

# Why ME?

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It's a question we all ask at some point, because everyone suffers.

What is most interesting is that we all instinctively don't like suffering, and feel our lives and planet should not be this way.

We seem to be designed to need hope - and this booklet is about hope!



This is a question we often ask when suffering. Aware of this, it is helpful to note that...

- 1. All answers to the question of suffering feel weak when we are suffering.
- 2. Suffering is a global problem (not merely a Christian one).

Everyone is asking the same question!

Where Christianity stands out is that it offers a unique answer, including an end to suffering and evil, and also a God who cares.

While no answer fully satisfies when you are suffering. Christianity has a really great answer that both makes sense and offers hope... and hope is what we need!



Christianity says our experience is real, suffering is bad and we do matter. God does see. God does care, and there will be a final end for all wrong, evil and suffering!

It's a real offer of hope, and a rare hope to find!

Here are seven things Christians believe about suffering.

1. For brief notes on what other religions have to say about suffering see the endnotes.



While God's greatest gift is love, His second was surely free will! While free will made relationship with God possible (we could choose to love Him), it also meant we could choose to reject Him! That's how evil and suffering began!

Because God is all-knowing and outside of time, the Bible then recognises that God would only have allowed evil to come about if He had a plan for how to deal with it.

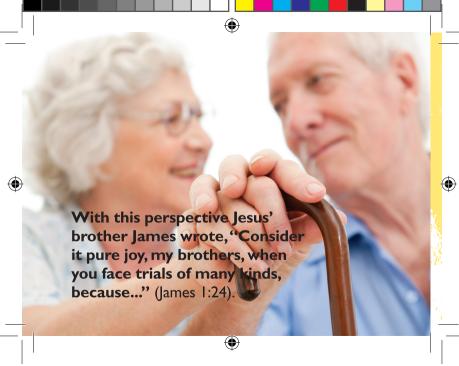
Put all that together and you have a unique promise of ultimate hope! Suffering had a beginning point, and that makes belief 7 possible (read on).



Christians believe in a God who cares. In fact, He cared so much that He gave His only Son to die in our place! He didn't sit at a distance watching our sufferings. He saw, He cared, and He came and got His hands dirty!

Jesus suffered one of the cruelest deaths possible - and yet was the only sinless person to have ever lived. If there was ever unjust suffering, that was it!

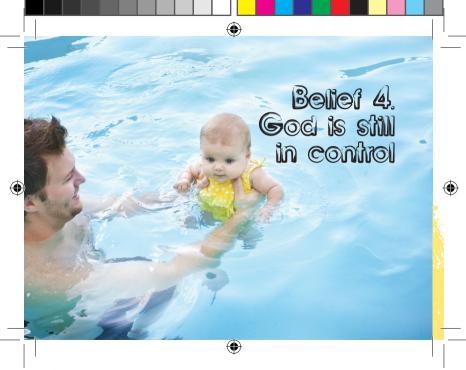
Having someone who understands makes a big difference when you're in pain!



### Belief 3. God can bring good out of our pain

One of the greatest promises in the Bible is that God works in all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28). While God did not cause our pain, the Bible says He can use it for good purposes!

Our sufferings can produce character, which will be rewarded in eternity. Sufferings can also be used to equip us to help others in need. They can humble us too, causing us to turn to God in faith.



A common human fear is that our lives and our planet are out of control. Most belief-systems offer little hope of a bigger plan, but Christianity does.

Christians believe God is working out this plan from the perspective of eternity. To reconcile suffering with a good God we need to trust Him in two things: That His big plan includes reasons for temporarily allowing the evil in this world, and also a complete and final solution to it.

We don't know enough to be able to validly accuse God of wrong. The many fulfilled predictions in the Bible show God does have enough control to fulfill many promises. Humility and trust are necessary. With these comes peace!



The greatest hope Christianity offers is our personal inclusion in God's final victory. 'Salvation' is offered through Jesus. Not only does God care, and not only did He come (Christmas), He also made a way for us to escape sin and its sufferings and be with Him for eternity (Easter).

Like all who have lived before us, we will eventually die. With Jesus, eternal life and hope is assured.



Our human instinct says justice must exist. Yet, if there is no God, then tyrants, murderers and rapists who escape trial in this life will never be brought to trial!

In contrast, the Bible says God sees all. While this world is not an even playing field, things will be levelled out in eternity. Those who do evil, who deny justice to the oppressed or help to the poor, will be called to account.

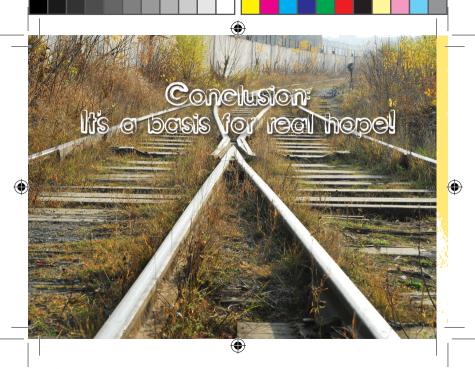
What other belief can restore the hope that true love and reason might exist in this universe?



Just as evil itself had a beginning point (when free will was wrongfully used), Christians believe evil will have an end point - because God is not evil and does have a plan!

The Bible promises God will eventually intervene big time. There will then be no more tears - or suffering. Not only is ultimate salvation possible for the individual - the promise is that the entire creation will be renewed, at which point all that is lost in this life would be restored to those who believed!

The final victory is assured!



While we are each free to believe what we want the Bible says what we believe matters. Hope is offered - but we must choose it.

The Bible says God both cares and understands - because He has experienced sufferings, persevered through them, and triumphed.

More than this: He knows the future, He loves us, and He has a plan!

Even more than this: He has made a way for our wrongs to be forgiven, and eternal life restored. God is with us to comfort us, help us and to turn all things to good in the end!



Christians believe something that is incredibly rare. They believe that real hope exists, and that God has placed it within our reach!

We hope this message has encouraged you.

If you wanted to say a prayer to take hold of that hope, a suggested one is on the next page.

Thank you for reading.



God, I'm hurting. Thank you that you care! I can not understand my pain. I can't see the way through sometimes. Thank you for giving me hope. Thank you for offering to journey with me through life too!

I put my trust and hope in you. Forgive me for the wrongs I have done. I thank you for the promise of eternal life in you. I welcome you as my friend. Help me to love others as you have loved me. Help me rise above my own sufferings to share a smile with others. Help me to pass on your hope!

Amen.

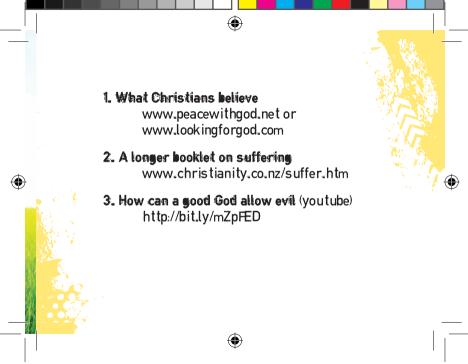


To strengthen faith, Christians practice three key habits:

- 1. They read the Bible to understand what Jesus was like and how God wants them to live.
- 2. They talk to God in prayer, asking His blessing for others and His help in their lives to live selflessly.
- 3. They attend a Church to learn about God from others and to have a few Christian friends, so that they can encourage each other in living God's way, including helping those in need and sharing God's hope.

These habits recognise that spiritual life is like physical if it is to stay strong.

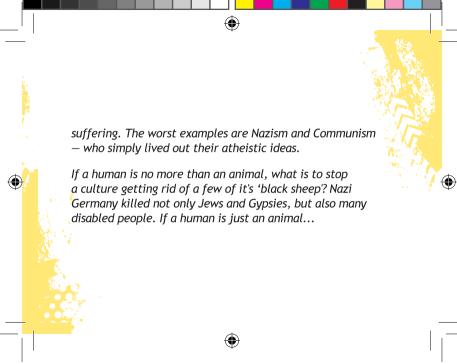




## Endnotes: What others have to say about suffering

If atheism is true in saying that no God exists, we humans are just accidents of chance and thus have no more intrinsic worth than any other animal (or insect). So no one

hears our cries when we suffer. There are no answers, and there is no ultimate hope. But the problem goes further. With no God to define what is right or wrong it is left to the individual or culture to decide. This means no clearly defined morality exists to define and stop humans from causing



If all roads lead to a 'universal spirit' ('impersonal cosmic force') there is again little basis for human worth (though the 'New Age' seeks to promote this idea positively in the West). Most Eastern religions agree that a human is of no more worth than a fly.

Buddhism's four noble truths are a 'contingency plan' for dealing with suffering. As with atheism, 'evil' and 'wrong'

do not actually exist — so suffering and pain exist eternally and there can be no hope of things changing. Our challenge is to overcome suffering by ridding ourselves of desire

and ignorance including the desire for good things.

Hinduism says our poverty or sufferings are the result of bad karma from a previous life. On this basis it is often suggested a person should not try to change their poor circumstances, or the poor circumstances of others. It explains the reality of suffering, but offers no love or real hope other than an eventual escape to 'nothingness' when one achieves Nirvana.

So, all religions offer an answer of some kind. Christianity, however, offers a unique hope.

### A Shining Lights' resource www.shininglights.co



### Written by Dave Mann

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