

Pain and Suffering: Where Is God When It Hurts?

"My best friend died in a car wreck. My grandfather died of cancer. My sister has MS. My parents got divorced. If God is supposed to be good and loving, how can he allow such terrible things to happen?"

Harsh Realities: Job loses it all, Job 1:1-22

1. Do you see Job as admirable or scary? Why?
2. What would test the limits of your faith?
3. Do blessings come to the obedient and curses to the disobedient?

When will it end? The Fruit of Suffering, James 1:1-18

1. What allows you to keep praying when you seem to get no answer?
2. What role does desire play in your life? Are you aware of your desires? What role do they play in your relationship with God?
3. Are you a "first fruit"? (Take the question any way you want.)
4. Have you noticed spiritual changes in yourself as you grow older?

Hard Lessons: Why was he born blind? John 9:1-40

1. Have you ever had an experience/spiritual experience and at the time missed its meaning?
2. Do you "give God the praise"?
3. Have you ever been reluctant to profess your faith? Why?
4. What role do spiritual light and darkness play in your life?

Finding God: God's whisper: 1 Kings, 1-18

1. What is your reaction to the God portrayed in this passage?
2. How has the Lord nourished you over the course of your life?
3. Are you able to express your negative feelings to God? If you can, do you consider that prayer?
4. Do you have a sense of the Lord asking you to do anything? Alternatively, do you have a sense that the Lord calls you to be a certain kind of person?

Comforted by Others: Four friends who cared, Mark 2:1-12

1. Friends break down barriers to get the paralyzed man to Jesus. Who in your life has brought you to the Lord? Did they have an easy job of it?
2. Do you believe that Jesus forgives your sins? How do you deal with sin and forgiveness in your life?
3. Is there any paralysis in your life that needs to be healed?

Things Can Change: The Pain and The Hope, Romans 8:18-27

1. Natural catastrophes kill tens of thousands. Is suffering natural? Is it redemptive?
2. "For in hope we are saved." Does hope save us? What do you hope for? Paul says we groan for redemption. What do you "groan" for?
3. Is there a restlessness in you? Does it come from God or somewhere else?
4. Do you have any sense that the Spirit works within you, without your even being aware?