

Read: Romans 5:1-5

How God Brings Good from Bad

Romans 5:3a

Not only this, but we also rejoice confidently in our sufferings.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Boy oh boy, I’m glad when I skin my knee!”

“Did you know that I broke my arm last year? I was so happy about it! I mean—I couldn’t go swimming, I couldn’t ride my bike, I had to have surgery...”

We don’t normally say that we’re happy about pain. When we get hurt, we cry. Broken bones are painful, and wearing a cast is difficult. Maybe you’ve lost a beloved family pet, or maybe a friend moved away. While a Band-Aid and a kiss can help the skinned knee feel better, other events in life might hurt our feelings. We even describe sad events as “heartbreaking.”

Then *why* does Paul say in Romans 5:3 that “we also rejoice confidently in our sufferings”?

No one says “I’m glad that I skinned my knee, lost my dog, and broke my arm”! Who is happy about painful events, sad losses, or heartbreak? No one! These things hurt. Sometimes they hurt our bodies, like a skinned knee or broken bone. Sometimes the hurt is in our emotions, like feeling sad when a friend moves away or a grandparent passes away.

We might even be confused about the reason why these things happen. When I was younger and broke my wrist, I remember telling my dad: “I don’t know why I have to wear a cast. I don’t know the reason why I broke my wrist.” We feel pain, both in our bodies and in our feelings.

But Paul still says: “We also rejoice confidently in our sufferings.” Why?

Because even when we can’t see the *reason* why things happen—we know that God has a good *purpose* for the suffering we experience. Pain reminds us that we still live in a world of sin and death; feelings of sadness and loss remind us that in heaven, God promises to wipe every tear from our eyes.

Paul says it like this. And as you listen, notice that Paul doesn’t talk about the *reasons* why we have suffering. He doesn’t even spend much time talking about the causes of pain. Instead, Paul simply comforts us with God’s goodness through Jesus—and then he says that God wants to use every instance of pain or sadness in order to help us trust in his Word, even when life is still painful.

We have been justified by faith. It means we have peace with God through Jesus. Through faith we stand in God’s presence. We rejoice that we have God’s approval through Jesus.

“Because we have God’s approval through Jesus, we can be joyful even when life is painful and sad. Pain results in patiently living through the pain, which produces strength and hope. And this hope is sure, because God has demonstrated his love by giving us his Holy Spirit.”

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- When you’re hurt, what makes you feel better?
- Think of a time when you got hurt. How did God help you to recover?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How can God use pain to be a blessing in our lives?
- Why do you think God lets us experience pain in this world?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Respond: “If I’m suffering something, that either proves God *can’t* help—or that God *doesn’t care enough* to help.”
- Evaluate this statement: Based on what we learn in Romans 5: “I’m sad when I attend a Christian funeral because I miss the person—but at the same time, I’m joyful.” Why?

Closing Prayer:

Thank you, Jesus, for showing us your love—you carried our sin and won peace with God. Teach me to trust you at all times, especially when life is painful. Amen.