

WEEK 10: “How could a loving God allow so much suffering?”

[WARM-UP]

[THINK] Q: What’s the difference between an emotional and an intellectual confrontation?

How to approach the book of Job:

Job 2:11-13; 42:7

“worthless physicians” (13:4)

“miserable comforters” (16:2)

“comfort with empty nothings” (21:34)

Insufficient reasons given for suffering:

Eliphaz(5:17f) DISCIPLINE

Bildad (8:3f) SIN

Zophar (11:6) DESERVED

Underlying question: “How could a loving God allow so much MEANINGLESS suffering?”

[READ] Q: Might there be any good reason(s) for suffering?

Blind Man

John 9:1-7; 30-41

Lazarus

John 11:1-16

Disciples

John 16:16-33

*Just because I can’t **think** of a good reason for suffering, it doesn’t mean there **isn’t** a good reason.*
(This may not comfort an aching soul in the moment, but it is logically true and still beneficial.)

[EXAMINE]

2 Corinthians 4:7ff

TAKEAWAYS:

- Suffering should not be reduced to a trite product of punishment or sin.
- When we cannot see purpose in suffering, we should not assume there *is* no purpose in it.
- If suffering has a greater good purpose, it is fully compatible with God’s goodness and love.

Next week: “How could a loving God send people to Hell?” (Chapter 12)