

Oct. 13, 1013

Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People II Cor. 12:7-10

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

A Thorn in the Flesh

⁷ Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to ^ltorment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

⁸ Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹ And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast ^labout my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with ^linsults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

I was recently asked **“Why do bad things happen to good people?”**.

If God is a loving God and in control of what happens in people’s lives, why would he allow bad things to happen to people who are good?

Why does a young person die suddenly in an accident?

Have Tornados, Cyclones, Tsunamis, Earthquakes, etc.?

Lose Houses to fire, flood, or foreclosures?

Lose Jobs?

Have illnesses like Heart Attacks, Cancer, Aids, Alzheimer’s, etc.?

Planes flying into twin towers?

Shootings?

First we need to KNOW that God is in control.

In Genesis 1 we know that God created all things and set everything in motion. The world would fall apart without God. WE are God's creation.

Colossians 1:16-17

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁶ For ^{by} Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He ^{is} before all things, and in Him all things ^{hold} together.

God is omnipotent.

Isaiah 46:9-11

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁹ “Remember the former things long past,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is no one like Me,
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things which have not been done,
Saying, ‘My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;
¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east,
The man of ^{My} purpose from a far country.
Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass.
I have planned *it*, *surely* I will do it.

God is omnipotent.

He knows all that has been and will be.

He is in control of everything.

He has a plan and purpose for everything.

Matthew 10:29-31

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a ^{cent}? And *yet* not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

God does love us. ALL of us. He wants us to know, love, and serve Him.

So why does He allow bad things to happen to us?

The “bad things” were all introduced in Genesis 3 with the fall of Adam and Eve. We were given the power of “free choice”. Adam and Eve chose to partake of the tree of good and evil and sin entered into the human race.

So why does He allow bad things to happen to us?

Maybe we should ask: **Why do good things happen to anybody (good or bad)?**

“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”. We are all sinners.

Is there anyone here today that has not sinned?

Why is anything good happening to me? We all **deserve** nothing.

When we ask God to help us through our adversities:

Sometimes he intervenes and avoids a tragedy

Sometimes not. **WHY NOT!**

No one knows the mind of God. Only a fool would claim to know. God is always working out His “perfect plan”.

Sometimes we are suffering because of our sins.

ILLUSTRATION:

Many have made bad choices in our life and brought on their own suffering.

If someone smokes 3 packs of cigarettes a day and ends up with lung cancer, he cannot blame God.

If someone is a persistent alcoholic and ends up with liver problems, he cannot blame God for his illness.

If a thief or criminal finds himself in prison, he cannot blame God for his situation.

How about those times when we are suffering, but not because of our sins?

ILLUSTRATION:

JOB:

Job's friends tried to convince him that he was suffering because of some sin in his life. Not true. We know from the book of Job that God allowed Satan to afflict suffering to demonstrate Job's faithfulness. Even Job did not know the reason for the afflictions at the time.

Satan cannot do anything to us without God's permission.

Job 2:6

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁶ So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your ^[a]power, only spare his life."

Matt. 4. Temptation of Jesus. Jesus answered him with scriptures, rebuked him and sent him away.

BODY:

Job's story is similar to Paul's in II Corinthians.

We can find 5 reasons why God allows suffering.

1. God Permits Suffering to Humble Us

2 Corinthians 12:7

A Thorn in the Flesh

⁷ Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to ^[a]torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

God uses suffering to humble us and keep us from boasting (Said it twice).

What was Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh"?

We don't know (physical problem, bad eyesight, migraine headaches).

God left it as a "divine omission".

God uses Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh" to teach us lessons.

He is God, we are not. God is in control.

We often think of Paul as a SPIRITUAL SUPERSTAR. He had done many great things, but he was human.

ILLUSTRATION:

Can you imagine being in a testimonial service with Paul?

8 Year Old: I was 8 years old and went to VBS and prayed with my teacher and became a Christian.

Paul: I was on my way to Damascus to arrest Christians because I hated Christianity. A brilliant white light shone all around and I heard the actual voice of the Lord Jesus Christ...

Can you imagine following that testimonial?

Paul of all people would have a lot he could boast about. God gave him a "thorn in the flesh" and it gave him great discomfort. God used the "thorn" to humble Paul and keep him from boasting.

If God awarded good people for doing good we would do them for the wrong reason. We would likely start boasting of our good deeds and forget about God. During our good times we tend to forget that God is in control.

2. God Permits Suffering to Draw Us Closer to Him

2 Corinthians 12:8-9

⁸ Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹ And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast ^[b]about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me

Our closest times with God are when we are in trials. When we are weak, we realize we need God.

We must rely on Him instead of someone or something else.

Christians we admire most are the ones who endure these trials. This gives them a great testimony to share later. They are the ones that we want to have coffee with and learn how they made it through their trials.

ILLUSTRATION:

How many Christians have you known that once were a follower of Christ, but you no longer see them in church? Some crisis came and they turned to the wrong sources (Psychiatrists, Lawyers, Marriage Counselors, etc.) that were not Christian. They didn't turn to Jesus or get help from the church.

If we would but draw closer to God and allow Him to empower us, we have the promise that his grace will get us through.

3. God does not Always Remove Our Suffering

2 Corinthians 12:8-9

⁸ Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹ And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.”

Paul pleaded at three distinct times to have his “thorn of the flesh” removed. God replied with “My grace is sufficient”. God is in charge and He calls the shots. He knows what is best for us. We would mess things up.

God wants our “learning to rely upon Him” to be more important than our “being comfortable”.

ILLUSTRATION:

Do you know someone who is constantly complaining about all of the “bad” things that are happening to them, their head is down, and they are moping around? They are putting out a signal that they do not believe that God knows what is best and is in control.

Let God teach you strength in your weakness! Don’t expect your “thorn in the flesh” to go away. Paul’s didn’t. God is in control.

4. God Gives Us the Ability to Endure Our Suffering

2 Corinthians 12:9

“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast ¹⁰about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

When you are at your weakest point, God’s strength can be perfect in you. When you stop relying on yourself, God will give you the strength and wisdom to get you through it. He will guide us with infinite power if we trust him.

5. God Permits Suffering to Point Us and Others to Christ

2 Corinthians 12:10

¹⁰Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with ¹⁰insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

God permits suffering to point us and others to Christ. **I WANT THAT!**

Paul says to do this for Christ’s sake and glory.

What means more than anything else is that more people see the power of Christ dwelling in me.

If more afflictions means that your strength is known in my weakness, BRING IT ON!

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT:

KNOW That:

- 1. God is in control.**
- 2. God permits suffering to humble us.**
- 3. God permits suffering to draw us closer to Him.**
- 4. God does not always remove our suffering.**
- 5. God gives us the ability to endure our suffering.**
- 6. God permits suffering to point us and others to Christ.**

God delights in taking weak things and making them strong.

When we have afflictions, rather than turning away from God, we should use them to come closer to God and allow his power to override our weakness.

In the end, when we face God at judgment day, we can have full confidence that:

“Good things WILL only happen to good people”

“Bad things WILL only happen to bad people”.

2 Corinthians 13:4-5

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁴ For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak ^[a]in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God *directed* toward you.

⁵ Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you ^[b]fail the test?

He is Lord, He is Lord.
He has risen from the dead and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is Lord.