

“Why do bad things happen to good people?”

If I had \$100 for everytime someone asked “*Why me?*” or claimed “*No good God would let bad things happen!*” or mused “*Why do bad things happen to good people?*” I’d be a rich man! We’re selfish creatures by nature and often ignorant about God and His ways, so I understand why these questions or statements occur. But, there are several considerations we must keep in mind as we counsel others and perhaps even deal with personal grief or pain.

First, there is none good but the Father (cf. Luke 18:19). He created humankind in perfection, but we walked away and introduced sin, death, and sickness into the world. In other words, we removed ourselves from the benevolence and protection of the Creator and made a bed of death, disease, and pain we must lay in until God makes all things perfect again. It was our fault, not His. So, we mustn’t blame God for our pain and suffering.

Second, we often suffer the consequences of our wrong actions or those of others. Unhealthy lifestyles and poor eating habits may lead to diseases such as diabetes and addictions that can result in sickness or death. Drunk drivers kill the innocent. Wars demand the lives of thousands, many innocent and unsuspecting.

Third, life is full of risk. Jesus said, “*Those who live by the sword will die by the sword.*” (cf. Matthew 26:52) Likewise, those who drive the car may die by the car. One who works with machinery may suffer death, dismemberment, or injury from those implements of technology. And our technology-enhanced lives suffer from cancers and disease produced by chemicals, petroleum byproducts, and genetic alterations that enable the technologies and economies we worship.

Finally, anyone who ‘counts the cost’ of following the Christ (cf. Luke 14:26-33) understands that there will likely be pain in obedience. We may face persecution and choice. For instance, Paul suffered beatings, shipwreck, snakebite, flogging, and martyrdom. And, John reveals that end-times Saints will have to choose allegiance and persevere to the end of the age. *All* true followers must persevere during a variety of trials because of hope – our faith in the future rescue and translation and everlasting life resurrection will bring. Meanwhile, we grow as humans and mature as followers when we overcome adversity or are shaped by the Father’s occasional discipline.

In summary, we are our worst enemy. We give in to temptation (regardless of the source) and create much risk by our lifestyles and technologies, causing harm to ourselves and those around us. None of these causes or effects belong to God; the blame for our demises isn’t His. Instead of seeking to blame God, we should enquire as to how to persevere through trials, learning in the process as the Spirit prompts and equips. After all, “*Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life . . .*” —James 1:12.

Blessings,

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