



**Question:** Is the disease in my body the “devil’s work”? It can’t be our Lord’s work. I am his child. He wouldn’t give this to me.

What is the cause or origin of sickness and disease? See Genesis 3:16–19. Brokenness, corruption of the perfect creation, death — these are the universal consequences of sin. See Romans 5:12.

**Death is the ultimate reminder that we have inherited the sinful nature from our “first parents”, Adam and Eve.**

The good news is that God will set all things right in the new heavens and the new earth. It will be a place of perfection — no sin, no sorrow, no suffering, no sickness. But until that time, we are living within a body that is infected by and impacted by universal sin which leads to death. Chronic pain, illness, and disease are a form of death.

**Disease, sickness, and suffering are a result of man’s rebellion against God.** In that sense is indiscriminate — it’s no respecter of persons. Sickness and suffering falls upon the righteous and the unrighteous.

But can some sickness be the devil’s work? The Bible does appear to attribute some sickness and disease to Satan. See Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38.

There also appear to be times in Scripture that God does allow or send an illness or suffering upon an individual. Examples: Job, Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21), Herod Agrippa (Acts 12). Not many of us could claim the status of Job whom God allowed Satan to torment because of his exemplary faithfulness to God. The remainder of these examples show us that sickness, disease, and death that came from the Lord was due to personal wickedness. See John 5:14.

But there was also a time that the disciples wanted to attribute sickness to sin and Jesus corrected them. See John 9:1-3.

**God’s allowance of sickness or suffering in your life does not invalidate His love, His power, or His compassion.** Remember, we don’t define God through our circumstances or challenges. God can and will demonstrate his love, compassion, and grace in the midst of our suffering. See 2 Corinthians 1:3–11.

Even in the midst of suffering, God’s Word reveals some important truths that may give hope and purpose:

**1. Suffering produces intimacy with God** (Job 42:5). Intimacy with God is often nurtured right in the midst of suffering. Dr. Tim Hager: “There’s an opening of the soul that happens during times of stress or duress. During these times of suffering, we experience God at a deep, profound level.”

**2. Suffering equips us to comfort others** (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). Suffering gives us compassion for others who are hurting, enabling us to minister more effectively. Those who have suffered make the most effective comforters.

**3. Suffering refines us** (Isaiah 48:10). The meaning of this verse makes it clear the pain and suffering have a way of bringing our strengths and weaknesses to the surface. When the impurities (dross) float to the surface, God skims it off; he purifies and refines us to be His image bearer.

**4. Suffering produces growth and maturity** (James 1:2-4). If we can turn toward God in our pain, He can use our suffering to mature our faith.

**5. Suffering conforms us into God’s image** (Romans 8:28-29). We may be tempted to read these verses to say that God will bring good out of everything. While He can and does redeem pain in our lives (if we yield to Him), the verse speak of being conformed to God’s image *through* our suffering.

Remember, we serve a Savior who is familiar with suffering (Isaiah 53:3-5; Hebrews 5:7-10). Christ’s power is make perfect in our weakness. See 2 Corinthians 12:8–9.

**Question:** When someone you love is suffering a terminal illness, do we pray that death comes so they can be with the Lord or do we continue to pray for healing? What should we ask the Lord for? How do we pray in those circumstances?

See Philippians 1:21–23. First and foremost question is what is their spiritual condition. That will immediately give you a direction to pray. Second, where are they in the terminal illness process? A fairly coherent loved one may not appreciate you praying for the hastening of their death. As death appears inevitable, prayers should turn to prayers of comfort and assurance. This is when Scripture passages become very helpful.

**Question:** Still curious if there is no suffering or sorrows in heaven, how will we feel if one of our loved ones doesn’t make it to heaven?

See Revelation 21:3–4. The Bible doesn’t address how we will feel if one of our loved ones doesn’t make it to heaven with us. I have a feeling that we will be so overwhelmed in the actual, unhindered presence of God that we will find ourselves thinking only of Him — He will be our focus, not us. We also know that God is perfectly just, and those who are in heaven will have every confidence that whatever has happened at the final judgment has been totally just and right. The terrible possibility that our loved ones might miss heaven should motivate us to earnestly pray and lovingly witness to them while there is still time in this life for them to experience salvation.