

GOOD KARMA? BAD KARMA?

Joe Slater

In Hinduism and Buddhism, karma is the total of everything you have done in this life and previous ones; this, in turn, determines what your next life will be like.

Few people in this country think of karma that way. To most, it has a more immediate application. If you do bad things, bad things will happen to you; if you do good things, good things will come your way. You get what you deserve. That's the way life works . . .

Except it isn't.

Solomon was frustrated to no end when he saw the inequities that exist in this world: *“There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs life in his wickedness”* (Eccl. 7:15). Likewise Job lamented, *“Why do the wicked live and become old, yes, become mighty in power? . . . They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave”* (Job 21:7, 13). Truly, the wicked do not always suffer and the righteous do not always prosper here and now.

Countless suffering people have wondered, “What did I do to deserve this?” But affliction isn't always due to personal sin. Job's friends presumed that his intense suffering resulted from his sin. They couldn't have been more wrong.

But wait! Doesn't the Bible say, *“whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap”* (Gal. 5:7)? Indeed it does; but that passage has little to do with our physical circumstances, and much to do with our eternal spiritual well-being.

If misfortune comes your way, rest assured it isn't “bad karma”! Neither do pleasant events indicate “good karma.” Give God credit for His grace in sending trials to purify us as well as delightful things for us to enjoy.

Crying It Out

This past week has been a long one. My wife and I were trying to teach our infant son to sleep through the night. This has meant many hours of crying; and, yes, the baby was upset as well!

The doctor suggested we allow him to “cry it out.” This means letting the baby cry himself back to sleep. It normally takes about three nights for babies to learn that nighttime is for sleep and to begin going back to sleep on their own. When they awaken, it is difficult to sit by and let them cry, but we know that in the end, we will all be happier and healthier.

I can't help but think that our Heavenly father sometimes lets us “cry it out” too. Many times, as we go through trials or struggles, we wonder, “Why doesn't God just take it away?” Maybe that's not what's best for us. As followers of Christ, we know that whatever we are facing is temporary. In Romans 4:3-6 Paul wrote: *“We also have joy with our troubles, because we know that these troubles produce patience. And patience produces character, and character produces hope. And this hope will never disappoint us, because God has poured out His love to fill our hearts. He gave us his love through the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to us.”*

Next time you find yourself “crying it out,” remember that you have a loving father just on the other side of the door, watching and listening, not wanting you to suffer – but wanting you to grow.

--Luke Bower (Abilene, TX) via Old Paths

Our Walk

I set a goal for 2018 to walk five million steps! I am pleased to announce that I met it (of course, all the hiking I do certainly helped).

Let me tell you something about fulfilling this goal – walking became my life. I had to walk a lot every day to accomplish it. I'm sure I am better off for it – I know I certainly didn't have much extra time for getting into trouble!

The Christian life is often referred to in the Scriptures as a walk. Just as in me walking became a way of life, our Christian walk should be our daily way of life. Several verses in the New Testament mention walking; in them are the ways in which we are to be walking through life as children of God.

We are to be...

- ...walking in the fear of the Lord (Acts 9:31)
- ...walking in the steps of faith (Rom. 4:12)
- ...walking according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1)
- ...walking properly (Rom. 13:13)
- ...walking by faith (2 Cor. 5:7)
- ...walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16)
- ...walking in good works (Eph. 2:10)
- ...walking worthy of our calling (Eph. 4:1)
- ...walking in love (Eph. 5:2)
- ...walking as children of light (Eph. 5:8)
- ...walking circumspectly (Eph. 5:15)
- ...walking in harmony (Phil. 3:16)
- ...walking worthy of the Lord (Col. 1:10)
- ...walking in wisdom (Col. 4:5)
- ...walking in the light (1 John 1:7)
- ...walking as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6)
- ...walking in the truth (2 John 4)
- ...walking according to God's commandments (2 John 6)

What will happen if we do so? Rev. 3:4 words it this way: “You have a few names...who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”

Indeed, let us walk the right way now so that we can walk righteously with Jesus forevermore!

--Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY)