

Purpose in Suffering Answer Key

Print one answer key for your use.

1. Some people teach that disease or disorders are always the result of sin in the life of the individual and that they will not receive healing until they repent of that sin. How do John 9:1–4 and 1 Corinthians 11:27–30 give a biblical understanding of sin leading to sickness? *There are some instances where illness may be the result of sin in a person's life, but that is not always the case. We should never assume that someone who is suffering with a disease or disorder is in sin.*
2. We know that God is able to heal because He is omnipotent. We see that expression as a leper worships and speaks to Jesus in Matthew 8:1–3. What important aspect does this leper acknowledge about healing? *The leper acknowledged that Jesus was able to heal but asked if He was willing. He did not demand that Jesus heal Him but was willing to submit to God's will. When seeking healing, we should come to God in faith knowing that He can heal if He pleases while being willing to submit to His will in our affliction.*
3. There are many examples in the New Testament of God not healing people, even those closely connected to Paul (e.g., 2 Timothy 4:20; Philippians 2:25–30). How is God's willingness to heal when we ask related to His sovereignty, wisdom, and love? *Because God is in control over the universe and knows all things, we must trust in God's wisdom and love to handle our situation in the way that He sees is best. He loves us as His children and always wants what is best for us. Sometimes, in His wisdom and love, He chooses not to heal, and we must trust that He knows what is best for us, enduring the trials that come to us through disease and disorder. Romans 8:28–30 is a helpful text on understanding how God uses all of these trials to conform us into the image of Jesus.*
4. There are instances in Scripture where healing was connected to the faith of an individual (Mark 5:34). And James 5:14–15 instructs us to pray for healing as we have faith that God can heal. Does this mean that someone who is not healed of a disease after prayer is lacking faith? *No, it does not mean that the person necessarily has a lack of faith. As mentioned above, God may have other purposes in not granting healing in a certain situation, and He may be strengthening our faith in that suffering. However, God may choose to heal someone whose faith is weak to encourage their faith. When we pray for healing, we should do so with full assurance of faith that if God is pleased to heal, He is absolutely able.*
5. How does Paul's experience of suffering and enduring a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7–10) and James's exhortation to see trials as a source of joy (James 1:2–4) help us understand God's purpose in suffering in disease or disorder? *We must trust that God has a purpose in our suffering and that His grace is sufficient for us in whatever trial He has for us. While we pray fervently and expectantly for God's healing, we do so trusting in His wisdom for our lives. All of these things work to sanctify us as our faith is tested and perfected.*
6. As we experience various forms of diseases and suffering in this world, how can that help us to long for heaven? *Knowing that death and disease are intruders in this world that will be wiped out, we can long for the freedom from those parts of the Curse that we experience here on the earth.*
7. In light of eternity, is it accurate to say that every person who puts their faith in Jesus will be healed of every disease or disorder they experience? *While we cannot demand full healing here on earth, we know that at the resurrection we will receive our glorified bodies, and that part of the corruption of sin will be wiped out. All God's children will experience perfect wholeness as we worship around the throne and delight in our God who saves.*