

LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRY

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Lutheran Hour Ministries

Suffering – Why Christians

*And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives."
Hebrews 12:5-6*

Many times I have been asked, "Why does the Lord allow painful things to come my way? I am already a Christian. By the Spirit's power, I have already been moved from darkness into light. Why then should I experience hurt and harm, wounds and worries, pains and problems?"

Those people conclude their question with "That doesn't seem to be the kind of thing a loving Father would do."

It's a fair question and one that deserves a reasonable answer. First, allow me to explain: I make no claim to know the mind of the Lord. His ways and thoughts are far above me or anyone else. On the other hand, that doesn't mean we can't sometimes derive insights from His Word and from our common human experiences.

Let me begin by asking which of your children looked forward to getting a shot?

Pam and I have three children who are as different as night and day. Still, they set aside their differences and came together in disliking a shot. I would imagine your children and grandchildren are the same. Anyone who has taken a little one in for a vaccination remembers the tears, the twisting, and the turning, the shouting, and the struggling.

In spite of your children's hurt, you still took them in to the doctor; you still made sure they had their shots. And if I were to ask how could you be so cruel? How could you be so heartless to abuse your child in that way?

What would you reply?

You would tell me it wasn't abuse at all. You took them for their shots because you cared for them. You believed those shots were necessary if your children were to be protected, if they were to grow up strong and healthy. You knew that, but your children didn't understand, did they? All they saw was the pain while you as a parent saw the purpose.

You did it because you loved them -- not because you wanted to hurt them.

Now, if you, as a human parent, act in this way -- doing what is right rather than what is easy -- do you think God, the all-loving and all-caring, would do any less for His children? Impossible! The Lord will do what is necessary for our good.

For our good, our forgiveness, and our salvation, He sent His Son into this world. Here Jesus suffered much, but He accepted that suffering because it was for our ultimate good.

That is at least one reason why you may be burdened with a pain or a problem.

God, who sees the future, who knows what is best, is preparing you. He is doing for you what needs to be done. And you, as His child, should believe the pain taking place is done because your Heavenly Father cares and loves you.

THE PRAYER: Dear Lord, I may never get to the point in my life where I will welcome chastening. Even so, may I, in every circumstance mean it when I pray, "Thy will be done." This I ask in the Savior's Name. Amen.