritual trials. At any given moment, our world could come crashing down on us, and when it does, this question, “Why God?” is going to be asked. We ask Him, “Why this?” and “Why me?” and “Why now?” In Job 14:1, we find that man is but a few days and is full of trouble. With the trouble that is so real, we find that we want an answer from God as to why.

To get the answer, we must turn to God’s Word. First, we will want to turn in the Bible to James Chapter 1 and read verses 2 through 8. The writer of the Book of James is a pastor, a pastor who deals with the real issues of life. Trials/problems are a real part of life, and this question, “Why does God allow them?” comes up and needs an answer. James, as a pastor, gives us an answer. Let’s see what he says from different versions.

**NKJV James 1:2** “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. **4** But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. **5** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **6** But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

**NIV James 1:2** “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3** because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. **4** Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. **5** If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. **6** But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. **7** That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.”

**NASB James 1:2** “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **4** And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **5** But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **6** But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, **8** being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

**ISV James 1:2** “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you are involved in various trials, **3** because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **4** But you must let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing. **5** Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to everyone generously without a rebuke, and it will be given to him. **6** But he must ask in faith, without any doubts, for the one who has doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. **7** Such a person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. **8** He is a double-minded man, unstable in all he undertakes.”

**CEV James 1:2** “My friends, be glad, even if you have a lot of trouble. **3** You know that you learn to endure by having your faith tested. **4** But you must learn to endure everything, so that you will be completely mature and not lacking in anything. **5** If any of you need wisdom, you should ask God, and it will be given to you. God is generous and won’t correct you for asking. **6** But when you ask for something, you must have faith and not doubt. Anyone who doubts is like an ocean wave tossed around in a storm. **7** If you are that kind of person, you can’t make up your mind, and you surely can’t be trusted. So don’t expect the Lord to give you anything at all.”

**The Message James 1:2** “Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.”

**In these verses, I want you to see why we receive trials.**

**James first reminds us of the reality of trials by using the word “when,” not “if”. A truth that you and I must realize is that in life, you are going to have trials. James even knows that all trials are not the same. Notice the word “various”. James says we are going to have many different types of trials. There will be financial trials, there will be family trials, and personal relationship trials. Chuck Swindoll, in his study guide to James, points out that the Greek word he uses for “various” is the one from which we get the term ‘polka- dot.’ By this, he means that we can expect our lives to be spattered with trials of all shapes and sizes.**

**Then James points out the timing of the trials. Notice the word “fall” in verse 2. This word literally means “to be suddenly surrounded by”. It was used by Jesus when he described what happened to the Samaritan when he “fell” among thieves in Luke 10:30. The idea is that you do not get up in the morning planning to have trials. They come upon us suddenly. James understands what it is to live life. He understands that at any moment we could face a variety of problems. Our lives are going to be filled with what one person calls “disruptive moments” (or better, “divine interruptions”) – unplanned and unscheduled trials are going to happen. Suddenly, without warning, you are going to be facing a problem, a trial.**

Now, in stating the reality of the trial, James also calls for a response to trials. Sounding almost ludicrous, James says we are to “count it all joy” and we are to “let” the trial have its perfect work in our lives. The two responses he wants to see are one of rejoicing in trials, done by moving the trial from the liability column—the negative column and putting it in the asset column—the positive column. Then he wants us to remain under the pressure of the trial because this pressure is going to develop us.

How do we usually respond to a trial? We get angry – we turn on God – we turn away from God. We want out of the trial. We want to run from the trial.

Having taught us of the reality of trials and the response he wants us to have with a trial, we still find ourselves asking WHY? What is the reason for these trials? James also reveals to us the reason for trials.

From verses 3 and 4, we learn that the first purpose of God’s trials is so that as you go through a trial, you will learn how to handle certain situations in life; therefore, you will become stronger. You have more experience. You are able to endure more. James says that God allows trials to come into our lives to make us stronger Christians. God wants to grow us up. His tools or his classes for growing us are adversity, pain, sorrow, and trials. We must know that God is very interested in developing our character, and He will use circumstances to develop our character. Our faith life comes out through the trials we go through. This then becomes our first reason for trials: God wants to grow us up to be mature Christians.

