



# Why Suffering?

If God is all-powerful and good,  
why does he allow suffering?

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



G O D Q U E S T I O N S

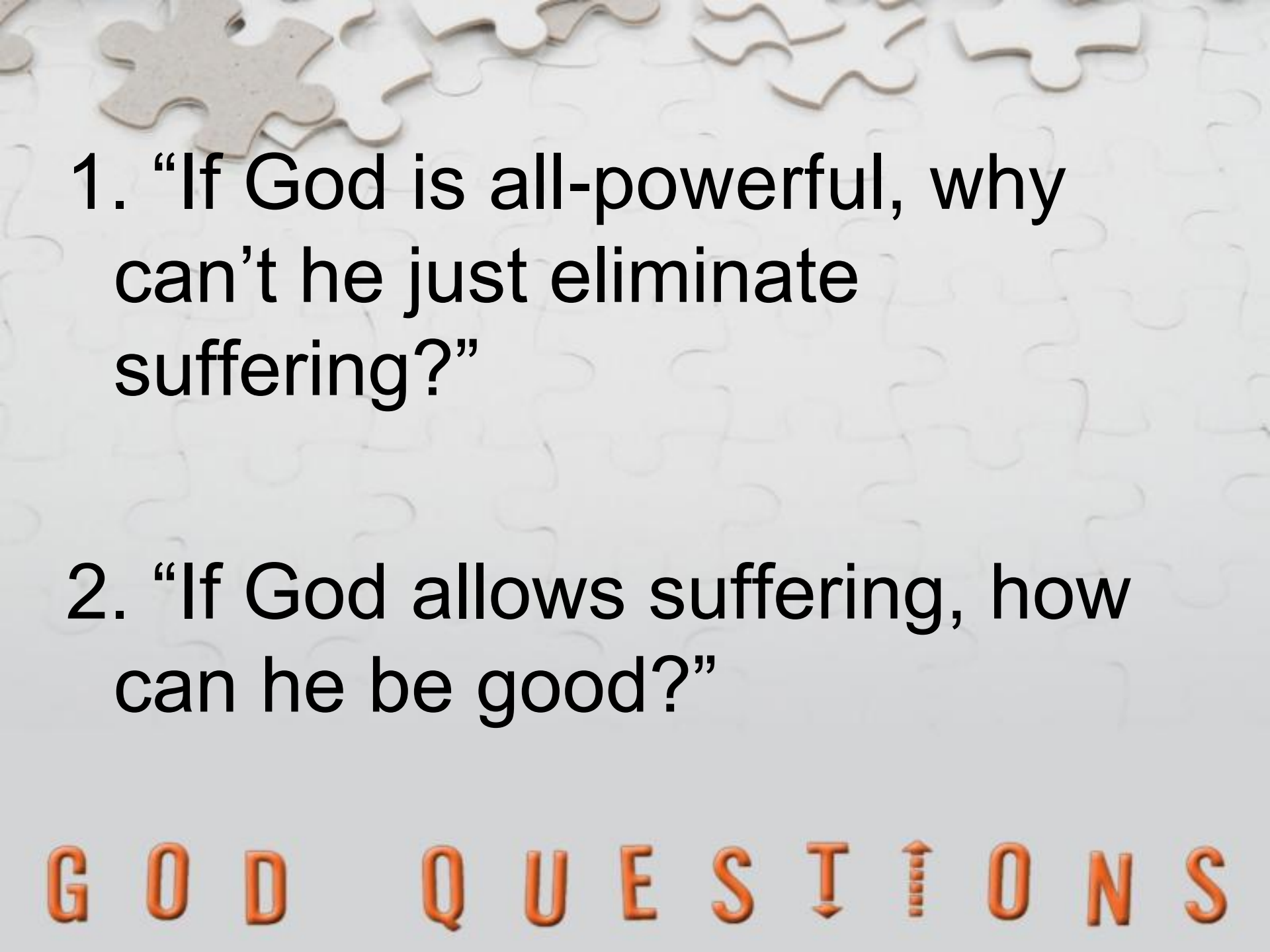




“Life is *dukkha*.”

-Sidhartha Gautama

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



1. “If God is all-powerful, why can’t he just eliminate suffering?”

2. “If God allows suffering, how can he be good?”

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



**“If God is all-powerful, why can’t  
he just eliminate suffering?”**

**G O D Q U E S T I O N S**

# Parable of the Lost Son

Luke 15: 11-24



G O D Q U E S T I O N S



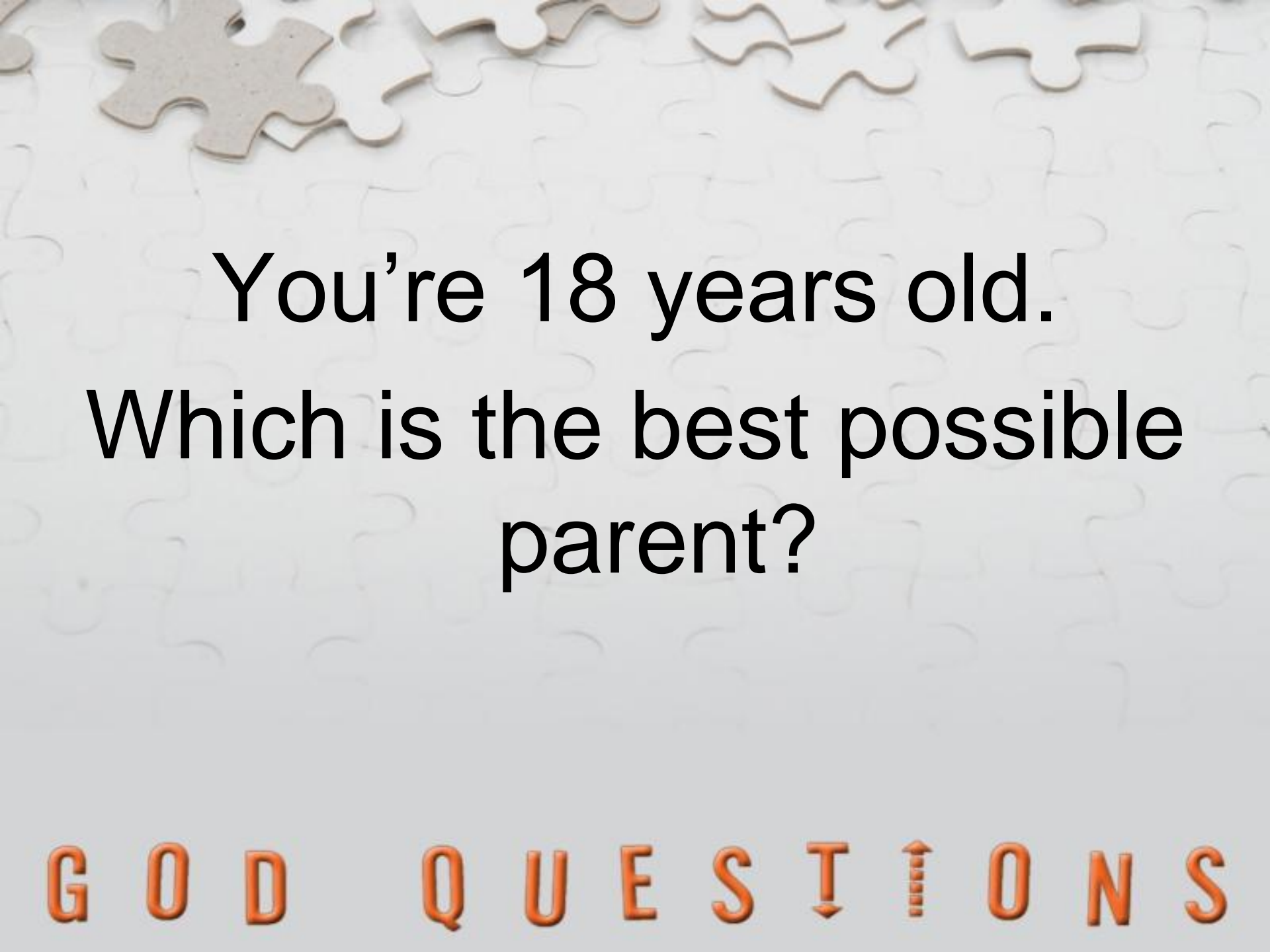
# Was it right to let his son go?

Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

-Luke 15: 13



G O D Q U E S T I O N S



**You're 18 years old.  
Which is the best possible  
parent?**

**G O D Q U E S T I O N S**





# PARENT 1

Parent 1 provides everything you need, and always ensures your success. You are sheltered from anything that could bring danger. You are not allowed to do anything that would bring danger to yourself or others. The other children are also kept from doing anything that could hurt themselves or others.

Parent 1 also seeks to provide as friendly an environment for you as possible by screening out (as much as possible) harmful or annoying weather, animals, and even microorganisms.

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



## PARENT 2.

Parent 2 provides opportunities for you, but you are allowed to fail. You are exposed to an environment with risks, and with that comes the possibility of personal difficulty, failure, and even disaster. In addition, the other children of the family also have the freedoms you have, and are not necessarily prevented from doing harm to themselves, each other, or you.

The environment provided by Parent 2 is somewhat threatening, somewhat friendly, always unpredictable.

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# Which is the best?

Parent 1

Parent 2

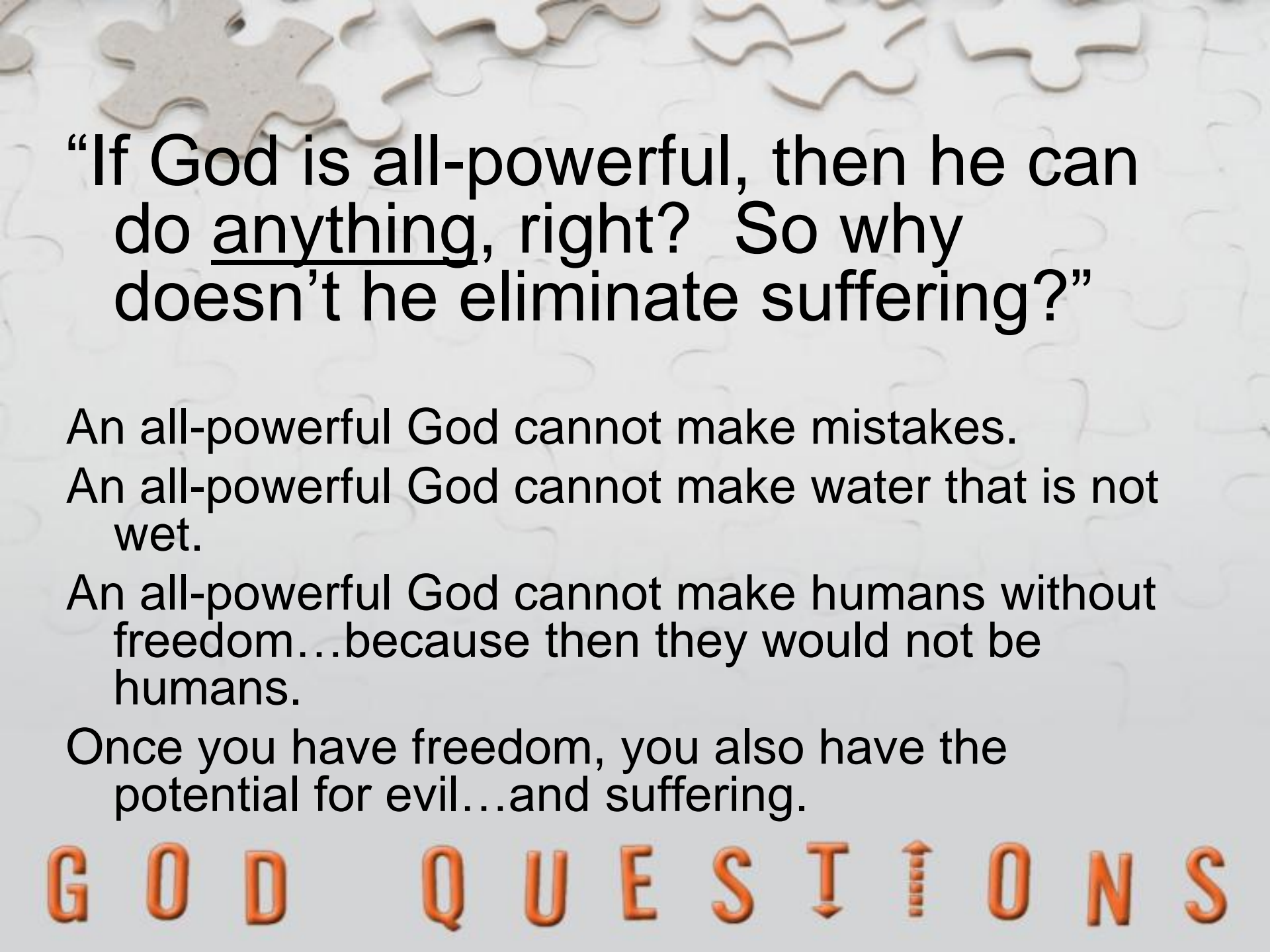
Control

Love



G O D Q U E S T I O N S





“If God is all-powerful, then he can do anything, right? So why doesn't he eliminate suffering?”

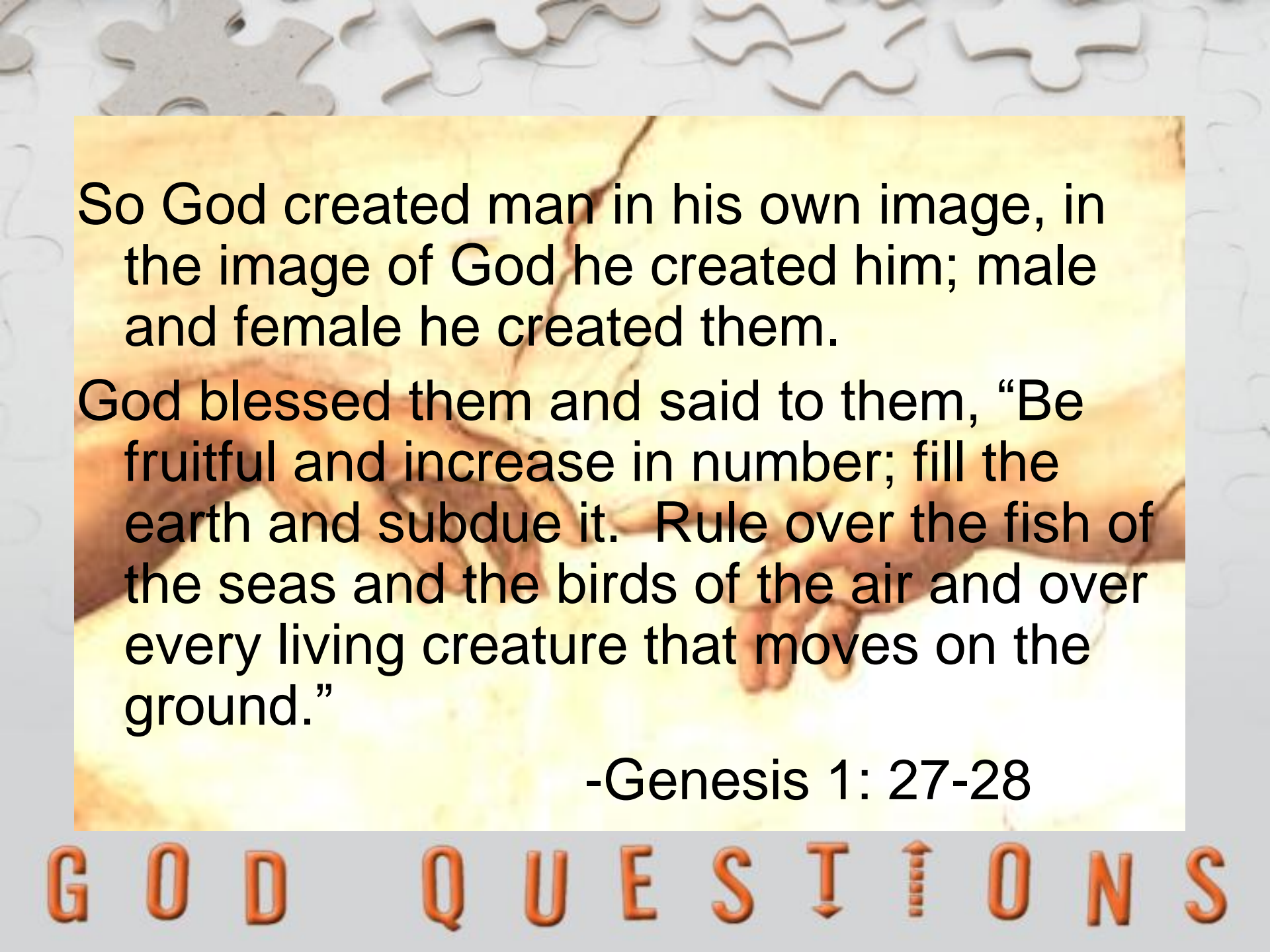
An all-powerful God cannot make mistakes.

An all-powerful God cannot make water that is not wet.

An all-powerful God cannot make humans without freedom...because then they would not be humans.

Once you have freedom, you also have the potential for evil...and suffering.

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the seas and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

-Genesis 1: 27-28

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



The bottom line:

God is love.

-1 John 4: 16

A world without human freedom would  
have no... hate

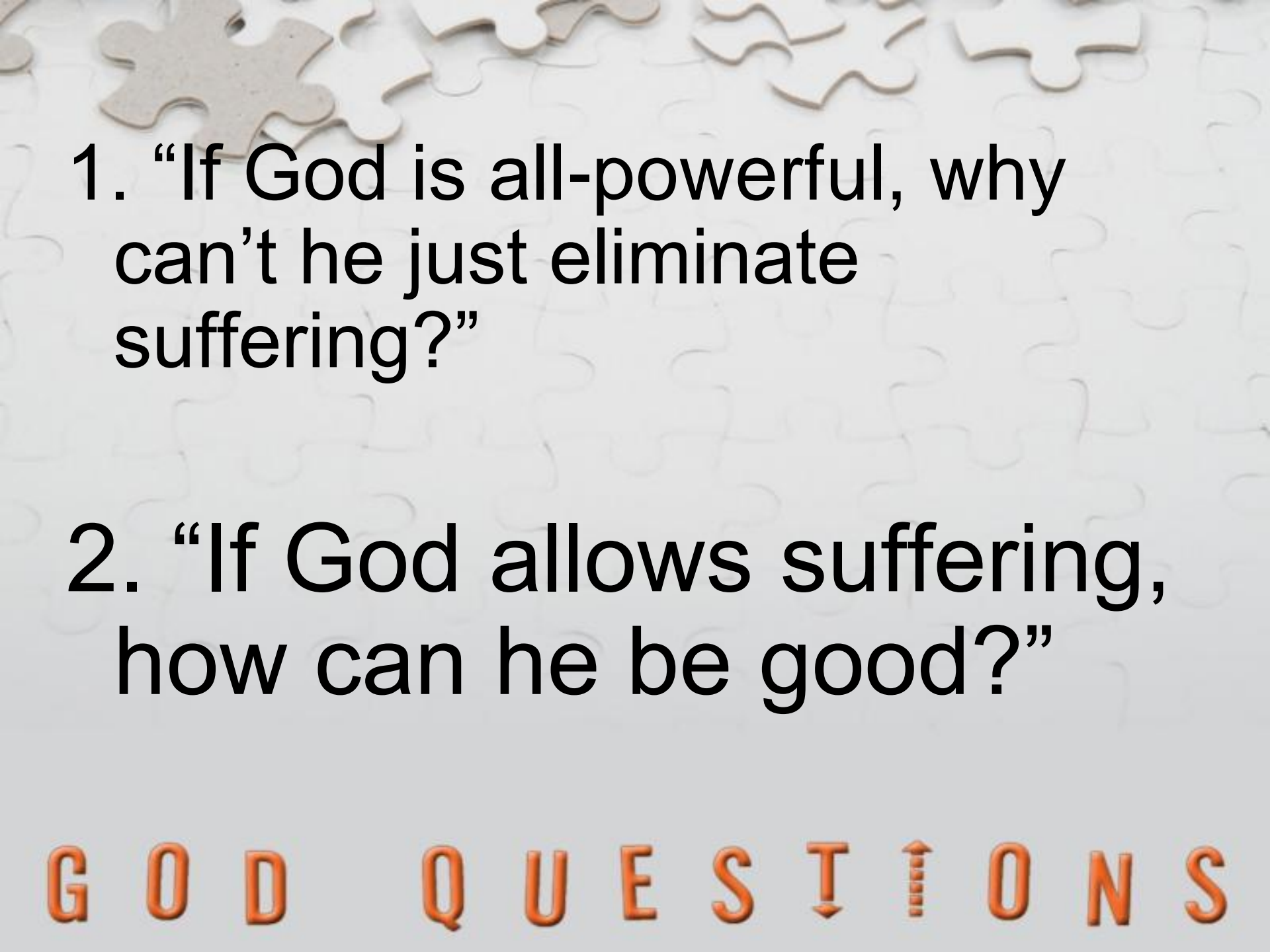
suffering

humans

**love**

G O D Q U E S T I O N S





1. “If God is all-powerful, why can’t he just eliminate suffering?”

2. “If God allows suffering, how can he be good?”

G O D Q U E S T I O N S

Was it right to let his son go?

Why didn't he help his son in his  
hour of greatest suffering?

...he began to be in  
need...he hired himself  
out to a citizen of that  
country who sent him to  
his fields to feed pigs...no  
one gave him anything.

-Luke 15: 14-16



G O D Q U E S T I O N S

Kind

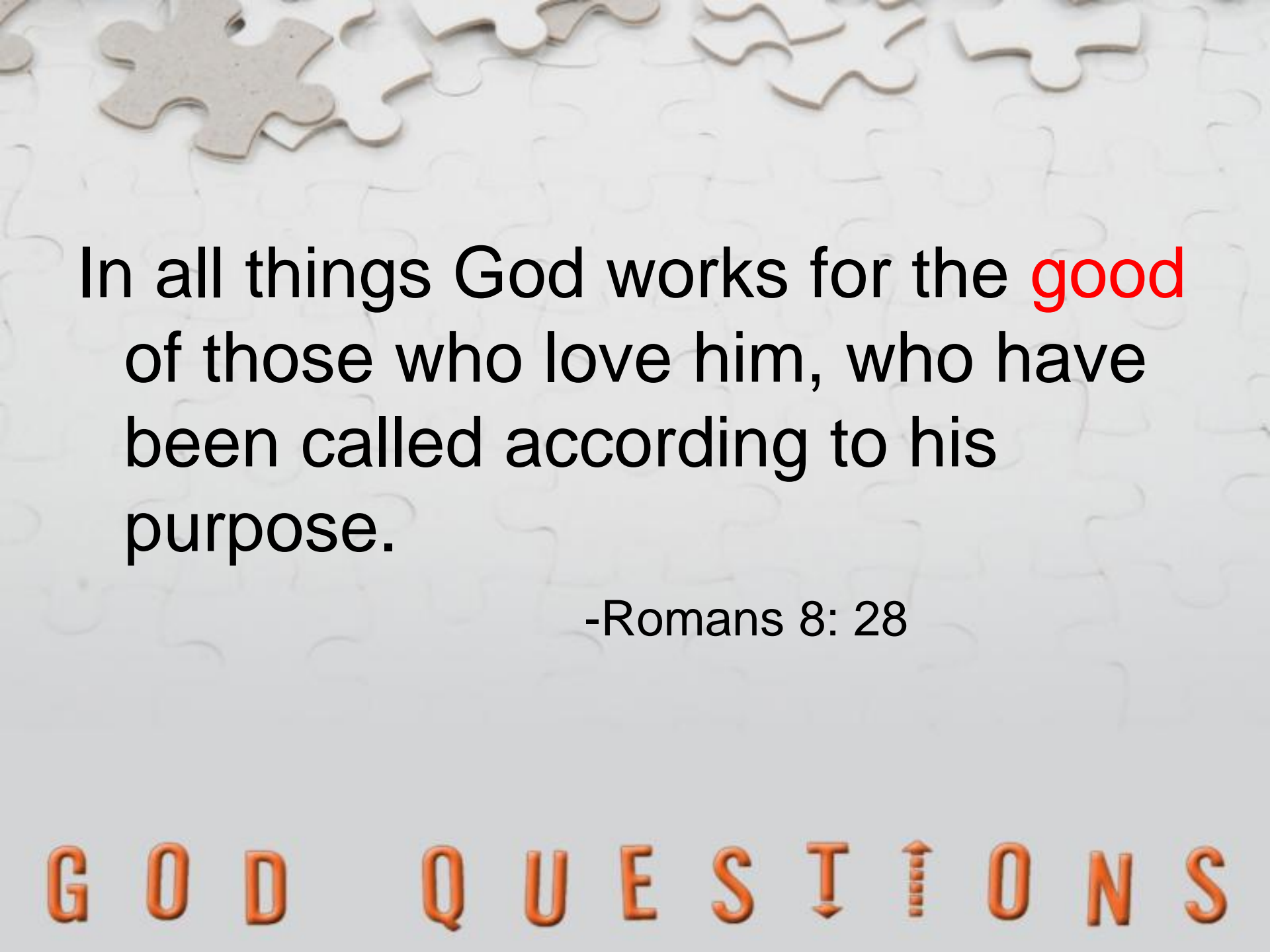


Good



G O D Q U E S T I O N S

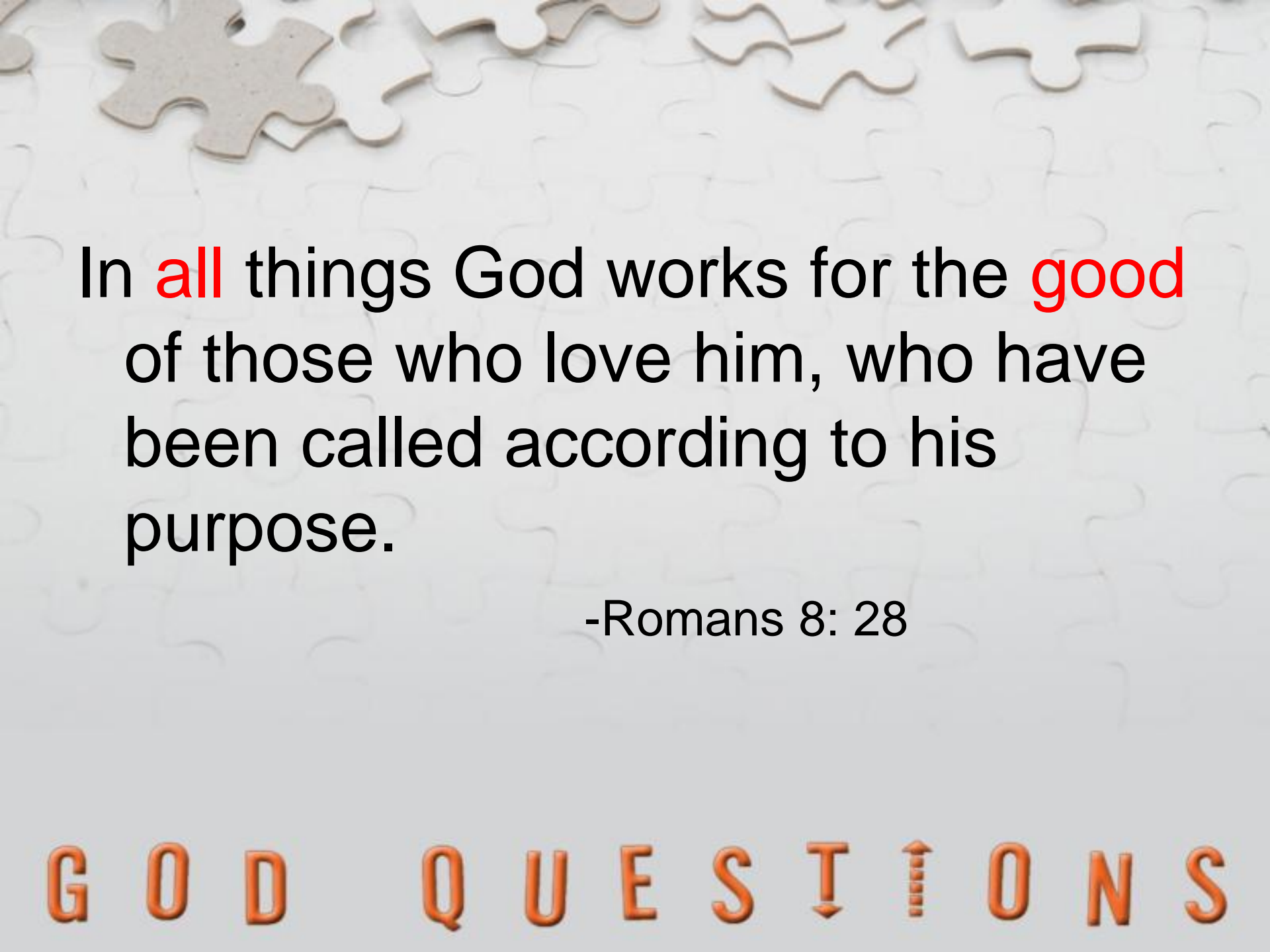




In all things God works for the **good**  
of those who love him, who have  
been called according to his  
purpose.

-Romans 8: 28

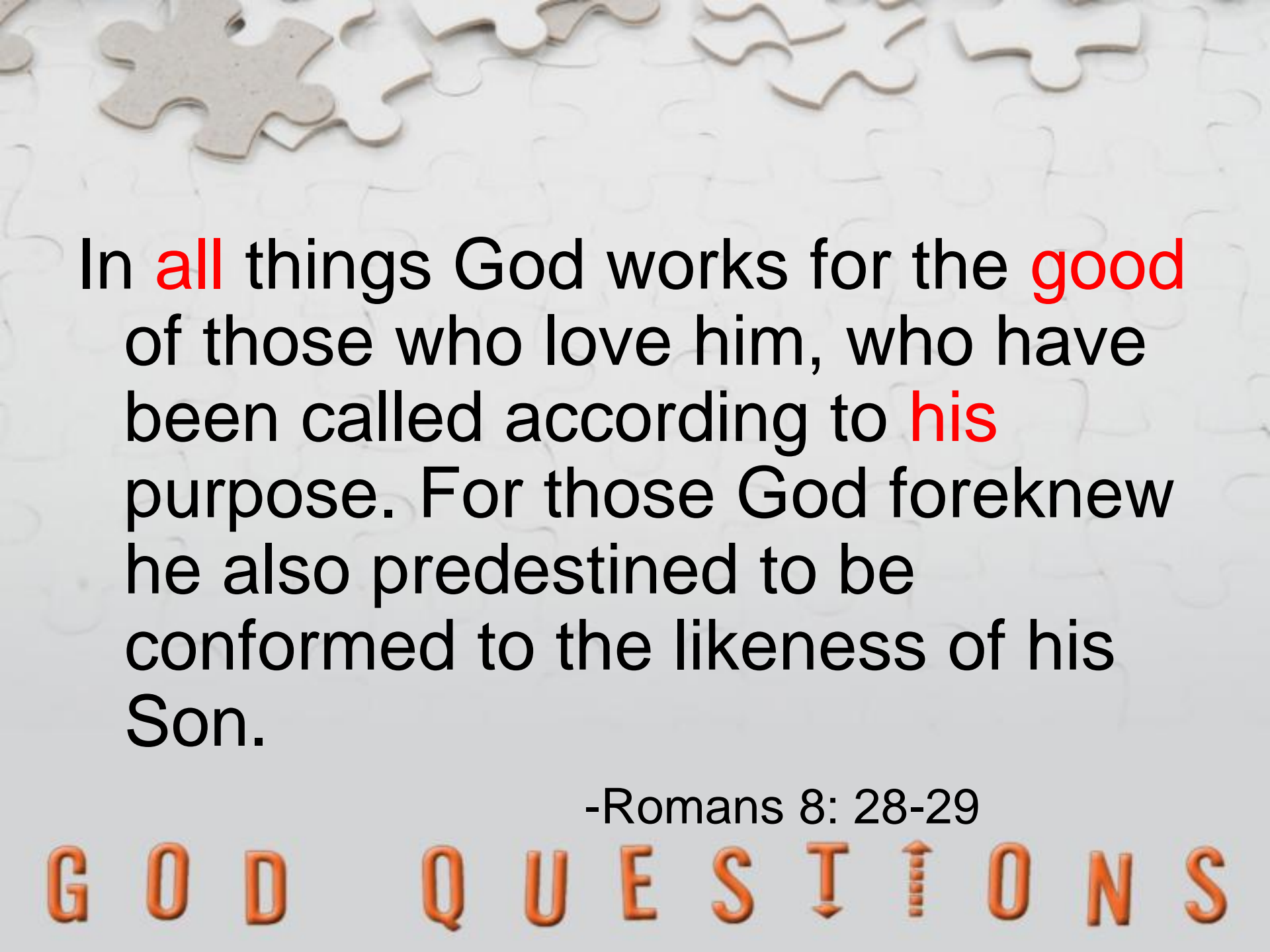
G O D Q U E S T I O N S



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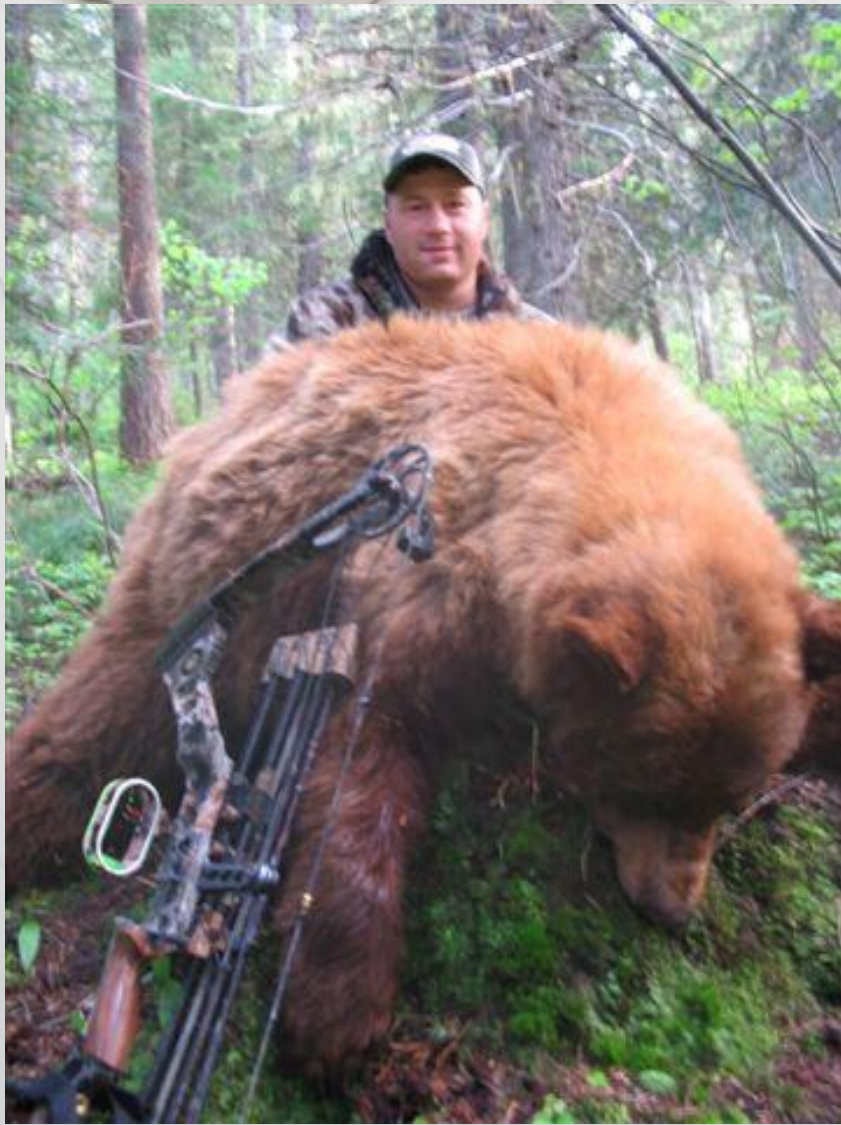
G O D Q U E S T I O N S



In **all** things God works for the **good** of those who love him, who have been called according to **his** purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.

-Romans 8: 28-29

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



G O D Q U E S T I O N S



Was it right to let his son go?

Why didn't he help his son in his hour of greatest suffering?

Where was the empathy for his son?

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

-Luke 15:20



G O D Q U E S T I O N S

# The bottom line: God is love.



-1 John 4: 16

“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup [of suffering] be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

-Matthew 26: 39

G O D Q U E S T I O N S

Was it right to let his son go?

Why didn't he help his son in his hour of greatest suffering?

Where was the empathy for his son?

# What was the point of all this suffering?

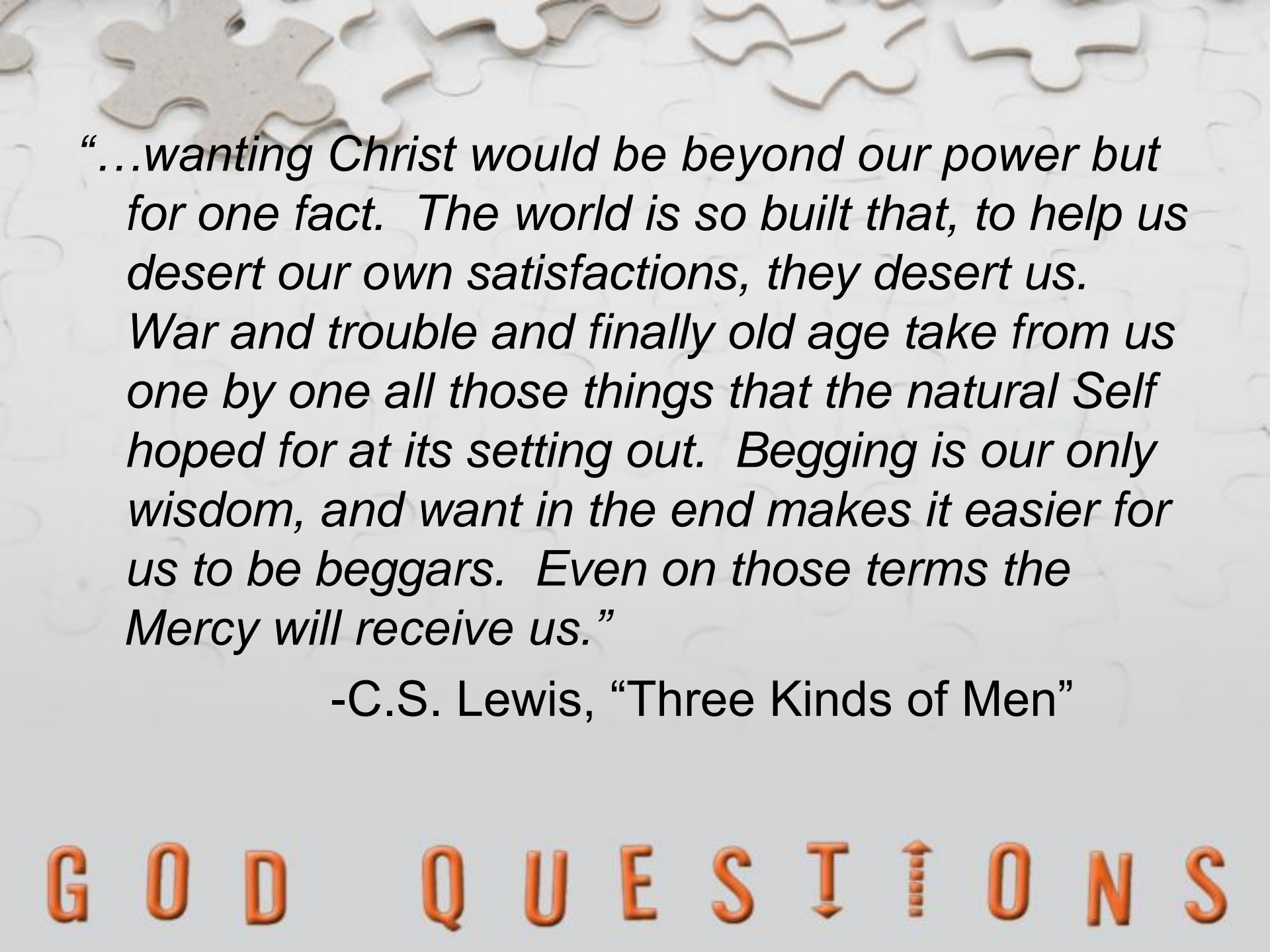
“Let us have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” So they began to celebrate.



-Luke 15: 23-24

G O D Q U E S T I O N S





*“...wanting Christ would be beyond our power but for one fact. The world is so built that, to help us desert our own satisfactions, they desert us. War and trouble and finally old age take from us one by one all those things that the natural Self hoped for at its setting out. Begging is our only wisdom, and want in the end makes it easier for us to be beggars. Even on those terms the Mercy will receive us.”*

-C.S. Lewis, “Three Kinds of Men”

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



# “Pain is God’s megaphone”



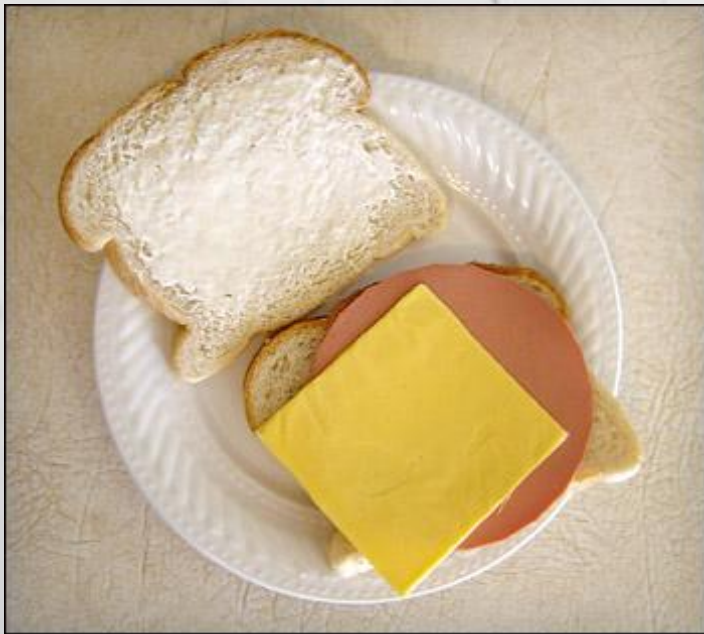
*“God whispers to us in our pleasures,  
speaks in our conscience, but shouts in  
our pains.”*

-C.S. Lewis

G O D Q U E S T I O N S

# The bottom line:

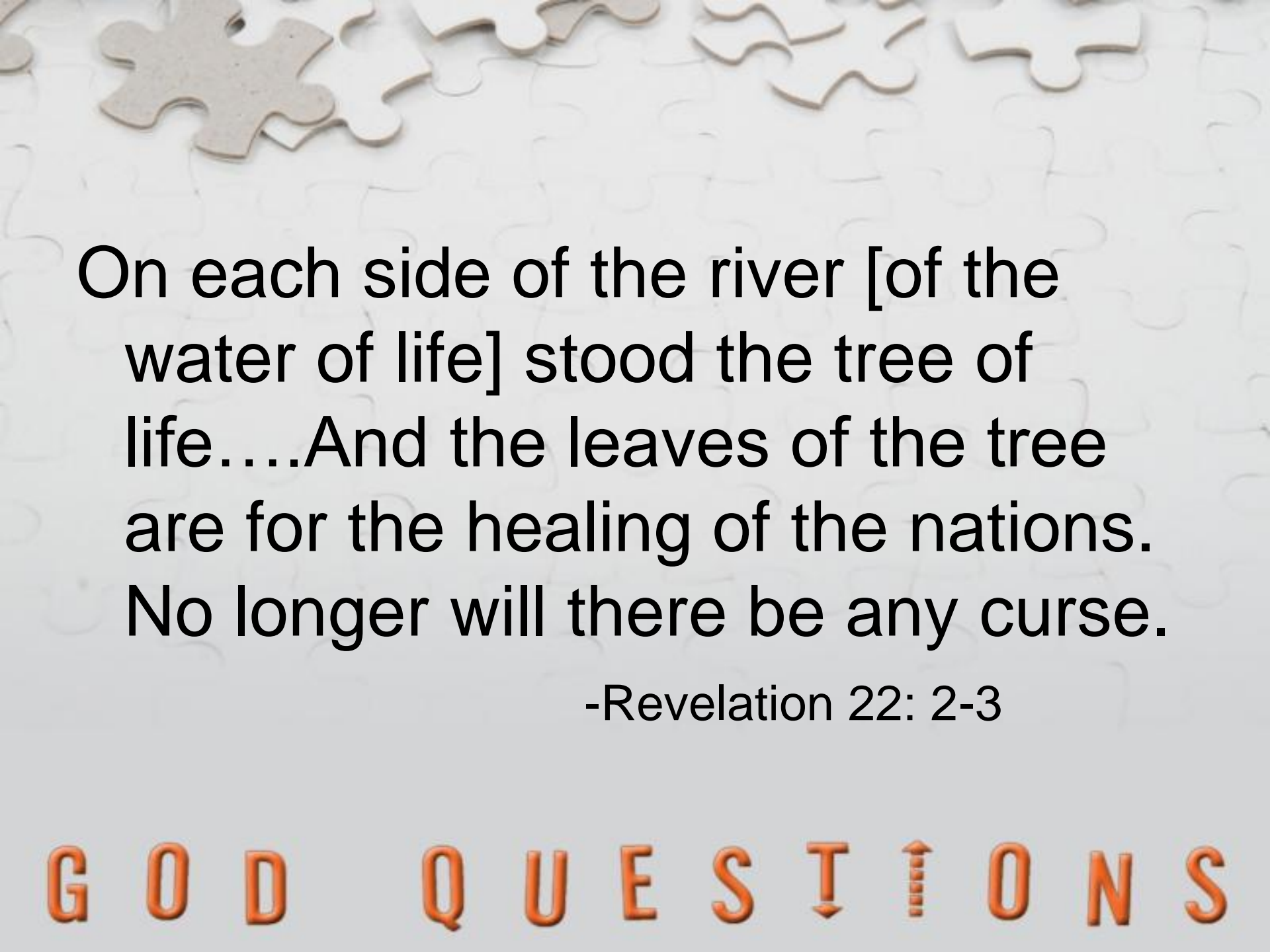
God is love -1 John 4: 16



Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us **an eternal glory** that far outweighs them all.

-2 Cor. 4: 16-17

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



On each side of the river [of the water of life] stood the tree of life....And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse.

-Revelation 22: 2-3

G O D Q U E S T I O N S



G O D Q U E S T I O N S