Suffering is deeply personal, and we experience it in many ways. In times of severe distress, adequate words or explanations seem elusive. We grasp for answers to the urgent questions of the moment: “Why? Why me? Why now? Why this? What’s next? Where was God when this happened?”

To truly understand this challenging subject, we need to go to the source—the inspired Word of God, the Holy Bible. We must consider how evil and suffering began. When God created humanity, He gave us freedom of choice, because He greatly desires children who choose to be like Him. This is His plan and incredible purpose for our lives!

Why does God allow suffering in the lives of those who are trying to obey Him? Clearly, suffering was brought into the world as a result of sin. This does not mean that people who are suffering are always the cause of their own suffering; often people suffer because of the sins of others. And though suffering is painful and we should do whatever we can to avoid causing it, God can use it to produce good.

Suffering can aid us in becoming more Christlike in our character and in our lives. Jesus Christ understands our suffering. He and the Father are compassionate and merciful. God “comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”