**In Genesis 22, we find another reason for trials. In verse 1, we find that God tested Abraham. The test was for Abraham to offer his only beloved son as a burnt offering. In verse 12, the Lord says, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”**

**In answering the question “Why God,” Genesis 22 gives us an answer that sometimes God needs to see where we are spiritually. He sends a trial to see if He is first by asking you to give up something very important to you. While this is not always the case, I have found that sometimes, that is why boyfriend/girlfriend relationships come to an end. God wants to know if He is more important than another person. A second reason for a trial may be that God wants to know if you love Him more than anything or anyone.**

**In Philippians 1:12, we find a third possible reason. Paul says in Philippians 1:12 that “the things that have happened unto me have actually happened for the furtherance of the Gospel.”**

**Paul was in prison, chained to Roman soldiers. From a human point of view, becoming a Christian and being put in prison for your faith does not seem very appealing. But Paul saw what was happening to him as an opportunity to share Christ. In Chapter 4, he says that members of Caesar’s household send greetings to the Philippians. Paul saw trials as a way to take the gospel to people. Sometimes a trial comes your way so you can be a witness to someone. You have to ask yourself: Is this disruptive moment really a divine appointment? Is this happening so I can share the gospel with someone?**



A fourth possible reason is found in 2 Corinthians 1:4. We will start reading at verse 3. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort which we ourselves are comforted by God.” Sometimes God places you in a trial just so later on you can comfort others who find themselves going through the same trial.

The challenge here is to not waste your suffering. Learn how God shows grace so you can tell others about that grace.

A fifth possible reason is also found in 2 Corinthians. Please refer to chapter 12 and notice verse 7. This is another verse you must see from the Message. “Because of the extravagance of those revelations, and so I would not get a big head, I was given the gift of a handicap to keep me in constant touch with my limitations. Satan’s angel did his best to get me down; what he did in fact was push me to my knees.”

Sometimes, you will have trials to keep you humble. We are all tempted to become prideful. We are all tempted to become independent of God. God wants us to be dependent on Him and, sometimes, when He sees we are becoming prideful, He allows things to happen that push us to our knees. Trials are used by God to keep us humble, relying on Him.

A sixth possible reason is that sometimes God sends trials into our lives as a method of discipline for sin. See this from Hebrews 12:5-11.

Sometimes trials are because you have sinned. The difficulty is really God’s way of disciplining you. Therefore, you must ask the question: Are these the consequences and discipline because I sinned?

**Ps. 119:67 Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I obey your word.**

**The seventh possible reason comes from the life of Job. Why did God allow Job to face those trials? Job 1 and 2 make it clear that God used Job as an example to Satan. Job loved God for who He was, not for what He had given him or done for him. Sometimes, you may find yourself in a trial, and the only answer to why is that God decided to showcase you. He may say, “Satan, have you considered (whatever your name is)?” and into the furnace you go to demonstrate to Satan your deep commitment to God.**

**An eighth possible reason comes from Exodus 14:1-4. The children of Israel were told to go into an area that placed them in a trap. But God put them there so he could gain honor over the Egyptians. Sometimes we find ourselves in hard places because God wants to demonstrate something so great that the lost have to marvel at His work. Our trials are used by God to honor Himself before the lost of the world.**

**The ninth reason can also be drawn from here and from Isaiah 37. Sometimes we find ourselves in a tremendous bind, so God not only can demonstrate His power to the lost, but to us. When that Red Sea opened up, believe me, both the Egyptians and the Israelites were standing amazed at the Power of God.**

**In Isaiah 37, Hezekiah was trapped, but he trusted the Lord and saw a mighty deliverance. In order to see the strong hand of God at work, you sometimes will find yourself going through a trial.**

**The tenth possible reason is found in Romans 8:17-19 and verse 23. Here we find ourselves facing trials, and it makes us homesick for heaven. Trials remind me that this is not my home. It causes me to desire to be in my heavenly home.**



For the eleventh possible reason, we must also consider Isaiah 55:8 and 9 in understanding the question “Why God”. God says here: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor My ways your ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

You may say this is a cop-out verse to answer “Why God,” but I have come to learn, and I am still learning, that even with my checklist, God does certain things in my life that I just cannot understand, and I must trust that He does know what is best. Therefore, sometimes we have trials in order for God to place us in a position where we must trust Him completely, understanding that He knows what He is doing. Paul wrote, “All things work for good to those who love the Lord.” Therefore, when I cannot trace His hand, I am to trust His heart.

We now have some possible answers that God gives from His Word to the question “Why God?” Sometimes it may be only one answer, and sometimes it may be two or more of the answers from the checklist. But as you go through the trials, review the checklist.

While we may be interested in knowing why we are facing a trial, we find that James was not as interested in why we receive trials, but how we respond to trials, and I think God is also. How are we to respond to trials? With a rejoicing spirit and remaining in the trials until God finishes His work.



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