

ARE PERSONAL TRAGEDIES DUE TO SIN?

Copyright 1994 - 2018 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : June 22, 1998

Last Updated : July 8, 2018

Self-Righteous Judgment, A Common Temptation, Hidden Ways Of The Lord, God Doesn't Make Mistakes, Afflictions Due To Sin, Afflictions To Glorify God, Lack Of Faith, Questioning God's Ways, Mockers of The Endtime, Humbly Scrutinizing Our Sin, Voice Of Conscience, Resistance To Chastisement, Evilness Of The Heart, God's Loving Chastisements, Vicarious Punishment, King David And The Census, David And Bathsheba, Forsaking God's Mercy, Rebellious Jews, Vicarious Atonement, His Mercy Endures For Ever, We Should Pray For, Comfort And Admonish One Another, Closing Remarks, Suggested Reading List

One temptation which is common to many Christians, is to quickly judge others in our hearts when we see some kind of evil or tragedy befall them. Oh how quick we are to point our self-righteous finger at them, as if we are some kind of sinless saints ourselves who never do anything wrong. "Oh, God must really be dealing with that person!" we secretly say to ourselves. If we really yield ourselves to this dreadful sin, we may even begin to gossip with others concerning the tragedy which has befallen that brother or sister in the Lord. In the seventh chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus issued a serious admonition concerning this dangerous attitude when He said the following:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."
Matthew 7:1-5, KJV

In spite of this stiff warning, how many of us still yield ourselves to this temptation? Let's be honest here for a moment. This is a common tactic which Satan tries to use on all of us; for as the Apostle Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
1 Corinthians 10:13, KJV

However, at the same time, we need to remember that Paul also tells us that we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. If we stay close to the Lord, and to His Word, and in tune with His Spirit, then we should immediately recognize when the Devil is trying to tempt us with such things. Consider this verse:

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
2 Corinthians 2:11, KJV

So then; the question is this: How should we properly react to the tragic events which befall others, particularly those events which affect our own brethren in the Lord? I believe that part of the answer can be found in the following verses which are found in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

Clearly then, the Lord's thoughts, and the Lord's ways, are much higher than our own; and oft times, it is not given to us mere humans to understand them. It is at times like these that, due to the sin in our own hearts, or due to our own spiritual shallowness, we may totally misinterpret the situation; and thus yield to this self-righteous spirit of criticism. As I have pointed out many times before, God has a specific purpose and a plan in everything that He does. He doesn't make mistakes. Let me again share a verse from the

writings of the Apostle Paul which I have shared on many other occasions:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Romans 8:28, KJV

If there is one thing I know without a shadow of a doubt, it is that when the blessings of the Lord cannot be seen in our lives, it is usually for a very good reason; but again, is it always due to sin in our lives? To begin to answer this question, consider that on a number of occasions, Jesus did in fact point to sin in a person's life as the reason for their affliction. The following example which is found in three of the Gospels bears this out quite clearly:

"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."

Matthew 9:2-6, KJV

While personal sin is definitely a reason for some cases of bodily afflictions and other evils which befall us, there are several other possibilities to consider as well. In the case of temporary or lifelong afflictions, as I believe I point out in the article entitled "Why Doesn't God Heal Me?", it may simply be that the Lord wishes to use the situation to glorify Himself. Perhaps you may recall the following example that is found in the Gospel of John:

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it

is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

John 9:1-7, KJV

As we can clearly see by this example, some afflictions are simply part of God's overall plan to increase people's faith and belief in Him through unquestionable miracles of healing. Of course, it should not really take miracles for any of us to believe. A faith which requires physical signs and miracles is not really true faith; for as the Apostle Paul wrote in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen . . . But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Hebrews 11:1, 6, KJV

At the same time, our God is a God of mercy; and thus, because Jesus knew that He was dealing with spiritual children, He performed miracles in order to increase their faith; He kind of helped them along the way as it were. At the same time, there are also a number of examples where Jesus was disappointed by their lack of faith and clearly told them so. On one occasion, in prophesying His own Death, He is recorded in three of the Gospels as having said the following:

"But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Matthew 12:39-40, KJV

As can be seen, Jesus was of course referring to the fact that, just as Jonah had spent three days and three nights in

the belly of the great fish, He would likewise spend three days and three nights in the Earth before His Resurrection would occur. There were other occasions where the Lord was disappointed by their lack of faith. Consider the following examples:

"And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."

Matthew 8:26, KJV

"Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?"

Matthew 16:8, KJV

"If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Luke 12:28, KJV

While some people feel that it isn't proper to question the Lord when certain negative things happen in our lives, I believe that it can be appropriate, if it is done in the right spirit with the proper attitude. In other words, if a person is questioning the Lord in a negative critical way so that he is really saying "God, if you are so powerful, why didn't you stop this from happening to me? You really blew it, God!", this of course is very wrong. Yet sad to say, I have encountered a number of people with this very same dangerous attitude. Lord help such people! Who are they to judge and criticize the Almighty? Sadly, as I point out in some of my others articles, this critical haughty attitude towards God is clearly described for us in the Scriptures. Consider the following verses:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

2 Peter 3:3-4, KJV

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous,

boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

2 Timothy 3:1-5, KJV

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"

Ephesians 4:17-18, KJV

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

On the other hand, if you are sincerely trying to understand what you have done wrong which has brought God's punishment upon you, then there is nothing wrong with questioning the Lord. How can we possibly correct the situation unless we ask Him what we have done which has been displeasing in His sight? Personally, I believe that God's still small Voice in our hearts is very faithful. I believe that oft times He has already shown us the answer even before we have approached Him about it. Paul referred to this as the voice of our conscience in his Epistle to the Romans, as we see here:

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"

Romans 2:15, KJV

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,"

Romans 9:1, KJV

If we can be honest with ourselves, sometimes, due to the hardness of our own hearts, and due to an unyielded area which we have refused to give to Him, we simply have a hard

time accepting what the Lord is trying to show us. It hurts to truly forsake all. It hurts to humble ourselves in order that we might grow spiritually; and so we resist His Spirit. As I have pointed out before, our hearts can truly be evil; much more so than most people are willing to admit; even though they know it to be true. The Prophet Jeremiah and Jesus Himself both made this truth very clear when they said the following:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Jeremiah 17:9, KJV

"And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

Mark 7:20-23, KJV

We would all be much wiser to simply yield ourselves to the heavy Hand of the Lord working in our lives; for we know that everything that the Lord does, is done in true love; and that it will yield good fruit in the end; if we will just submit ourselves to the correction of our Heavenly Father. Paul, who himself felt the chastisements of the Lord in a very direct way, made this clear when he wrote the following:

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward

it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

Hebrews 12:5-13, KJV

I discuss Paul's life and ministry more at length in the article called "Biblical Cafeteria, or the Whole Course?". Another issue which arises concerning Divine Chastisement, is whether or not God will afflict others because of our sins. While this may surprise some of my readers, the answer appears to be "Yes". Consider, for example, an incident that is found in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, where King David displeased the Lord by taking a census. This was a prideful act on David's part because he wanted to glory in his own greatness and the power of the flesh instead of in the Lord; even though he knew that this was wrong. Consider what he wrote in the twentieth Psalm:

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."

Psalms 20:7, KJV

Because of this sinful act, the Lord gave David three choices of punishment. David, in his own distress, and also because he trusted wholly in the Lord's mercy, asked the Lord to choose the punishment for him. We are told that seventy thousand people were slain that day by pestilence as a result of David's sin, as we see by these verses:

"And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite."

2 Samuel 24:14-16, KJV

Perhaps the story with which most people are familiar, is

that of David and Bathsheba. This story is found in the eleventh and the twelfth chapters of the Second Book of Samuel. As you may know, one day David spotted Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of his captains of war, taking a bath on the rooftops of Jerusalem. After committing adultery with her, David committed first degree murder by sending Uriah into the foremost part of the battle where he knew that Uriah would die. After taking Bathsheba to wife, the Lord revealed the sins of David through the Prophet Nathan. As punishment for his sins, the Lord caused David's first son by Bathsheba to die, as we see in these verses:

"And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead."

