

Why Do We Suffer?

Aliens

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- **Our foolish choices**
- **Other people's sinful choices**
- **Living in a sinful world**

1 Peter 4:15-16 (NIV) If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶ However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

1 Peter 4:4 (NIV) They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you.

1 Peter 4:12 (NIV) Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

Viktor Frankl: "Despair is suffering without meaning."

Finding Meaning in Our Suffering:

- **Suffering shapes our character.**

1 Peter 4:1-2 (NIV) Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. ² As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

Hebrews 2:10: For in bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was entirely appropriate that God—for whom and through whom all things exist—should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

- **Suffering simplifies our priorities.**

1 Peter 4:7-10 (NIV) The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

- **Suffering strengthens our bond to Jesus.**

1 Peter 4:12-13 (NIV) Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ...

Acts 7:55-56 (NIV) But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

- **Suffering sets our hearts on future joy.**

1 Peter 4:13 (NIV) But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed.