



How Can a Loving God Allow Suffering?

My pain is a gift from God!

God can use my pain to stop me depending on my own resources so I hand over my burden to God, trusting him for the right answers and to give me peace and rest. *Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.* (Matthew 11:28)

God is testing my faith!

God may want to see if I am just a Christian when life's going smoothly. I can be faithful even when things are not going like I hoped

Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life (Rev 2:10)

God is pruning me and shaping me to be more like him!

My suffering can shape my character and build qualities that make me more like Christ, such as faithfulness, love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, perseverance, and peace with myself and others... Diamonds are created under great pressure and perhaps God is shaping something beautiful in me through my suffering. *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So fix your eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.* (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

I need to learn to count my blessings each day!

It's easy to focus on what I don't have, and what I would like to be, but I need to focus on what God has done for me, what he has given to me, and the opportunity I have in this place in my life, in this time, and in these circumstances. I need God to help me be more thankful and glorify him in every situation.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us (Romans 8:18) *Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving; present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 4:4-7)

I have a free will and I still chose to do it my way instead of God's way!

How different am I to Adam and Eve? How stupid am I to keep on trying to pick up my problems as if I know what I need better than God does? When will I learn! Forgive me Lord I don't want the freedom of the world, but the freedom of knowing that YOU are my guide and my shepherd and you promised *I will never leave you or forsake you* (Hebrews 13:5)

God is my only Hope and I can have expectations from Him, it's OK!

I still feel so low, like God has rejected me. I can join the Psalmist and say; *You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths. Your wrath lies heavily upon me; you have overwhelmed me with all your waves* (Psalm 88:6,7) *Why O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?* (Psalm 88:14) Things are tough and I can't feel your presence Lord, just like Job I feel *I am your target* (Job 7:20). BUT I will hope in you, because you alone keep your promises and I can trust you, and only you, to come through for me. *I can join David and say I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone O Lord make me dwell in safety* (Psalm 4:8).

You are my shepherd and I do not want for anything, You will find me green pastures and let me rest there, you will take the storms in my life and make them quiet waters, so my soul can be restored. You will guide me in paths that are right for me, because you love me. Even when I walk through times of sickness, depression and other shadow experiences of loss, grief and death, I won't be afraid, because you are with me. You will poke me and prod me until I listen and get it right. You will guide me away from places and people that threaten me, and are bad for my wellbeing, and this gives me great comfort and hope. Not only will you guide me you will set before me everything I need, even when my enemies are looking on, so let the feast begin! You have anointed me ... set me apart for something wonderful, your child, your friend, your servant... I have nothing to complain about because you are all I need, my cup of blessing is overflowing and I can't even see it, I'm sorry Lord. I know that good things and love are going to be part of my life because I have you in my life, and as long as I stay close to you and lean on you I am safe forever... Thankyou dear Jesus (Psalm 23 Anne's' paraphrase.)

I just want to praise you dear Lord, for saving me from myself.

You are my God and I am your child. Thankyou father. *Never will I leave you: never will I forsake you. So we say with confidence the Lord is my helper: I will not be afraid* (Hebrews 13:5,6). Please help me to believe these comforting words and forgive my unbelief. I Love You Lord. *Hear my cry O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I* (Psalm 61:1,2) every day and in every way, forever.

In Jesus name I pray. Amen

