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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Bereans "received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so."

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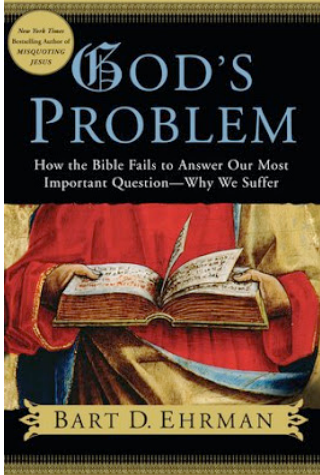
THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Romans 8:28
Lesson #4
Does God care?
6/15/2025

**Challenges
to the Christian Faith**

3. Does God care?
(the challenge of **suffering**)



**New Book
Old Question**

"How the Bible Fails to Answer our Most Important Question - Why we Suffer?"



**Bart
Ehrman**

If God were truly a loving powerful God there would be heaven on earth and we can't imagine it in any other way.



Do we have the hubris to assume that the issue of human suffering can be viewed in this way only?

Bart Ehrman's thesis in **"God's Problem"**
Why we Suffer? is convincing,

ONLY If you ignore the context.

- the **origin** of human suffering
- the **end** of the Biblical narrative

context
context
context

Matthew 6

“The lamp of the body is the eye. If the eye is clear the whole body is full of light but **if the eye is darkness, how great is that darkness.**”

Ben Anderson's story

- Entered high school with no idea of the pain and suffering that he would endure.
- He volunteered to be a part of a group that promised to be fun, and bring honor with glory to his life.
- What he got was a culture that glorified brutality, humiliation, and suffering that left him scared for life physically.
- For 3 hrs every day he would be beaten & kicked leaving him bruised with broken bones and in need of reconstructive surgery.
- All of this with the complete endorsement of the school's administration.
- This school is closer to us than you think.

It's like the coach who quit because

it made no sense to him
that so much time and money was spent
on an activity that endangered
the health of young men
who played the same game every week
with 1/2 the boys leaving depressed.

**Let's just declare everyone
a winner and go home.**

Tell me why this doesn't make sense?

“The two big advantages I had at birth were to have been born wise and to have been born in poverty.”

Context frames the narrative.

“I grew up in challenging circumstances and learned how to prophet in and from them (from my faith).”

Sophia Loren
(Roman Catholic actress)



“Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of the light.”

Brene Brown
(Author, Social Worker)

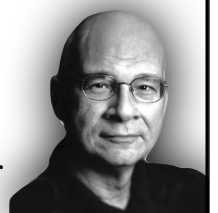


“Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

“Though Christianity does not provide the reason for each experience of pain, it provides deep resources for actually facing suffering with hope and courage rather than bitterness and despair.”



C.S. Lewis



Timothy Keller

Suffering plays a role in:

Hope and Peace

Romans 8:18

"For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time** are not worthy to be **compared with the glory** that is to be revealed to us."

Spiritual Authenticity

Philippians 3:10

"that I may **know him** and the power of his resurrection and **the fellowship of his sufferings**, being conformed to his death;"

Witness and Ministry

2 Corinthians 1

"3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; 4 who comforts us in all our affliction **so that we may be able to comfort** those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

Could it be that we are blind & deaf to the
CONTEXT of our brokenness
and our hope?

In the end, God will post,
not our medals, degrees,
or accomplishments

but rather our **scars, insights,
faith, and witness in response
to our circumstances** as alien
ambassadors in a fallen world.



Suffering is a window into the:

1. Wisdom of life Revealing the human dilemma

Suffering is God's visual aid.

