

The purpose of the first paragraph is to reveal stats and quotes from mainstream sources about the growing struggles teens may have regarding each topic. The purpose of the second paragraph is to reveal God's perspective by seeing what the Bible says regarding each topic and how we can receive help and guidance in our life's purpose through a relationship with Jesus.

PAIN & SUFFERING

Many have been puzzled by the suffering we see in our world¹⁵⁴. Pain affects more people in the U.S. than diabetes, heart disease, and cancer combined¹⁶². They encompass all negatives of our world and life, whether emotional, physical, psychological, biological, local, global, etc. leaving us looking for answers.

The Bible says in the beginning God created everything (Gen. 1:1) in perfection, until humans disobeyed Him and received the curse of sin (Gen. 3:6-19), bringing pain, suffering and death (which God doesn't like, Ezek. 18:32) to humans and the world (Rom. 8:21-25). Bible characters dealt with it (David, Job, Paul) and sometimes doubted God (Ps. 77:6-13, Job 30:20). Even Jesus, the only perfect person (2 Cor. 5:21), was murdered on a cross (Acts 5:30). Through His death (John 3:16) He can help us (Heb. 2:18) joyfully persevere (Jam. 1:2-4) as He works everything for our good (Rom. 8:28). God gives us the ability to trust Him with things we can't answer (Deut. 29:29) or don't understand (Prov. 3:5), and people to walk through life with (Gal. 6:2) as we look towards a future (Rom. 8:18) where He takes away the curse (Rev. 22:3) and all pain and suffering (Rev. 21:4).

BIBLE VERSES TO CONSIDER

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Genesis 3:6-7 "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so, they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."

Genesis 3:17-19 "To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Romans 8:21-25 "the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."

Psalm 77:6-13 "I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated and my spirit asked: "Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again? Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?" Then I thought, "To this I will appeal: the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand. I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your

works and meditate on all your mighty deeds.”
Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as
our God?”

Job 30:20 “I cry out to you, God, but you do not
answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me.”

2 Corinthians 5:21 “God made Him who had no sin
to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become
the righteousness of God.”

Job 9:16–17 “Even if I summoned him and he
responded, I do not believe he would give me a
hearing. He would crush me with a storm and
multiply my wounds for no reason.”

Job 21:7 “Why do the wicked live on, growing old
and increasing in power?”

2 Corinthians 5:7 “For we live by faith, not by
sight.”

Romans 8:16–17 says, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him."

Job 23:8-12 "But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread."

Job 2:13 "Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was."

Romans 12:15 "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

2 Corinthians 1:8-11 "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers"

Acts 5:30 "The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead – whom you killed by hanging Him on a cross."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life."

Hebrews 2:18 "Because he (Jesus) himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

James 1:2-4 "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Romans 8:28 "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the Lord our God."

Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

Galatians 6:2 "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Romans 8:18 "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

Revelation 22:3 "No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him."

Revelations 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

James 5:16 "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."

James 1:2-4 "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

2 Timothy 3:12 "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

Luke 13:1-5 "Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

Hebrews 12:7-11 "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They

disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

Isaiah 38:17 “Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.”

Hebrews 4:15-16 “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

2 Corinthians 1:5-7 “For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which

produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.”

1 Peter 1:7 “These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

1 Peter 5:10 “And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”

2 Corinthians 4:17 “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

1 Peter 4:19 “So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11 "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end."

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Ezekiel 18:32 "For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!"

Psalms 6:6 "I am worn out from my groaning. All night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears."

Psalms 13:1-3 "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death."

Psalm 42:3 "My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'"

Psalm 88:6 "You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths."

Isaiah 53 (talking about Jesus) "Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and

afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment, he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors."

STATS & QUOTES TO CONSIDER

Many have been puzzled by the suffering we see in our world.

There is perhaps no greater challenge to faith than the presence of pain and suffering in the world.

This question—Why is there pain and suffering in the world? —has plagued humanity since our very first thoughts about God.

Pain and suffering, no matter how much we know about them intellectually, have a way of tapping into our very core. They expose what we're made of in ways that other emotions do not.

No matter the reason, it seems pain and suffering are unavoidable; we seemingly have no choice in the matter. What we do control is our reaction, how we deal with our pain, and what we do with our experience.

The fact that we even have a category of “evil” or “suffering” assumes that there is a violation of a norm or standard.

Most suffering and pain are caused by people.

The existence of suffering in this world is a complex subject that might cause many Christians and non-Christians alike to question the love of God. But we must remember that God is not the cause of our suffering.

Jesus Christ was the only perfect man who ever lived, and people killed Him.

Those who are suffering may be tempted to turn away from God. They should never allow this to happen.

You must accept suffering without becoming bitter.

There are no easy answers to the WHY question.

Many people will ask, "Why can't God just fix it?" C.S. Lewis answers: "What are you asking God to do – wipe out all past sins? Give people a fresh start? Offer supernatural help for everyday living? But God has done this – through Calvary."

But do evil and suffering really mean that God does not exist? Some Christians have responded by turning the skeptic's argument on its head. They do this by asking on what basis is something deemed evil? If there is some moral standard the critic is basing their position on, then the problem of evil becomes an argument for not against the reality of God. After all, in order to call something good or evil, there must be an underlying standard of right and wrong. Theists argue that this standard is rooted in God and His nature. We know His moral law exists, so we recognize the reality of evil and suffering. But unless there is a moral standard, we have no real basis for calling anything good or evil.

Nearly 50 million American adults have significant chronic pain or severe pain, according to a new study prepared by National Institutes of

Health's National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH).

In 2016, an estimated 20.4% of U.S. adults had chronic pain and 8.0% of U.S. adults had high-impact chronic pain.

Pain affects more people in the U.S. than diabetes, heart disease, and cancer combined

126 million, or 55% of all adults, experienced pain in the previous three months

4 million U.S. adults report "a lot of pain"

3 million U.S. adults suffer from daily pain

When God speaks regarding Job's suffering in Job 38–41, he basically says, "Hey, Job, I'm God. You're not. You've gotta just trust me on this."