



# ASKING FOR A FRIEND

*Tough Questions, Honest Answers*

The NIV version of the Bible is used for all questions.

1. Have you ever questioned, even if only in your mind, why God allowed something to happen to you? What was it? To this day, do you have an answer as to why he allowed it to happen? Has anything good come of it?
2. Pastor Rick said that one of the causes of pain in this world is we live on a cursed planet (Genesis 3:17-19). What do you think that means? What type of events that cause pain would this explain?
3. There are people who say that people are basically good, do you agree? What does the Bible say about this? What does this explain about some of the things that happen to us that cause us pain?
4. Read Hebrews 12:4-11. What does this passage teach us? If this is true, what is one possible answer as to why painful things could happen to us? What do you think of this statement: We should never be afraid of God or doubt his love for us, but we should fear what God is able to do to us if he feels it necessary. Do you think God would ever punish you for anything you did by sending you to hell if you are one of his children?
5. Read Psalm 73:1-28. In what way was Asaph, the author of this Psalm, just like us in the way he thought? What bothered him the most? What did he see and understand that changed the way he saw things? What was his conclusion?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7. What does Paul say is one of the reasons why we go through suffering? For this to work, what attitude must we have when we go through suffering, what belief must we have?
7. Read Romans 8:28. What promise does God make in this verse? What promise does he not make? Can all Christians claim that everything that happens to them will turn out for something good, is this an unconditional promise? What is the condition placed on the promise? Do all Christians automatically love God when they become a believer?

## ANSWERS

1. *These can be good and bad things, but probably mainly bad things.*
2. *Genesis mainly says that the earth would no longer automatically produce food, they would have to work. But it also meant that the earth would actively work against man's existence, which would include all of the natural disasters that now occur to us. So we see that sin is the cause of these disasters that happen to both good and bad people.*
3. *No, man is born basically evil with a sinful nature, we sin. Verses that tell us this: Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Isaiah 53:6, Jeremiah 17:9,10. This explains possible the most hurtful part of our suffering: when other people inflict suffering upon us, and they will because they are sinful.*
4. *This passage teaches us that God disciplines (trains) and punishes us as any good parent does. When we disobey God, he can cause, or allow, painful circumstances to come into our lives in order to get us to change direction. You should never doubt God's love for you, he died on the cross for you. But as your heavenly father who controls everything in your life, you should have a healthy fear of what he can do when you choose to disobey him, he will punish disobedience and reward obedience. Even though he disciplines us, he never kicks us out of his family: Once you are a child of God, you are forever a child of God.*
5. *Asaph, just like us, questioned the fairness of life: Good things happened to bad people. What seemed to bother him the most was that if evil people never suffered like he did, maybe his service to God was pointless, it did not profit him, why deny himself the pleasures of this life? What changed his perspective was when he saw what the ultimate end was to those who were evil: Their eternal destiny, they would ultimately spend eternity in hell. He also saw that those who stayed close to God always had his help and support, even when bad things happen, and that God will always be there for us. His conclusion was that he was much better off than the wicked people who seemed to be prosperous.*
6. *Paul said that one of the benefits of going through suffering was that we could then turn around and offer comfort to others with the comfort we got from God when they go through the same things. For this to practically work, we must first respond to our own suffering by turning to God for help, which many times will be from other people who have gone through the same suffering. Then we must have believe that helping others, serving others, is a valid reason for God to allow us to go through suffering. If our response to suffering is to doubt God, then we will be in no position to help anyone else.*
7. *This verse promises that if you love God, then he will cause anything and everything that you go through to ultimately turn out for your good. It does not promise that if you love God everything that happens to you will be good. The promise is conditional: You must love God, be seeking to serve him and put his will first in your life. Loving God is not automatic, it is like any relationship, it takes time and effort to develop a relationship with God to the point that you love him as he loves you. You can choose to not develop this relationship and if you do, this promise does not apply to you.*