

## A Discussion on Pain and Suffering

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."  
Isaiah 55:8-9

### Overview

Pain and suffering were never part of God's will for our lives. Since sin came into the world sickness, pain, conflict, struggle and death also came into the world. Pain and suffering is simply part of our fallen state – the result of sin.

Though pain and suffering stand on the foundation of sin, they are not necessarily the result of any particular sin in our lives. Examples to look at:

Job: Job 1:1 and 1:8 - Job was declared *righteous* by God

Man born blind: John 9:1-3 – This *was not the result of sin*

Timothy: 1 Timothy 5:23 – Paul prescribed wine *not repentance*

Just because you are having pain, suffering and struggles in your life does not mean you are particularly sinful. There is a cautionary tale however.

The man at the pool: John 5:1-15 In verse 14 Jesus says "stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." The "worse" is not specifically named. Commentators have argued through the ages if Jesus meant another debilitating condition or possibly being lost in hell. There does seem to be a tie, however, between the man's sin and possible illness.

### Personal Responsibility

Life choices **DO** effect our lives: The case of Hagar Genesis 16

Hagar was a slave and had no real choice or option in this story. In our world and culture, however, this story is played out over and over by willing, naïve young women all too eager to give themselves to some man only to discover they were used and his promises were empty. Once the child comes along they are abused and cast out. Now alone with no resource Hagar reaches out to God. She is given great promises about the boy's future but is told for now she must endure the hardship of her present life.

Life choices create life circumstance

A relationship with God will give us a hope and future but He never promises all

our problems will go away.

God does promise to be with us in all of our hardships. Hebrews 13:5-6, Luke 12:6

### **Take Away:**

Sin and suffering go together like “hand and shoe” - No real connection. If someone tries to tell you the reason you are suffering is because there is sin in your life just remember you can be suffering even if there is no sin in your life. Job and his friends were equally wrong about the connection between sin and suffering. Job’s friends were saying “you are suffering therefore you must be a sinner.” Job seemed to be saying “I am righteous therefore I should not be suffering” They’re both equally wrong. **You can suffer and be righteous.**

### **Benefits?!**

James 1:2-3 Consider it pure joy

Romans 5:3—5 Rejoice in our suffering

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 Comforts us so we can comfort

1 Peter 1:6-7 Proves our faith genuine

2 Corinthians 12: 7-10 boast about and delight in weakness

We cannot understand how our struggles fit into God’s plan. We have to accept on faith that it does. God has plans and desires for our lives as well as the lives of those around us. All of our lives fit together even with the lives of people we do not know. We must believe that God is working all things “to the good” Romans 8:28

### **Final Thoughts**

God demonstrates His love for us by sending Jesus. NOT by giving us a pain/stress free life

John 3:16

Romans 5:8

1 John 4:9-10 and 1 John 3:16

My health, wealth or a stress free life does not determine God’s love for me. I need to rest in His unchanging grace and nature. He will not send me on any path that He has not already gone down and He will not send me there alone – He always goes with me. Psalm 23 tells me His comfort, provision and anointing will be with me in my darkest times. I must trust in His love. He will make my path straight. Proverbs 3:5-6.