

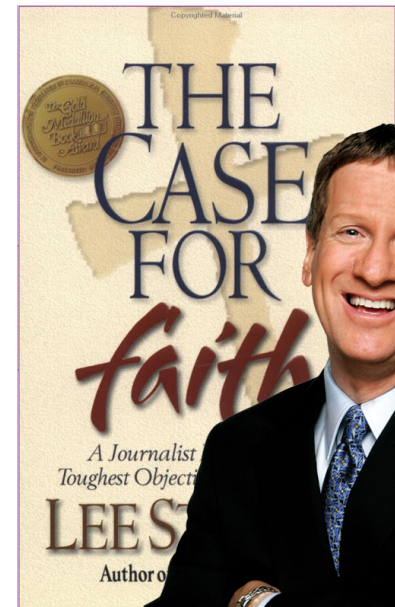
DIFFICULT  
*QUESTIONS about*  
CHRISTIANITY

EXAMINING SOME OF THE MOST  
CHALLENGING QUESTIONS  
CHRISTIANS FACE



“I commissioned George Barna, the public opinion pollster, to conduct a national survey in it he asked a scientifically selected cross-section of adults: “If you could ask God only one question and you knew he would give you an answer, what would you ask?” The top response was:

*“Why is there pain and suffering in the world?”*



IF GOD IS GOOD, WHY  
IS THERE SO MUCH  
SUFFERING IN  
THE WORLD?

DIFFICULT  
QUESTIONS *about*  
CHRISTIANITY



**1 Peter 1:3-9 <sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,**



**<sup>5</sup> who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.**

**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. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him;**

and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,<sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.



# 3 ways we experience pain/suffering

**#1 Natural Disaster** - *Tsunami, Earthquakes, Flood & Famine.*

**#2 Unknown Personal Suffering** - *(Job) physical ailments, financial burdens, relational loss.*

**#3 Understandable Experiences** - *persecution, effect of poor choices or God's discipline.*



# 4 Good & practical purposes for pain

**#1 Pleasure is meaningless without it.**

**#2 God uses it get our attention when all else fails.**

**#3 A tool for discipline and growth.**

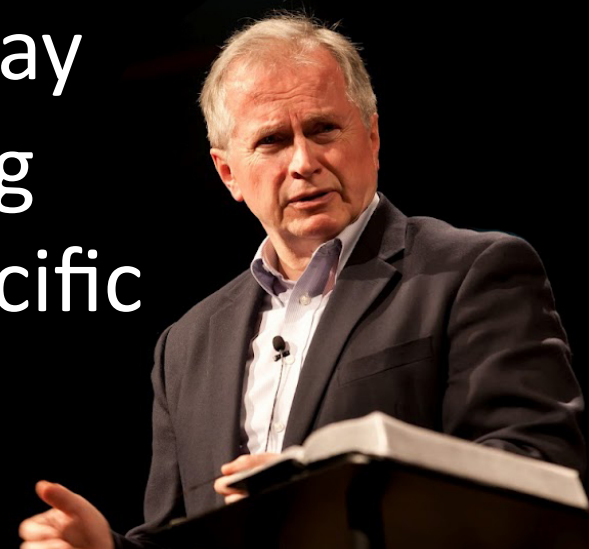
**#4 Refine or prove your faith.**



It follows that when we face suffering of any kind, we should use the occasion for self-examination. God may be speaking to us in the language of a wise heavenly Father who chastens those he loves. Such chastening may be God's response to specific sins in our lives; it may be a more general way of toughening us up in this broken world so we will stop thinking that God owes us good health, or that our clean living and organic food guarantees us long and robust life.



Or it may be that God has a bet going on with Satan himself: think Job. So our self-examination ought to be honest, and any repentance should be forthright — but we should not whip ourselves into thinking that the crippling accident we just endured was a function of our sin. Even if it were, the remedy is always the same: flee to the Cross, and trust our good and gracious and holy God. And it's not inconceivable that we may conclude, with Job, that this suffering cannot be God's punishment for specific sins in our lives.



