

# Hard Questions

## If God is Good, Why do People Suffer?

**God's love is greater than this fallen world (Romans 8:28).** From the beginning of creation, God has demonstrated His love to us by giving us choice. For love to exist, choice is necessary. And because choice exists – the choice to embrace or reject Him – suffering, pain, and injustice exist as well. Sin has marred all of creation, brought physical and spiritual death, and produced every kind of relational strife and hardship. God's promise to us is not that He will remove all suffering and pain from our lives. His promise to His followers is that He will be present with us, pouring out Jesus' victorious love and peace in the midst of our difficulties (John 16:33). Jesus came **for** us as the answer to a fallen world and desires to be **in** us, working and moving through us to represent His heart to those experiencing difficulty (Philippians 3:10).

### GETTING STARTED

As a follower of Jesus, how do you understand or explain suffering in our world, especially if we believe God is good? To what degree do you wrestle with these types of questions?

### GO DEEPER

1. According to John 16:33, Jesus states clearly that in this world we will have trouble. What does He promise (and not promise) to us in this verse that gives us hope in the midst of that trouble?
2. In Genesis 2:15-17, God gives Adam and Eve choice in the Garden of Eden. What was that choice, and why was it an act of love? Do you agree or disagree with the premise that choice is necessary for love to exist?
3. From Romans 8:28, God works for the good of those who love Him. Some have taken this to mean that God makes or declares bad things good. Why is this a wrong perspective or interpretation? What does this verse mean instead, and what does that look like in the midst of difficulty?
4. What does it mean to know the fellowship of sharing in the suffering of Jesus, in Philippians 3:10?

### MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. In what ways have you experienced suffering, and where was God in the midst of that difficulty? How has God possibly worked for your good in that struggle?
2. Pastor David, in his message, makes the point that Jesus coming FOR us is only part one of God's answer to a fallen, suffering world. Part two of God's answer is Jesus IN us. How is God calling you to be the answer – Jesus IN you – in our broken world? What, if anything, was stirred in you from the introduction of foster325.org and the vision to provide foster homes for kids in the 325 area code?

### PRACTICE IT NOW

As a group, in an attitude of prayer, ask God to reveal Himself in the midst of the difficult situations you are facing. Ask Him to show you how He is moving and working, to reveal what He is accomplishing in you and in your struggles. Ask God also to show you more of how He wants to use you to represent His love and peace to those around you who may be experiencing hardship. Ask Him to stir your heart more and to give you clear direction in what you and your family are to step into as the answer to our fallen world.