Luke 11

"34 The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35 Then **watch out that the light in you may not be darkness.**"

Psalms 119:71

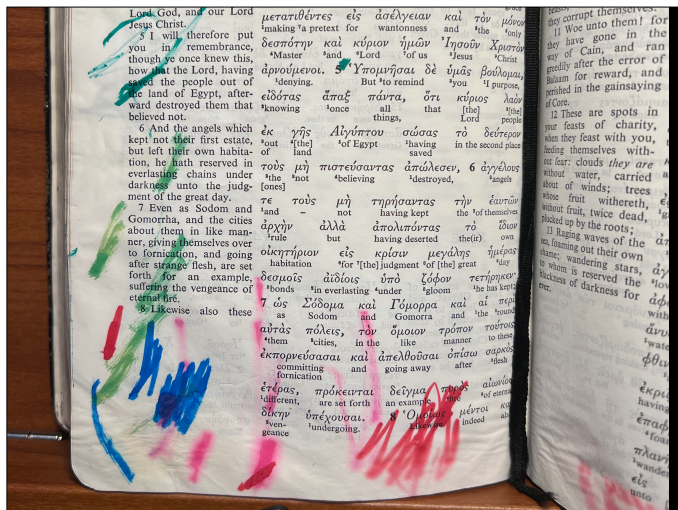
"It is **good for me that I was afflicted**,
that I may learn Your statutes."

Romans 8:28

"And we know that **God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God**, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Hebrews 5:8

"Although He was a Son,
He learned obedience from the things which He suffered."





As a powerful woman, how do you respond to those who say that women are not free to be ordained in the Catholic Church?



COLLEEN CAMPBELL CAMPBELL

"Power in the Kingdom of God is love. I don't need a position or a title to exercise that power."

Agnes Mary Donovan
Superior General, Sisters of Life



Suffering is a window into the:

2. Word of the Cross

Revealing the Gospel message.

Suffering is a window into God's heart and the Gospel.

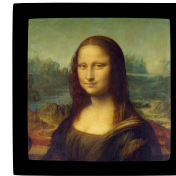
1 Corinthians 15

"3 For I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,"

A picture frame has two functions.

To display a picture in a context where it will be most appreciated.

To draw attention to the picture in a way that respects and glorifies it.



The great symbols of the faith
ARE NOT



The Law



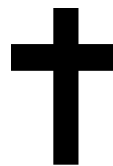
The towel and basin



Crown of a King

*reminding us of
what we must do.*

The great symbols of the faith
ARE



The Cross



The bread and cup



Water Baptism

*reminding us of
what Jesus' has done.*

Suffering is a window into the:

3. Way of the Cross

Revealing the path of discipleship.

Suffering calls for, peace, power, and perseverance.

Romans 5

"3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that **tribulation brings about perseverance**; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;"

Our power is not to change our circumstances, but to respond to them as Jesus & Paul did.

Philippians 2

"5 Have this **attitude (mindset)** in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but **emptied himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the **likeness** of men"

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all things

through Him who strengthens me.

1 Cor. 13:4-7

Love is a response to

patient trials
kind insults
not jealous success of others
does not brag success of self
is not arrogant power & authority
not unbecoming freedom
not self seeking competition
is not provoked confrontation
holds no grudges injustice
does not rejoice failure of others
rejoices in the truth gossip & slander
bears all things losses
believes/hopes all things discouragement
endures all things delayed hopes

Our response to hardship in a broken world is the framework for agape love, which is at the heart of God.

We see in a glass dimly.

The wise chief,
the naive brave,
and the horse





1.
Joseph suffered repeated injustice but in the end could see a purpose.
2.
Job suffered the same injustice but never knew why even though we were allowed to see why.
3.
Paul's thorn in the flesh was of Satan and yet he could rejoice in the benefits it unleashed.
4.
Judas was overcome by grief for his own sin but did not abide to see what Jesus could do with it.
5.
Jesus not only shared our experience of evil but took the worst of it on himself so as to give us hope.

"When suffering comes,
we yearn for a sign
from God,
forgetting
we have just
been given one."

Mignon McLaughlin
(journalist)



Do we have ears to hear?

Hard Questions

Next week
Roddy Dinsmore

From a
pastor's
heart

