

“Trusting God a Joke Since Wicked Prosper, Godly Suffer”

I write to you feeling perturbed about God. At times I really wonder the question of His existence.

I would appreciate if you could enlighten me in the area of trusting in God. I find it hard to trust Him nowadays. I trust in Him to provide financially, but instead I receive more financial problems. I see sinners who are ruthless and despicable earning tons of money, curse Him with the very breath He gave them. What a joke! His children suffered in hunger and He dared to claim that He will not allowed the righteous to suffer hunger. Sometimes when I see how He blessed those rogues, I told myself where is His logic? Of course He hopes that by showing mercy, these crooks will repent, then how about His children who are suffering hunger? You mean God enjoys people cursing Him so that He could bless them? Then I think His children will begin to curse and swear at Him.

I poured my hope on Him in several areas of my life. He said that whoever called upon the name of the Lord shall not be put to shame. I trusted Him time and time again in some areas of my life such as my career, my family problems etc. But none of them came true for me. Instead my feeling right now that He is a cheat and I feel more ashamed trusting Him. What a joke!

I thought to myself, if He cannot even keep up His promise as Jehovah Jireh, our providence, that can meet our needs on earth, how can we trust Him for our salvation?

My pastor emphasized a lot on His grace and prosperity. I believe wholeheartedly but now I feel very cheated by such messages. I felt worse than Job, he suffered but at least God restored him eventually. I felt like a fool believing in a book that was claimed to be written by Him.

Jesus came to give us life so that we can have life more abundantly. Now instead of having life more abundantly, I guess it should be read as a bums life. A life that is cheap and useless comparable to the fate of a bum.

I winced when I read that your pastor emphasizes prosperity. If it's the same kind of prosperity theology that some preach here in the U.S. that God wants to lavish good stuff on His kids, including health and lots of money and whatever our hearts desire then no wonder you are disillusioned with Him. We believe this is a false gospel and it leads believers to stumble because it teaches a lie about God.

God is concerned about His glory, and about us having a close, intimate relationship with Him (the second produces the first). Making us or keeping us comfortable usually doesn't result in God getting the glory or in a close, dependent relationship with Him, because it's so easy to cherish the gifts instead of the giver.

So, because of false teaching, it is quite possible that you had unrealistic expectations of a God who is not the same God of the scriptures a God who is holy, just, righteous, sovereign, and not at all committed to jumping through our hoops. And then you blame God for not being faithful or good, correct?

But because God IS good and because He loves us so much, He only acts in our best interests. If our prayers are for things that are not in our best interest, He will not grant our requests (or our demands). Which is why I think Philippians 4:6-7 is so incredibly important: God wants us to let our requests be made known to Him *with thanksgiving*. However He chooses to answer, when we give thanks, we are relinquishing our illusion of control and expressing our belief that He is sovereign and He knows what He's doing.

I learned this important (and now precious to me) lesson the hard way when He kept saying "no" to the huge prayer of my heart for physical healing. I invite you to read my story, *How to Handle the Things You Hate But Can't Change*.

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin

[Editor's Note: The inquirer shares the frustrations of the psalmists in seeing the rich and ruthless get off apparently scot-free, seemingly unnoticed by a God who promises justice and blessings. This quandary is nothing new, but it is significant that a sovereign God would allow it into the Scriptures it would make God look bad if there were no bigger, truer picture as explained briefly above. See for reference: Psalm 73: 2-12.

Regarding the inquirer's reference to Psalm 37: 25-2 about the righteous never being forsaken or their children begging for bread, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and others, explains, "David must surely have seen good people in great difficulties! But this misses the psalmist's point. He did not question that the righteous may be temporarily forsaken, needy and poor. Rather, he observed that nowhere can it be shown that the righteous have experienced continued desertion and destitution.... The point is this: in the long haul, God does not forsake his own whether they have little or much; their children will be blessed! (pages 267-268)." *Hard Sayings of the Bible* also addresses the issues of why the godly so frequently suffer and the ungodly seem so prosperous related to Psalm 73. For another Probe perspective on how Psalm 73 helps us deal with the problem of evil, please see Dr. Ray Bohlin's article "Where Was God on September 11?"]

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