



Hard Questions and Answers from God's Word: A Scripture Guide for Leaders and Parents

In this world you will have trouble.
But take heart! I have overcome the world.
John 16:33b

This section will provide some guidance to Christian teachers and parents as you help children who have survived a disaster or crisis. Some kids may not have experienced personal loss in their lives yet but are living in fear that it's coming. They may be frightened at what they are seeing or hearing around them. They may be afraid of getting sick or losing a loved one. This section will help you with the hard questions that come from hurting people, questions for which there are no simple answers. These questions and responses may help by providing some biblical principles.

This is not an exhaustive list of questions or of Scriptures. It will, at best, provide a starting point. May the Holy Spirit use these to speak to you! You can add other Scriptures that come to mind in the space provided.

People in crisis often ask questions that will fall into 3 main categories:

1. Who is God?

These questions ask things like: If God loves us, how could He allow this to happen? How can I believe God has not forsaken me?

2. Why did this happen?

These questions might sound like these: Why did so many people die? Why didn't God stop the pandemic? Why is this bad thing happening? Is God punishing us for something?

3. How can I go on living?

Why did God spare me? How can I go on living? Where are my family members now? What happens to children when they die?

You may be struggling with these questions, too. God encourages us to share our true feelings, questions, and doubts with Him. There is so much that we cannot understand, but we can trust that He is good and loving, and He can comfort you and the children you teach.



A prayer for you teachers and parents: Holy Spirit, fill these teachers and parents so that in all they say and do, they will bring the presence of Jesus into the lives of children and youth who are hurting and questioning. May the words of their mouths and the meditation of their hearts be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, their strong Rock and their Redeemer, amen.



1. WHO IS GOD?

Times of crisis can cause us to ask: Can we depend upon the trustworthiness of God? Can we trust that what He says about Himself in the Bible is true?

The verses in this section all relate to the character of God and to His faithfulness. As the following verses illustrate—God is totally trustworthy and good.

If God loves us, how could He allow this to happen?

Bad things like suffering, disease, and death happen in our world. God created the world to be perfect. But when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, that allowed evil and sin into the world. The world experiences the results of sin and some of that can be seen in disasters and diseases. God is so great and good, however, that He can bring good even out of terrible things. The following verses show us who God is, and how He loves us.

For great is his love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD.

Psalm 117:2

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

Psalm 62:8

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.

Psalm 136:1

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—
how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?
For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,
neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,
neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:32, 38–39

Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:



How can I believe God has not forsaken me?

It is not uncommon to feel alone or wonder if God has deserted you when going through a crisis. But regardless of how you feel, you can trust what God says in His Word.

God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Hebrews 13:5b

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD,
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a
thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

Deuteronomy 7:9

So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:



2. WHY DID THIS HAPPEN?

Why did this happen? How do I pray in this time?

“Why?” questions are very difficult to answer. Because we are mortal beings and God is infinite, we are not fully capable of understanding the “big picture.” Some people say it is like looking at the back of a piece of embroidered cloth or tapestry. The pattern and beauty of the front is not visible on the back. The back looks more like a mess of knots and threads than a picture. While God sees the completed beautiful picture, all we can see is the knotted, messy parts. It is a matter of perspective. While we do not understand, we can still trust and praise God because He is good, loving, merciful, and at work.

Although some believers think that God doesn’t welcome such questions, there are many psalms that include difficult questions. When praying seems difficult or impossible, read or recite the psalms as prayers. There are many emotions expressed in the psalms, from the most joyful elation to the darkest pit of depression and fear. Here are some verses you can begin to pray:

Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
Psalm 4:1

Why, LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand.
The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.
You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted;
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry
Psalm 10:1, 14, 17

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel. In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them.

They cried to you they and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.
Psalm 22:1–5

Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:



Why are so many people dying? I hate death!

There are no easy answers as to why so many are dying or sick during this pandemic. We can point to lack of sanitation or how easily the virus spreads. Or we could point to how no one person or country could stop the pandemic is so big that it is all over the world. But the spiritual answer is that death, disease, evil, and natural disasters, brought into the world by Adam and Eve's sin, is the cause. Death seems to be in control, but God will overcome death.

[God] will swallow up death forever.
The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces;
he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth.
The LORD has spoken.
Isaiah 25:8

Our natural bodies don't last forever. They must be dressed with what does last forever. What dies must be dressed with what does not die. In fact, that is going to happen.
What does not last will be dressed with what lasts forever.
What dies will be dressed with what does not die. Then what is written will come true.
It says, "Death has been swallowed up. It has lost the battle."
"Death, where is the victory you thought you had? Death, where is your sting?"
1 Corinthians 15:53–55, NIV

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.
Revelation 21:4

Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:



Why didn't God stop this from happening?

See notes under: "Who is God?" Since the fall of man back in the Garden of Eden, even creation reflects the consequences of sin on earth. Sin affects people and nature. Sin is the cause of pandemics the same as it is the source of natural disasters, suffering, and death.

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice,
but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself
will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought
into the glorious freedom 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.

Romans 8:19–22

Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:



Why did this happen—are we being punished for something?

While God has used natural disasters and diseases as judgments against nations in Old Testament times, it does not mean that all things like the pandemic are His punishment. Most are simply the earth reflecting the results of sin on creation.

We must remember that everyone in every nation is a sinner dependent upon God's grace and mercy. We all deserve God's punishment for our sin, but God sent His Son Jesus to take the punishment for us.

**This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.
There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by
his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.**

Romans 3:22–24

For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Ezekiel 18:32a

**[Your Father in heaven] causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good,
and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**

Matthew 5:45b

**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,
but to save the world through him.**

John 3:16–17

Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:



3. HOW CAN I GO ON LIVING WHEN SOMEONE I LOVED DIED?

Why did God spare me? How do I go on?

You may wonder if you'll ever stop crying. You may be numb and think that you'll never feel anything but sadness. You may feel that you can't even pray. You may feel hopeless.

What you feel right now is not how you will feel forever. God can heal your heart and help you to begin to enjoy life again. This is not fast, nor easy, but God is with you and will help you. If you wonder why you were spared, it is possible that God has work for you to do, lessons for you to learn or share, or joy for you to experience.

Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning..

Psalm 30:5b

**And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,
who have been called according to his purpose.**

Romans 8:28

**I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.
I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have
hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."**

Lamentations 3:19–24

Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:



Where are my family members who died? What happens to children when they die?

It is difficult when a loved one dies. As noted in sections above, when sin entered our world, it brought pain and death to everyone. We do know that God loves every person and made a way through Jesus for all who believe in Him to be with Him forever.

**Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.
John 11:25**

The Bible says that what happens after death depends on if we have chosen to accept God's gift of salvation through Jesus so we can with Him forever. If not, we'll be forever separated from God's love. However, God alone knows each heart, and He hears even a last-minute cry.

**But the other criminal rebuked him.
"Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?
We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve.
But this man has done nothing wrong."
Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."
Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."
Luke 23:40–43**

We know that God loves children. Jesus welcomed them and used them as an example of faith.

**He said to them, "Let the little children come to me,
and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.
I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child
will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms,
placed his hands on them and blessed them.
Mark 10:14a–16**

Add your thoughts and additional Scriptures here:

