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they will ultimately prosper (Isa. 3:10; Prov. 12:21; Job 14:7). God’s promise of final victory over evil, pain, and suffering is comforting (Rev. 2:10; Matt. 25:46). However, many still wonder why evil, pain, and suffering continue.

**Some explanations for evil, pain, and suffering**

In the process of creating and directing lives, God must necessarily cause and/or allow pain. The reason for suffering is not always evident. Suffering in the form of discipline may prepare us for life: “It’s good for you; it will make you a better person.” This is the basic lesson of Proverbs 3:12. Storms do not kill bad people selectively. God has limited His power. No external force limits God’s power; He limits Himself. Free moral agency implies wrong choices and thus evil, pain, and suffering. Natural law (and especially its abuse) includes the possibility of pain. Fire, which warms pleasantly at a certain distance, can also destroy. Water, which is necessary to sustain life, can also drown people and animals.

We may be using the wrong standard. Everything that takes us away from God is evil. Everything that brings us to God is good. Pain can be beneficial. Pain may be warning that something is wrong (headaches, internal disease, external injury). The pain and suffering caused by sin (disease, injury, bad conscience, etc.) sometimes prompt sinners to change their ways.

Suffering *can* build character. Through suffering, God is revealed to us. The more we need God, the more He provides. Though God does not prevent calamities, He gives people strength to overcome them. What if people lived forever in a painless world? The world would become hopelessly overpopulated. Because people could not have more children, we would probably not have been born.

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