

"When pain is to be borne, a little courage helps more than knowledge, a little human sympathy more than courage, and the least tincture of the love of God more than all." **C.S. Lewis,**
The Problem of Pain

(I) A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO SUFFERING:

(A) There is a God:

(1) The infinite _____ (1) God, who _____ (2) you.

(2) The God who is not _____ (3) to your suffering.

(3) It is not His intention that you should have to suffer. This is not the way God intended _____ (4) to live.

(B) He is the one who is available if you will _____ (5) to Him for:

(1) His _____ (6).

(2) His comfort

(3) His mercy

... *In a sense, God _____ (7) with us in our difficult times:*

(C) As we see Jesus outside the tomb of Lazarus, for example, and he's weeping. He's weeping over what _____ (8) and _____ (9) ha[ve] done to the human race.

(D) It gives God no _____ (10) that you should be in this situation.

(II) POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS:

(A) You may be questioning: "If God is this way, then why won't He stop [the suffering]?"

(1) A Christian Reply:

(a) That's not the way the _____ (11) is.

(b) That is not what God has ever made a promise to.

(c) His promise is:

- (i) That if we know Him in a _____ (12) way, He never leaves us.
- (ii) He never forsakes us.
- (iii) His _____ (13) and comfort is always available for us.

[Knowing these things] can help you see beyond the _____ (14). [They] can help you understand, if not fully, to have something to hold onto that's greater than _____ (15).

(B) How do I know that God loves me?

(1) A Christian Reply:

- (a) Look to the _____ (16). There, He never loved you less, and He can never love you _____ (17).
- (b) We know by _____ (18) acts that God loves us.

It's a matter of turning to Him, even in our difficulties. But we don't just turn to Him because we're in difficulty. It's because our difficulty has brought us to realize: "Things are really _____ (19) in the world [where] I live." [It makes us ask], "Is there any way beyond this?"

And, of course, the Christian answer is _____ (20). It's through Christ, the One who died and gave _____ (21) for us.

(III) WHAT ELSE WE NEED:

But we need. . . Christians, to be:

- (A) Reaching out to embrace you
- (B) To _____ (22) you
- (C) To share with you what it is like to put your _____ (23) in God
 - (1) It [in many cases] won't make [your suffering] go away.
 - (2) It won't mean that you won't _____ (24).
 - (3) It does mean that you have a _____ (25) when the day comes that you think you cannot go another day through this world, that there's nothing worth living for.

When you know God, you know that there is something _____ (26).

It is that that can be a real comfort to us, and an encourage for us to . . . put one _____ (27) in front of the _____ (28).

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING:

- How Long, O Lord?: Reflections on Suffering and Evil, *D.A. Carson*
- Be Still, My Soul: Twenty-Five Classic and Contemporary Readings on the Problem of Pain, *David Martyn Lloyd-Jones; D.A. Carson; J.I. Packer; Nancy Guthrie*
- Surprised by Suffering: The Role of Pain and Death in the Christian Life, *R.C. Sproul*
- A Place of Healing: Wrestling with the Mysteries of Suffering, Pain, and God's Sovereignty, *Joni Eareckson Tada*



1. personal
2. loves
3. indifferent
4. humanity
5. look
6. grace
7. weeps
8. death
9. sin
10. joy
11. world
12. personal
13. grace
14. moment
15. yourself
16. cross
17. more
18. historical
19. broken
20. yes
21. himself
22. comfort
23. hope
24. cry
25. hope
26. worth living for
27. foot
28. other