2 Samuel 12:13-19, KJV

As a result of David's various sins, war and treachery remained in his house for many years to come. In fact, as I point out in such articles as "The Fruits of Disobedience", it was in the days of his grandson, Rehoboam, the son of King Solomon, that ten of the tribes of Israel were rent from David's family. This practice of the Lord to punish future generations for the sins of the fathers is clearly revealed in the following verse which is found in the Book of Exodus:

"Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and

transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

Exodus 34:7, KJV

Severe judgment such as the above is usually reserved for those people who really go out of their way to upset the Lord or displease Him in some way. God is faithful to give us several warnings to get our hearts right with Him; but if we fail to heed His admonitions due to our own foolish pride and stubbornness, then we are in essence bringing the Lord's wrath upon ourselves by our own choice; for as we read in the Book of Jonah:

"They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy."

Jonah 2:8, KJV

Thus, as we can clearly see, in extreme cases of serious sins, God will indeed pass judgment on others who are related to those who have committed the original sin. In fact, as I point out in other articles, in the New Testament, we find the foolish unbelieving Jews bringing judgment upon their own children at the time of Jesus' judgment before Pontius Pilate when they exclaim the following:

"Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

Matthew 27:25, KJV

Jesus was fully aware of the evilness of these mockers of the Truth, and that is why He even told them that they would fill up the cup of iniquity of their forefathers when He said the following to them:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you

prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

Matthew 23:29-35, KJV

Of course, in a broader sense of the word, we have all inherited the sinful nature of our first parents, Adam and Eve. This is why in his first letter to the Church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul wrote the following:

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

1 Corinthians 15:21-22, KJV

Thus, in Jesus Christ, we find both the greatest example of Vicarious Punishment, as well as the greatest example of Vicarious Atonement. Both of these two great principles are summed up for us in the following verses which are found in the New Testament:

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Romans 5:6, KJV

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6:23, KJV

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16, KJV

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

1 John 3:16, KJV

In conclusion, even though He must sometimes deal with us harshly due to the foolishness of our own sins, our God is

truly a God of mercy. Just as He is quick to punish us, He is also quick to receive us again once we have repented of our sins. As we have already seen, the Lord doesn't wish that any should perish, but rather that all should come to repentance, because His mercy endureth forever. Consider the following verses, and be encouraged:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

2 Peter 3:9, KJV

"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22-23, KJV

"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him . . . But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

Psalms 103:8-13, 17-18, KJV

"If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"

Psalms 130:3, KJV

So then, if we see that a certain brother or a sister is being chastised by the Lord in order to make them a better vessel for His use, rather than point the finger at them in a proud self-righteous fashion, the best thing that we can possibly do is to follow the Scriptural admonition and pray for them, and try to help them, knowing that "There, but for the grace of God, go I." Consider these verses:

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

James 5:16, KJV

"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, KJV

Furthermore, as the following verses reveal, we should also endeavor to comfort those who find themselves at a difficult point in their lives:

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4, KJV

You will find the topic of Divine Chastisement discussed more at length in such articles as "Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement" and "Beholding the Evil and the Good". If you feel that you are currently walking through the Valley of Baca -- that is, the Valley of Weeping -- don't despair. God still loves you. He hasn't deserted you. He will receive you again into His everlasting arms just as soon as you repent of your sins, and seek forgiveness from anyone whom you may have offended. Healing is only one step away. It is all up to you. Won't you please take that step?

I trust that this article has been a blessing and a great encouragement in your life. If you have enjoyed reading it, please consider sharing its URL with your online friends. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Tumblr, or any other social network, I would also appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which are related to the topics

which were discussed in this article. All of them are also located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server:

Beholding the Evil and the Good
Biblical Cafeteria, or the Whole Course?
Exposing the "Judge Not" Fallacy
Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement
Striving For Perfection: Are You a Sinless Saint?
The Fruits of Disobedience
The Judgment of Angels, Demons and Men
Why Doesn't God Heal Me?

Written by the WordWeaver

wordweaver777@gmail.com

<https://www.billkochman.com>