# I. PHILOSOPHICALLY

Peter reminds us that God can use pain and suffering for our good and His glory.

1 Peter 1:6&7 though now for a little while you may have had to **suffer grief in all kinds of trials.**<sup>7</sup> 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.

MY ARGUMENT AGAINST GOD WAS THAT THE UNIVERSE SEEMED SO CRUEL AND UNJUST. BUT HOW HAD I GOT THIS IDEA OF JUST AND UNJUST? A MAN DOES NOT CALL A LINE CROOKED UNLESS HE HAS SOME IDEA OF A STRAIGHT LINE. WHAT WAS I COMPARING THIS UNIVERSE WITH WHEN I CALLED IT UNJUST?

-C.S. LEWIS, MERE CHRISTIANITY. PG 31



Atheism treats people cheaply. Also it robs death of meaning, and if death has no meaning, how can life ultimately have meaning? Atheism cheapens everything it touches - look at the results of communism, the most powerful form of atheism on earth.

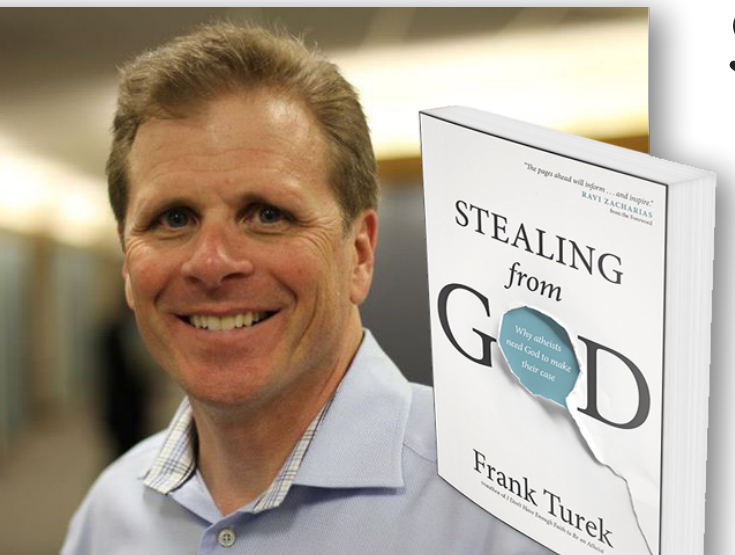
*-Peter Kreeft*

Lee Stobel,  
*The Case for Faith*. pg.68





“Friedrich Nietzsche, who famously said “God is dead... And we have killed him,” died in 1900. But he predicted that killing belief in God in the 1800’s would result in the mass killings of human beings in the 1900s. His prophecy couldn’t have been more accurate. Over just a few decades, Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot and Mao together murdered as many as 100 million people.”



Frank Turek, *Stealing from God*. Page 118-119

"If God does not exist, everything is permitted"... "Now assume there is no God or immortality of the soul. Now tell me, why should I live righteously and do good deeds if I am to die entirely on earth?... And if that is so, why shouldn't I (as long as I can rely on my cleverness and agility to avoid being caught by the law) cut another man's throat, rob, and steal"

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

*The Brothers Karamazov* Part 4, Book 11, Ch. 4 & *Selected Letters of F. Dostoyevsky*. pg. 446



## 2. PRACTICALLY

In the midst of suffering, Peter reminds his friends to look to the cross and to look to their future to help sustain them.

1 Peter 1:3-4 “In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This **inheritance is kept in heaven** for you.”

Let's take this question to the cross. Go to the cross and say, "God, why are you allowing evil and suffering to continue?" Even though the cross cannot tell you what the answer to that question is, the cross can tell you what the answer to that question isn't. It can't be that he doesn't love us. It can't be that he doesn't care.

