

If we neglect to wipe cooking oil off our hands or off a large bottle of cooking oil, and then pick up that bottle, only to have it slip and drop on our toes, we suffer!

If we rake the grass cuttings on our lawn without wearing gloves, and then develop blisters on our hands, we suffer.

If we overexert ourselves in very hot weather, either in work or recreation, and then become ill or even have a stroke, we suffer!

If we leave dangerous medicines where small children can get at them, and they eat them, they suffer, and we suffer along with them.

If we drive when we are very sleepy, or when we are drowsy because of some medication, and then become involved in a serious accident, we suffer, and others may suffer too.

If we neglect our health, do not have physical examinations from time to time, and then discover that we have a serious disease that has advanced to a critical stage, we suffer, and our loved ones suffer with us.

If we become involved in some covert dishonest scheme or some secret immoral relationship, or if we wrong someone else badly, sooner or later we suffer.

God's laws simply cannot be broken with impunity! In Numbers 32:23 (referring to God's moral laws) He tells us, "You may be sure that your sin will find you out."

The lesson is clear and pointed: transgressors of God's laws must suffer!

Thus we may say that, as far as God's role in suffering is concerned, He inflicts suffering but does not cause suffering. Human beings are the cause of their own suffering!

V. A BIBLICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD RESPONSIBILITY FOR HUMAN SUFFERING

What should our attitude be toward suffering, especially in connection with the question of responsibility? Can responsibility for human suffering be located and fixed in any ultimate sense? Who is to blame?

This question of final or ultimate blame or responsibility cannot indefinitely be avoided. If we attempt to sidestep or ignore it, it will not go away, but will continue to plague us at every turn and every step.