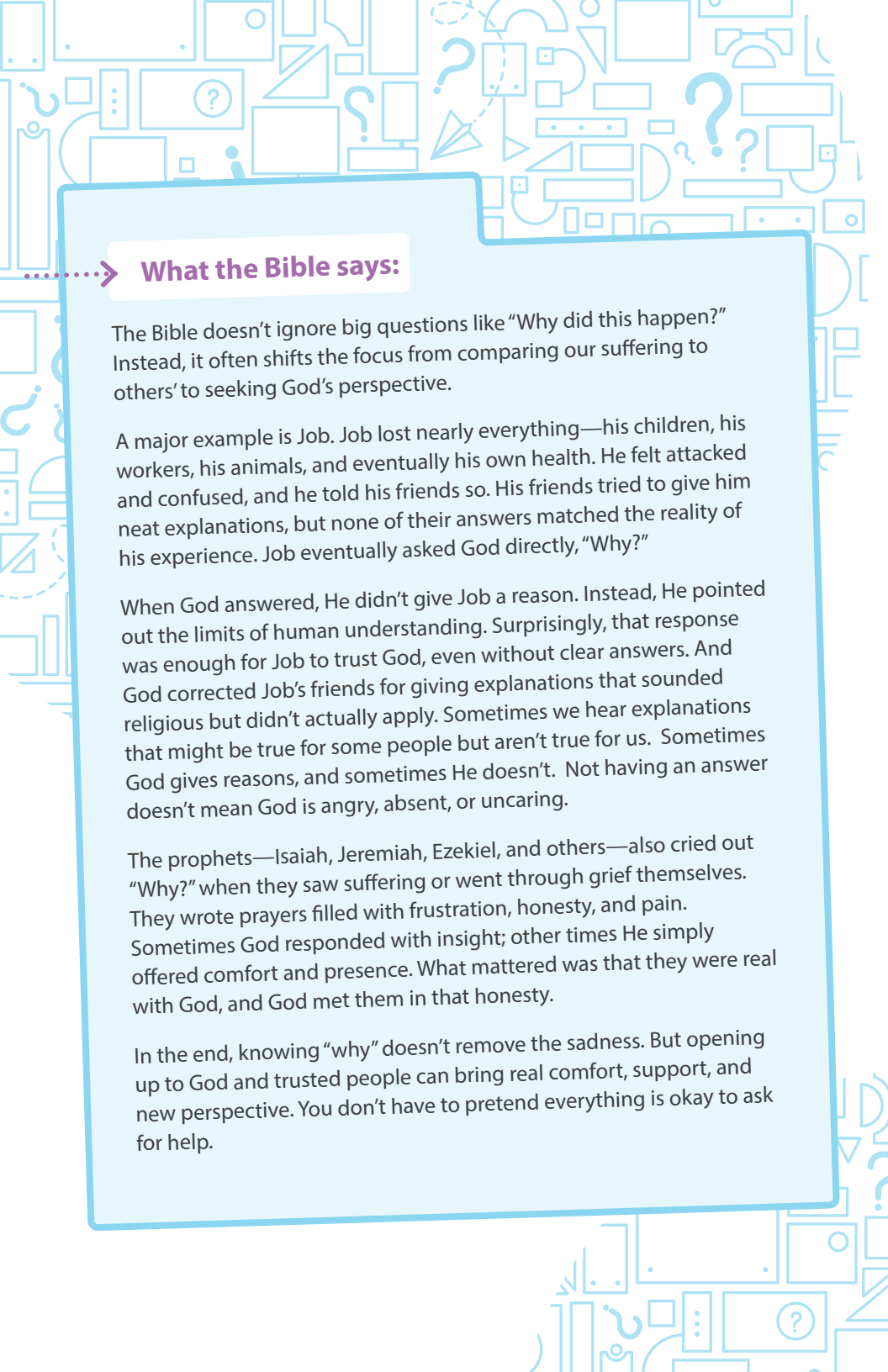


IF YOU'VE WONDERED...

“Why did this have to happen to me?”

As you get older, you may be noticing how different people's lives are. When something painful or tragic happens to you, it's normal to compare your situation to someone else and wonder why you had to face this while others didn't. You might even feel singled out, as if something—or someone—is targeting you. Life can feel unfair.

When tragedy feels unavoidable, your mind may try to find a cause. This is natural. You might wonder whether the tragedy could have been avoided or if you or someone else did something wrong that set it in motion. Sometimes the question “Why?” may ring in your thoughts. It is natural to want to understand why in order to know what to say to others. This may be because you want friends or family to understand how heavy the situation feels and to acknowledge the pain you're carrying.



.....➤ What the Bible says:

The Bible doesn't ignore big questions like "Why did this happen?" Instead, it often shifts the focus from comparing our suffering to others' to seeking God's perspective.

A major example is Job. Job lost nearly everything—his children, his workers, his animals, and eventually his own health. He felt attacked and confused, and he told his friends so. His friends tried to give him neat explanations, but none of their answers matched the reality of his experience. Job eventually asked God directly, "Why?"

When God answered, He didn't give Job a reason. Instead, He pointed out the limits of human understanding. Surprisingly, that response was enough for Job to trust God, even without clear answers. And God corrected Job's friends for giving explanations that sounded religious but didn't actually apply. Sometimes we hear explanations that might be true for some people but aren't true for us. Sometimes God gives reasons, and sometimes He doesn't. Not having an answer doesn't mean God is angry, absent, or uncaring.

The prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others—also cried out "Why?" when they saw suffering or went through grief themselves. They wrote prayers filled with frustration, honesty, and pain. Sometimes God responded with insight; other times He simply offered comfort and presence. What mattered was that they were real with God, and God met them in that honesty.

In the end, knowing "why" doesn't remove the sadness. But opening up to God and trusted people can bring real comfort, support, and new perspective. You don't have to pretend everything is okay to ask for help.

.....> What you could explore:

Express yourself: Try to share what is going on with your thoughts and emotions either verbally or in some other way. Think about what you are feeling. Express what you know and any comparisons you might be making. Try to express how they are affecting you.

Seek resources: Try to locate writings or podcasts or videos where people share about their tragedies and how they understand them. Listening to those who have had time to reflect on their tragedies can offer different insights. Both immediate responses and later reflections provide valuable perspectives.

.....> What you could do:

Find others who are grieving: Feelings of being alone or targeted can change through interactions with others who have experienced significant tragedies as well. You might find that you can relate to and learn from the stories of others, even if they aren't exactly like your own.

Ask friends and mentors: Sometimes getting another's perspective can help. Mentors can offer resources and comfort during times of grieving. Friends and mentors can admit to not knowing why something happened and remain physically present.

.....➤ Where you could look for more information:

- ✎ **Chapters where people ask God about why something bad has happened:** Exodus 5 • Numbers 11 • Judges 6 • Isaiah 63 • Jeremiah 12, 15, 20 • Ezekiel 18 • Habakkuk 1 • Job 3, 7, 10, 13, 23, and 30 • Matthew 27 • Mark 15 • 2 Corinthians 1 and 12
- ✎ **Poetry passages where why is asked in prayers:** Psalms 10, 22, 42, 44, 74, 88 • Lamentations 2 and 5
- ✎ **Passages about suffering while others are avoiding tragedies:** Psalm 10, 12, 37, 49, 73 • Job 12, 21, 24 • Jeremiah 12 • Habakkuk 1 • Malachi 3 • Ecclesiastes 7-8 • Matthew 20 • Luke 15 • Revelation 6