

## BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”  
John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

## PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

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## Why Does God Allow Suffering?

The existence of human suffering is arguably the most common and difficult problem raised against the existence and goodness of God. It is a particularly thorny issue because people experience it both emotionally and logically.

The problem of suffering has been with us since the Garden of Eden and it will be with us until Christ comes back. But suffering is not just a problem for Christians. Every belief system has to account for suffering in some fashion or another.

The purpose of this post is not to attempt a theodicy, that is, a defense of why God allows suffering. Rather, I simply want to highlight ten ways the Bible addresses suffering. These answers are not exhaustive, but they provide some biblical perspective for the inquisitive believer and non-believer:

1. Suffering is the result of mankind’s sin and rebellion against God (Genesis 3). Mankind chose to reject God’s one command, the world became corrupted by sin, and humans have suffered ever since.
2. God’s chosen people (the Hebrews) suffered when they disobeyed the Mosaic Covenant (Deuteronomy 28).
3. People sometimes suffer from the wrong choices of other human beings, even though God uses the resulting suffering for good (Genesis 50:20).
4. Suffering brings faithful believers into deeper understanding and relationship with Him (Job).
5. Believers suffer because of the jealousy and hatred of certain people who reject the Christian faith (Acts 7:54-60).
6. Believers suffer as a testament of faith to others (Hebrews 11).
7. God allows people to suffer so they will turn to Him in repentance and not perish for eternity (Luke 13:1-4).
8. Christians suffer so they can be conformed more closely to the character of Christ (Romans 8:28-30, James 1:2-4).
9. Believers suffer so they can know Christ more fully (Philippians 3:10).
10. To prepare followers of Christ for the glory of Heaven (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Each of these points deserves much more explanation. And each point raises further questions as well. Remember, there is no single answer to suffering. But wrestling through these passages, and others, can help provide a biblical perspective on suffering.

## KEY VERSE

I Corinthians 13:12 (NKJV)

*For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

## WEEKLY READINGS

**Monday: Genesis 1:31, 3:1-19; Romans 5:12-19**

### God Is Not The Creator Of Suffering

1. If you could write a letter to God, what personal hardships or grief would you ask him about? What do you think he would say in return?
2. What kind of world did God create? Based upon today's scripture, how did suffering enter the world?

**Tuesday: II Corinthians 7:9-10; James 1:2-4; Hebrews 12:11**

### God Can Use Suffering To Accomplish Good

3. Why is it difficult to see God working in your life when you are suffering?
4. When life changes around you, have you ever recognized it as a way for God to guide you closer to His heart? Have you considered that God may wish to refine you as His own beloved person?

**Wednesday: Psalm 96:13; Acts 17:31; Revelation 21:1-4**

### Evil Will Be Judged And Suffering Will Cease

5. For those who have suffered, how can God's judgement of evil be a comforting idea?
6. Revelation 21:4 gives us the amazing promise that in heaven God will wipe away our tears and that there will be no more suffering. Who in your life can you encourage with this promise?

**Thursday: Romans 8:18-25; II Corinthians 4:16-18**

### Our Suffering Cannot Compare To Heaven

7. Do you believe that there is a literal heaven? If so, what do you most look forward to about it?
8. How can focusing on Romans 8:18 and our future as believers help us in our times of suffering?
9. While we wait for heaven as believers, in what ways can God help us through our present trials?

**Friday: II Corinthians 11:23-31; Job 1:13-22**

### We Decide How We React To Suffering

10. Think back and remember a time of loss and pain in your life. How did you respond?
11. What can we learn from Paul's and Job's examples from today's readings?
12. Why is it difficult to identify God's voice from the overwhelming noise of suffering? Can you identify a time in your life when you felt peaceful even when it did not match your situation? Have you ever experienced a rock solid sense that God was making sure everything was going to be alright?
14. How can we help those who are suffering with our words and actions?