

Why Does God Allow Trials?

Joe Slater

Trials, especially severe ones, tempt us to doubt God. “If God exists, and if He really is good, then why does He permit pain and suffering?” But does God’s goodness require that our lives be a bed of rose petals?

Through Moses the Lord told His people Israel, “*You shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and to test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord*” (Deuteronomy 8:2-3).

The Israelites needed to suffer hunger to know the source of their blessings and to learn that satisfying one’s physical hunger isn’t the main purpose of life! Living by God’s word surpasses filling the stomach with food.

What kind of parents would just give their children everything they want with no conditions or expectations? Such children would become soft, flabby, lazy, self-centered, and entitled. (Just look around! We’re reaping a bitter harvest!) Children need to be tested, challenged, and made to endure difficulty so they mature into responsible, realistic adults.

It’s no different with God’s children. Though we may not enjoy it, we benefit from experiencing trials. Think of Joseph in Egypt; think of Daniel and his friends in Babylon. Most of all, think Jesus, “*the captain of (our) salvation,*” who was made “*perfect (complete) through suffering*” (Hebrews 2:10).

Let us learn to see God’s hand in trials!

I Me Mine

A recent Frank and Ernest comic strip portrays the two characters as senators walking away from the US Capitol Building. One carries a briefcase depicting him as “Sen. Krupt” (corrupt). He says with an expression of joy, “I never cater to special interest groups . . . unless their special interest happens to be me, of course!” The cartoonist provides a “frank and earnest” assessment of today’s political spectrum, as far too many “public servants” yield to corruption.

This cartoon describes far too common way of life that goes far beyond the political realm. While there’s nothing wrong with protecting one’s interests, the situation quickly changes when we become driven by self-centeredness. It reminds me of a lesson I once heard about the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21) in which the minister told of the man’s “eye problem.” It puzzled me at first, but I soon realized the man had a problem . . . an “I” problem! His “I’s” were blinded by wealth!

This attitude creates problems in marriages, in families, and worst of all, in the church. John’s third letter tells of Diotrephes, a brother with an “I” problem. And in Revelation 3:28, Lord Jesus offers salve to a congregation to help with their “I” problem.

How does a believer prevent becoming blinded? First, you must keep your eye on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2). Second, realizes that Christians are a “one another” people. Fifty-nine distinct New Testament references exist that discuss the relationships that believers share. Christians look out for the interests of others.

There is no room in the body of Christ for I, Me, Mine!

Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

Staying Connected To God

When God wanted to create fish, He spoke to the sea: “*Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures*” (Genesis 1:20).

When God wanted to create trees, He spoke to the earth: “*Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind*” (Genesis 1:11).

But when God wanted to create man, He turned to Himself: “*Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness*” (Genesis 1:26).

If you take a fish out of water, it will die.

When you remove a tree from soil, it will also die.

When man is disconnected from God, he dies.

God is our natural environment. We were created to live in His presence. We have to stay connected to Him because it is only in Him that life exists.

Let us stay connected to God!

Jovonne Perrin (via Facebook)

() () () () () ()

CHASING THE WORLD

We chase after so many different things. Only one thing is needful. Having a fist full of dollars, a great estate, and lots of prestige doesn’t mean a whole lot if you’ve gone to your ultimate address without the Lord.

Even worse is to find that in the middle of your busyness, you awake to find yourself in the barren land where Christ does not dwell and life is not found. Let’s not lose our life, our soul, our meaning, chasing after what is not lasting.

--Phil Ware