Why do bad things happen to good people?

A couple weeks ago we received this question in the box in the foyer. Someone wants to know, “why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? I think we all ask this question at some point in our live. Maybe we have lost our job and have no idea how we are going to make ends meet and wonder God why did I lose my job. I did nothing wrong I am on time, I don’t steal from the company in fact I actually helped make the company money. Or maybe something went wrong with the car and now you have to put money into it which was not planned, and you have no idea how you are going to pay to get it fixed. I think the time I asked this the most and really wondered this the most was about 6 years ago while I was working at Cuyahoga Falls. For those who don’t know for a little time I was an aid and attendant in the special education department in the Cuyahoga Falls School District. For about half of my time there I was in the high school. It was such a difficult job mentally. Waking up every day and going to see these kids, some of who were functioning autistic. And then there were someone who had Cerebral palsy. Some could talk and some only made sounds. One student even had a feeding tube. I would often think God why. What did this child do to deserve this? What do you let people be born with all these disorders? Why do you let people like Nic Vujicic be born with no arms and no legs. Years ago, we had a man named Jeff Steinberg here who was born with no arms and two badly bent legs. And then we have Rusty and Patrick Vanscoy who could probably never live on their own, never have a drivers license because something bad happen to good people. There are so many painful things that happen to us to family to friends. What I am going to try to do is to answer this the best I can it may not be the perfect answer, nor will it be complete because I am not God. He is the only one who can answer this in a complete way. So what I may say may not make you feel better about what you are going through but I do believe it is true and yet not complete in the whole thing as only God could answer.

Many people may say well I don’t believe in God and so who determines what’s bad and what’s not bad. Bad things just happen. Some people will say there is karma. You do good things you get good things, you do bad things you get bad things. So obviously if there are bad things happening then you did bad things. I recently read an article written by Costi Hinn who is the nephew to Benny Hinn and he said that he often questioned why some people weren’t healed at the Benny Hinn crusades and he was told that it was their fault for doubting God. I am going to give you what I have found as the biblical perspective to this question.

There are many churches that I love, many Christian radio stations that I love, many Christian organizations that I love, that have a slogan that says, 'Life is better with God'. Life is better with God. Which is true if you define better the right way. The problem is that so many people today define better as I'll never get cancer, I will always get the promotion, and nothing bad will ever happen to my kids. That is simply not true at all. In fact, Jesus said in John 16:33, he said:

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart I have overcome the world.

There is no promise that says if you do life with God, it's always going to be trouble free, and always going to be better. If you believe that, you are going to have a problem when you talk to Job, who was blameless and upright in every way, and yet lost everything that mattered to him for a season in his life. You are going to have a problem with John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, and yet, was beheaded in prison while Christ was near by and did nothing about it. You are going to have a problem with Paul who was as faithful as anybody in Scripture and yet was beaten and stoned and left for dead over and over again. And you are going to have a problem with Christ who did nothing wrong and suffered for our sins. Life is not always better with God if you define better as problem free. So let me give you the Christian perspective of why bad things happen. There are five major reasons.

1. The first reason is because our world is stained and corrupted by sin. This world is not what it was in the Garden before sin. We are under the curse of sin in this world, therefore sinful things happen. Genesis 3:16-19
2. There are times when God may be testing us. God may allow or cause, depending on your theology, challenging things to happen in your life because the testing develops perseverance, develops character, and develops your faith. Look at the life of Job.

* Satan is allowed to do whatever he wishes except touch job. VS 6-12
  + He killed his children and takes all his livestock. Job 1:13-22
  + In Verse 21 He says, “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord.
  + This would be the example of what we might call a good person.
* Again Satan tells God well if you let sickness come on him he will curse you. And God says do what you wish but don’t kill him. Job 21-7
  + Job gets sick covered with boil
  + Jobs wife tell Job to curse God, In verse 9
  + Job calls her foolish and says is verse 10-11 He told her,” You’re talking like an empty-headed fool. We take the good days from God- why not also the bad days?”
* In Job 2:11-38 Job sits and talks to some of his friends. They keep asking him about different sins that he might have committed, weather consciously or not. Job must keep defending his integrity.

1. There would be times when our spiritual enemy, Satan, is attacking. If you are a Christian, you have an enemy. His mission is to steal, kill and destroy anything that matters to the heart of God. We are in a spiritual war and there is an enemy on the attack.
   * 1 Peter 5:8, John 10:10, Mark 4:15, James 4:7
   * We need to put on the Armor of God Ephesians 6:10-18
2. There is a thing known as free will. For us to truly love God, we cannot be robots programed to love. We have to have the free will to choose to love or choose to reject God. Because of free will, there's the possibility of us doing good, there is also the possibility of us doing evil. Without free will, there is no love, but with free will comes the possibility of doing things wrong.
   * Judas walked with Jesus but then betrayed him
   * Peter saw the miracles that His master preformed but then denied him
   * Jonah deliberately disobey when told to go to Nineveh and because of his disobedience was punished.
3. The final thing though, I believe is the most important. The foundational problem with this question is, the question is flawed. Why do bad things happen to good people? And the answer is bad things do not happen to good people, because in reality none of us are good. (Romans 3:23)

Many of you are going to fight back right now and say, 'No, but they're good people, I'm a good person.' In the eyes of God, none of us are good people and we have to understand that. Our heart is deceitful above all things. (Jer.17:9) We are flawed, we are sinful. In the eyes of God, our best attempt at righteousness is as filthy rags. (Isaiah 4:4) We are not good people. Bad things do not happen to good people, bad things happen to bad and sinful people. Still, many of you are going to fight against this and you'll be tempted to say, but God is not fair. And I'm going to say, absolutely He's not always fair. He is always good, but He is not always fair. He is always good and you must start with the goodness of God, not the goodness of man, because man is sinful, God is good. When you start with the goodness of God, then you will thank Him that He is not always fair. Because of instead of asking why do bad things happen to good people, you'll ask the better question, which is, why do good things happen to bad people? That is the essence of the Gospel. God is always good, He is always just, but He is not always fair. If He were fair, He would give us what our sins deserve. If you are a Christian, you do not get what your sins deserve, you get eternal life through Christ. Psalm 103:10-13 shows how God is not always fair. The Bible says: God does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. He is good, but not always fair. For as high as the Heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:11-13) If you want to say, 'Well, bad things should only happen to bad people,' Jesus is the perfect example of the best person who ever lived, and yet the worst thing happened to Him. Why? So that the best thing that could ever happen would happen to us, the worst people who have ever lived. Our sins could be forgiven and we could spend eternity in Heaven with God, something we do not deserve and could never ever earn. (Ephesians 2:8-9) If you are facing tragedy right now, and you do not see the goodness of God, let me just say this. The goodness of God is not as easy to see when times are going the way you want. The goodness of God is always most evident when tragedy strikes. If you are hurting right now and do not see the goodness of God, it could be because you do not truly know God. It's in tragedy and human suffering that the presence of God becomes most real. If you are hurting and don't understand, or not experiencing His goodness, it could be because you don't know Him. You don't have to understand everything that happens on earth and you never will. But His presence is with you and will comfort you in ways that only He could do. If you don't know His goodness, it's probably because you don't know Him.