

Has anything ever happened in your life that was so awful or destructive that it did not make any sense to you for God to allow that to happen?

Unless you are one of the children here, the answer to that question can be seen on your faces.

In every aspect of our lives, we see things taking place that we can't understand, and we frequently cry out to God in our pain, anguish, and heartbreak about these things.

The Bible is full of examples of this.

Job lost his children, his earthly possessions and was afflicted with terrible disease.

Job 3:1 After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. (2) And Job said: (3) "Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night that said, 'A man is conceived.' (4) Let that day be darkness! May God above not seek it, nor light shine upon it. (5) Let gloom and deep darkness claim it. Let clouds dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

(6) That night—let thick darkness seize it! Let it not rejoice among the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months. (7) Behold, let that night be barren; let no joyful cry enter it. (8) Let those curse it who curse the day, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan. (9) Let the stars of its dawn be dark; let it hope for light, but have none, nor see the eyelids of the morning, (10) because it did not shut the doors of my mother's womb, nor hide trouble from my eyes. (11) "Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire?

Hab 1:2-4 O LORD, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!"
and you will not save? (3) Why do you make me
see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong?
Destruction and violence are before me; strife and
contention arise. (4) So the law is paralyzed, and
justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround
the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. ...
(13) You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and
cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at
traitors and remain silent when the wicked
swallows up the man more righteous than he?

David –

Psa 6:2 Be gracious to me, O LORD,
for I am languishing; heal me, O
LORD, for my bones are troubled. (3)
My soul also is greatly troubled. But
you, O LORD—how long

Luk 22:42-44 saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." ... (44) And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Atheists chide Christians in this area saying that if there were a God, things like this would not happen.

This is especially true if you claim God is loving and looking out for our welfare as many of our songs, claim.

Atheists may be repulsed by our singing “God Will Take Care of You,” and yet atheists suffer just like the rest of us. Their non-belief in God does not make any of the hurt go away.

Here are some suggestions from one
of the best friends I have ever had
that I met only once.

SUGGESTION 1

DO NOT DEMAND TO UNDERSTAND.

Isa 55:8-11 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.

(9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (10) "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, (11) so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

“Farther Along,” tells us that in the future we will understand why God allows these things to happen. The point of the song is that we cannot see the future, and even a problem may bring about something fruitful beyond our wildest dreams.

Tempted and tried, we're oft made to wonder
Why it should be thus all the day long;
While there are others living about us,
Never molested, though in the wrong.

When death has come taken our loved ones,
Leaving our home so lonely and drear,
Then do we wonder why others prosper,
Living so wicked year after year.

“Faithful till death,” said our loving Master;
A few more days to labor and wait;
Toils of the road will then seem as nothing,
As we sweep through that heavenly gate.

When we see Jesus coming in glory,
When He comes from His home in the sky
Then we shall meet him in that bright
mansion
We'll understand it all by and by.

Refrain:

Farther along we'll know more about
it,

Farther along we'll understand why;
Cheer up, my brother, live in the
sunshine,

We'll understand it all by and by.

-- WA Fletcher or W.B. Stevens

Proverbs 3:5 “Trust the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; (6) in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight.”

Following God's word for making life's decisions works, but our selfish desires can so easily get in the way.

Job 42:1-6 Then Job answered the LORD and said:
(2) "I know that you can do all things, and that no
purpose of yours can be thwarted. (3) 'Who is this
that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I
have uttered what I did not understand, things too
wonderful for me, which I did not know. (4) 'Hear,
and I will speak; I will question you, and you make
it known to me.' (5) I had heard of you by the
hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; (6)
therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and
ashes."

We cannot demand understanding in this life
because we do not know the future nor the plan.

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise
as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,
not wishing that any should perish, but that all
should reach repentance.

Our eternal future is far more important than what
happens now.

SUGGESTION 2

DO NOT BE A FAIR-WEATHER CHRISTIAN.

Going to church and going through the motions of being a Christian is easy when everything is going well for us. Unfortunately everything does not ever go well our entire lives.

Revelation 2:10 “Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution ... Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

A warning to the church in Smyrna, but it is happening in rapid acceleration today throughout the world. Believers are dying throughout the Muslim world in vast numbers

Hebrews 3:12 warns us, “See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily as long as it is called today, so that none of you will be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.”

Problems, suffering, and disappointment are the agents Satan uses to harden our hearts. Remaining an active Christian when things get difficult is a challenge. We need each other's encouragement and support not to give up.

SUGGESTION 3

DO NOT BOW TO BITTERNESS.

When problems come upon us, it is easy to sink into the darkness of bitterness.

“Tempted and tried we're oft made to wonder why it should be thus all the day long, while there are others living about us, never molested tho' in the wrong.”

I have seen bitterness and understand why people get bitter, and the darkness bitterness brings is terrifying.

Isaiah 50:10 “Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.”

1Jn 1:57 “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son, purifies us from all sin.”

In this passage, the darkness is the Greek word *skotia*, not the word *zophos* which mean blackness. *Skotia* is the darkness that ignorance produces—the hopelessness.

We are to be people of hope, optimism, and positiveness—not angry, bitter people who repulse and are repulsed by their pain.

SUGGESTION 4

DO NOT BE UNWILLING TO WAIT.

Genesis chapters 39-41 tells the story of Joseph, a man who had a promise and a vision from God. He did everything right but was mistreated by his brothers and then by the people he was trying to help and serve. He endured years of slavery and oppression. He waited in prison for years before a fellow prisoner fulfilled a promise. This was followed by many more years in a foreign land working for a dictator. When many years had gone by, he had an opportunity to retaliate against those who had sold him into slavery.

His response was, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you” (Gen 45:4-5).

He had not demanded to understand in the past, and now he was “Farther Along” because he had waited out God's action.

SUGGESTION 5

DO NOT LET GO OF YOUR DREAM.

"The story of Joseph is a story of a life of dreams. He had no idea what the dreams meant at the time. He was heavily pressured to reject the dreams (see Genesis 39:10). He suffered because of his dreams, but he never gave up on them. Do you have dreams, hopes, goals, plans, or ideals? The difference is that God's Spirit helps you with your dreams. Jesus promises us that our spirit dreams will happen.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-8, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks the door will be opened.”

This does not mean that our selfish dreams will happen.

James 4:2-3 “You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

God will answer those good and constructive dreams and plans that are in accordance with His will in ways we could never dream could happen.

Accept the fact that you will never understand all that happens in this life.

Do not be a fair-weather Christian.

Stick with God and engage in encouragement and support with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Do not allow yourself to sink into the darkness of
bitterness.

Be patient.

Understand that God sometimes operates over
long time periods.

We must not give up!

1Co 15:57 But thanks be to God,
who gives us the victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ. (58) Therefore,
my beloved brothers, be steadfast,
immovable, always abounding in the
work of the Lord, knowing that in
the Lord your labor is not in vain.

What DOES NOT make sense?

Rejecting God and abandoning your faith when the struggles of life happen.

You do not gain wisdom or understanding by turning to the atheist's guiding principle of “survival of the fittest.”

Rejecting God's message of hope and patience leads to isolation and despair and frequently suicide. None of those things makes any sense – not now nor for eternity.

Act 22:16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'