



joni&friends



Why Bad Things Happen

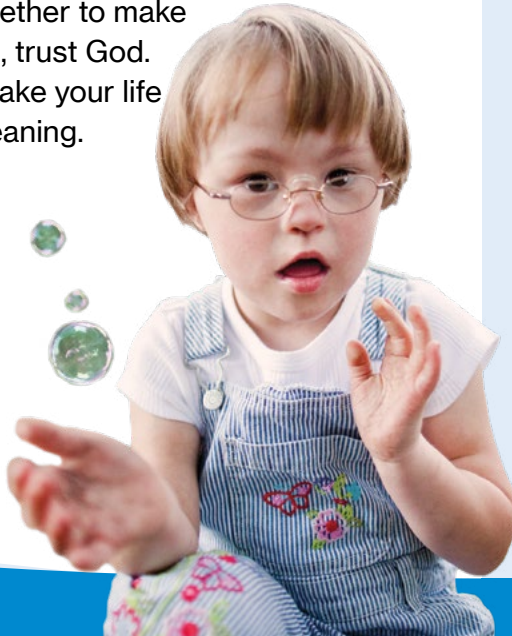
by Joni Eareckson Tada

Life's Big Puzzle

Have you ever dumped a box of puzzle pieces on the ground? Some pieces are upside down and some pieces right side up. Some are even hiding underneath other pieces. You can't see what the picture will look like. It is a great, big mess!

Some people see life like a big, messy pile of puzzle pieces. It is like they have forgotten that the pieces can be put together to make a pretty picture. Remember that God will take all of the "puzzle pieces" of your life and put them together to make a beautiful picture. One day you will be able to see how the hard parts of your life fit together to make something wonderful. Until then, trust God. Show Him you believe He will make your life beautiful, colorful, and full of meaning.

"...remember that God will take all of the "puzzle pieces" of your life and put them together to make a beautiful picture."



You Choose

I want you to believe that Jesus is the Answer. Jesus is the greatest answer to your question "Why?" The Bible says:

"But that happened so that we would not depend on ourselves but on God."

2 CORINTHIANS 1:9

Hard times are meant to bring us closer to Jesus, not push us away from Him. So you have a choice. You can either let suffering push you away from God, or pull you closer to Him. What will you choose? I hope you will let Jesus comfort you and tell you that everything is going to be okay. Keep trusting Him! He wants to give you His comfort and encouragement. And the more you get to know Jesus, the more easily you'll be able to see how the puzzle pieces of your life fit together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J.M.", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.



A Big Question

Why does God let bad things happen? Maybe your dad lost his job or someone in your family is very sick. Or maybe you are the one who is hurting and sad. Does God really care or is God just being mean?

I'm Joni Eareckson Tada, and I once asked the same questions. When I was 17 years old, I broke my neck when I dove into shallow water and my head hit the bottom. I couldn't use my hands or legs and I was very scared. I asked God, "Why?"

Everybody has hard days, but sometimes it seems like your days are just too hard. **It's not fair**, you think. But God isn't being mean! The Bible says that because Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, bad things started to happen. Now everyone gets hurt sometimes. Everyone has hard and painful things to go through. This is something we can be sad about. Even God is sad this happened! But God wasn't surprised and we shouldn't be surprised either. Even though we know bad things happen to everyone, it is okay to ask God lots of questions! It is even a good idea to ask God questions. When you ask God questions, it makes it easier for Him to teach you!

- It's okay to ask God questions.
- God doesn't hold it against you if you have doubts.
- God wants to use the very thing you have questions about (your suffering) to strengthen your trust in Him, and help change your world for the better!



Joni as a kid.

Why Do We Ask Why?

If hurt, hard things, and other kinds of suffering are supposed to be a part of everyone's life, then why do we still ask "Why?" When you ask "Why?" you are showing that you want things to be fair and right. That's good! God wants things to be fair and right, too. Then why does God allow all kinds of suffering?

Suffering is like a big puzzle. It's hard to figure out. What if God tried to tell you everything about the puzzle? You might be even more confused! Even if He tried telling you the reason why, it could be like trying to pour the ocean into a sand bucket! There's no way we could understand it all!

So maybe that's not really what you want. Imagine you are learning to ride a bicycle. You are doing a great job! And then you crash. You start crying, right? Would you want your mom or dad to come and tell you why you got hurt? No! You want them to hold you and kiss your owie!

And I think that's what you want from God, too. Yes, you have questions for God. But mostly, you want God to comfort you. And God knows answers don't always help when it hurts. So instead of explaining everything to us, He gives us Himself. In fact, when God the Father gave us Jesus, He was giving us all of Himself... with nothing held back!



What Jesus Thinks about Pain and Suffering



Jesus understands your suffering and hurt (better than even you do!). When you hurt, He hurts. When you cry, He sees every little tear. Because He died on the cross, He experienced the worst suffering we can imagine. Jesus chose to die on the cross because God wanted to “undo” what happened when Adam and Eve sinned. Remember how sin brought suffering into the world? Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He can do something about suffering. Suffering doesn’t have to be forever! That’s Good News!

SUFFERING:
An experience that is painful.

How did Jesus do this on the cross? It’s where Jesus paid the cost of your salvation—and if you trust in Him and obey Him, you are one of God’s children. As you trust Him, your problems will no longer seem so big and terrible.

“We have a high priest who can feel it when we are weak and hurting. We have a high priest who has been tempted in every way, just as we are. But he did not sin.”

HEBREWS 4:15

How is this Good News for You?

Because of Jesus, you can know everything is going to be okay. You may still hurt and have problems, but...

- You won’t be angry about your suffering and pain. Instead you will be thankful it makes you ask God for help.
- You will be sure that hard times are part of a plan for your good.
- As you trust God, your problems will help teach you to follow Jesus better.
- God will use your disappointments to make your faith in Him stronger.
- God will use your hurt to help you know how to help others.
- You will know that in heaven, God will get rid of all sin and suffering. (There will be no more hurt, pain, disability, sadness, divorce, or loneliness!)
- In heaven you will understand how God used hard things in your life to make good things happen.
- God is sad when you suffer and hurt, but He lets it happen so something He loves can happen, too. That something He loves is this: Jesus’ power shining through your life.

More Questions?

If you need further resources, would like more information on other books by Joni Eareckson Tada, or wish to know more about a relationship with Jesus Christ, contact joniandfriends.org. If you would like more information on how to be a Christ-follower, click on the Help & Inspiration tab at joniandfriends.org. We look forward to hearing from you, friend!

“Go out quickly into the streets
and alleys of the town and bring in the poor,
the crippled, the blind, and the lame...
so that my house will be full.”

LUKE 14:21-23



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Joni and Friends is an international Christian ministry that brings the Good News of Jesus to the world's one billion people affected by disability. With its life-changing programs, Joni and Friends serves the world's neediest; that is, people with disabilities in the U.S. and around the world.

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Scripture quotations taken from the *Holy Bible: New International Version*.