

God Has Purpose In Pain

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When life is engulfed in pain, we search for answers: Why is this happening? How can I handle it? When will it end?

We mistakenly believe that if we can discover the answers to these questions, we can handle the pain. But it's not that easy. In fact, answers are exactly what we *don't* need.

When my daughter became disabled five years ago, we felt as if we'd been betrayed by God. We searched for answers—and found none. **But God** knew His purpose in my daughter's pain, and ultimately, by seeking God instead of seeking answers, we were able to see His purpose also.

The true purpose of pain can *only* be understood in relation to God. God uses our pain:

- To develop intimacy with Him
- To discover priorities in life
- To display His glory

While we may not be able to pinpoint God's specific purpose for our pain, in order to reconcile our suffering with God's sovereignty, we must realize that that God does not primarily demonstrate His love through our circumstances, but through our **relationship with Him**.

In this workshop, we'll discuss how God can use pain for His purpose by examining some of the following core principles and Scriptures:

1. You do not have to understand "why?"

Isaiah 55:8-9 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

2. But God... has a plan; you don't have to figure it out.

Proverbs 3:5-6 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him and he will make your paths straight.*

3. But God's power is demonstrated in our weakness, even when we are suffering.

2 Corinthians 12:9 *But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

4. But God... will not allow anything to occur that He can't use for our benefit and His glory.

Romans 8:28-29 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*

RESOURCES

Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering by Timothy Keller

When God's Ways Make No Sense by Dr. Larry Crabb

Shattered Dreams: God's Unexpected Path to Joy by Dr. Larry Crabb

Enduring Trials God's Way: A Biblical Recipe for Finding Joy in Suffering by Scott LaPierre

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