*Tim Keller: "Suffering - If God Is Good, Why Is There So Much Evil In The World?" 10/1/06*



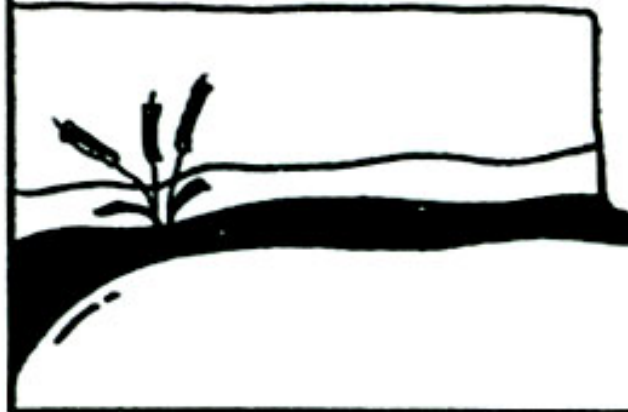
## 3. PERSONALLY

Honest people recognize that they can be guilty of inflicting pain, and that they don't always get involved where they can play a part in stopping or healing suffering.

1 Peter 1:14-16 **As obedient children**, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."



SOMETIMES I'D LIKE  
TO ASK GOD WHY HE  
ALLOWS POVERTY,  
FAMINE AND INJUSTICE  
WHEN HE COULD DO  
SOMETHING ABOUT IT.



WHAT'S  
STOPPING  
YOU?



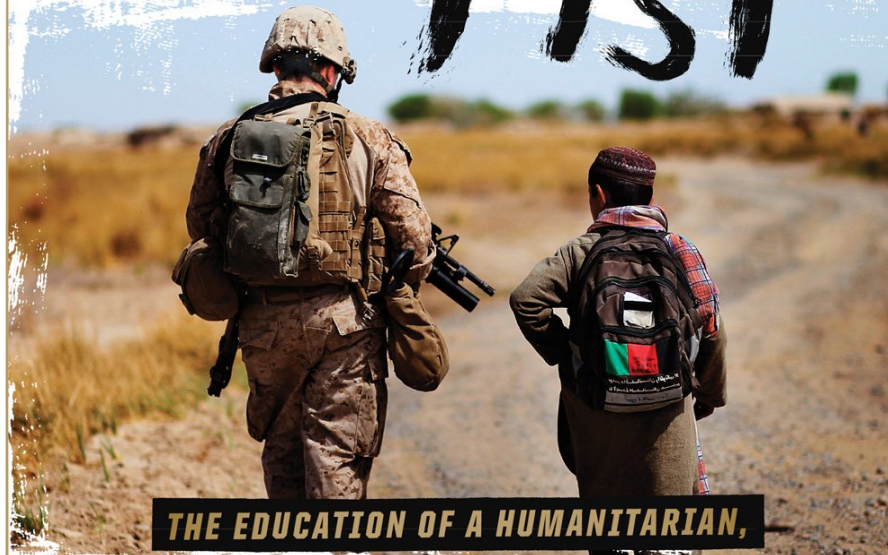
I'M AFRAID GOD  
MIGHT ASK ME  
THE SAME QUESTION.



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

# THE Heart AND THE FIST

"A remarkable story  
you're not likely to forget."  
- WASHINGTON POST

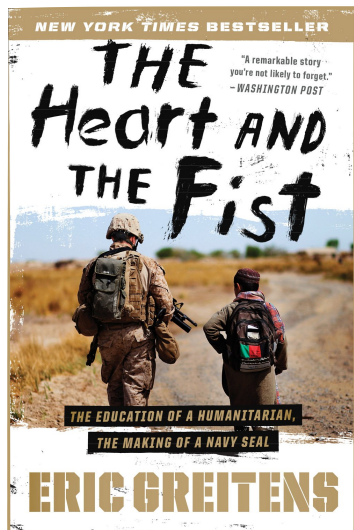


THE EDUCATION OF A HUMANITARIAN,

THE MAKING OF A NAVY SEAL

ERIC GREITENS

When I remembered kids in Croatia drawing chalk pictures of the homes they'd been forced to flee at gunpoint, or when I thought about standing at the open door of a church in Rwanda and starting at piles of skeletal remains, it became clear to me that all the protest, articles, and policy paper in the world had their limits. It took people with courage to protect those in need of protection. I could keep talking or I could live my beliefs.



Eric Greitens, *The Warriors Heart*. pg. 137-138