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Where is God When Tragedies Strike the Innocent?

Psalms 102:1-2: (NASB) ¹ *Hear my prayer, O LORD! And let my cry for help come to You.* ² *Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my distress; Incline Your ear to me; In the day when I call answer me quickly.*

CHARDON, Ohio (The Blaze/AP) - The death toll rose to three Tuesday in the shooting rampage in an Ohio high school cafeteria as schoolmates and townspeople grappled with the tragedy and wondered what could have set the teenage gunman off.

Comment from Christian Questions' Facebook page a few weeks ago: My son who was born with cerebral palsy just died. He was sick for 2 weeks before he passed. During those 2 weeks we prayed and prayed for his recovery. He passed anyways. Why did god forsake me and take my son? Posted: 2/15/2012 6:11:09 AM

STONINGTON, Connecticut - A 15-year old male died at his home yesterday afternoon of suicide.

Losing a loved one, especially a child, can bring unbearable pain and anxiety. It can cause us to question even those things we hold dearest - even the existence and plan of God. We will look into this grief and into God's plan to try and understand where God is when tragedy strikes.

Is God hiding? Psalms 27:7-9

When a child dies, God crossed the line, Parents' Perspective, Part 1

- When I held my 16-year old son's body in my arms I realized that God was doing something remarkable. I remember crying out to Him that if everything I preached was true over those many years of ministry, He would have to show me because at that point I did not believe it. I felt as though God had crossed the line and that this suffering, this horrible pain, would never go away.*

Psalms 102:1-8: So, if God seems to hide, then how can we depend on him? How can we have assurance that he is actually caring for us? How can we have any rest in faith when we see such deeply personal tragedies happen before our eyes?

How to deal with grief, complications after birth, youtube.com

- (after the birth of a baby girl) ...more and more people started coming in, and then doctors with lab coats started coming in. The doctor was very clear about what was going on. He told me they were having trouble getting her to breathe, she had a little bit of fluid, her heart rate was dropping. I was actually standing beside her when they took her to the table to work on her...I remember running down the hallway to where our family was and we all started praying...*

We will begin to develop the analogy that sometimes as a good parent, we have to do things we may not want to do or like to do, but they are for the good of our children.

How did grief and sorrow become part of God's plan?

How to heal from grief, part 1, griefshare.org

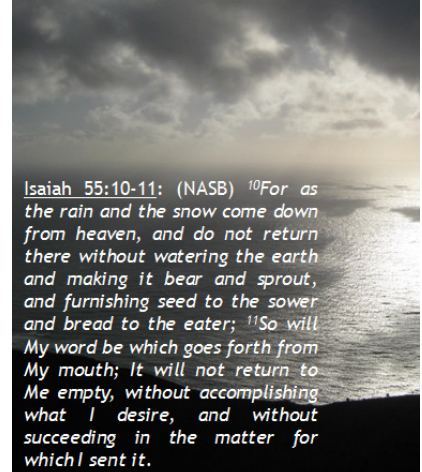
- ...they died in November, in February I fell apart...*
- A heaviness just came over me where I started weeping uncontrollably...*
- It's like your whole world fell apart, it seemed like God put the pause button on...*
- I just wanted to stay by myself...*

A good parent will offer their children choices, will tell them they should be obedient, and will put consequences in place.

God offered the choice of obedience, along with the consequences of disobedience: **Genesis 2:16-17:** *Dying thou dost die*, meaning "the process of dying begins." This was a test to see how well Adam would obey.

The test of obedience was presented in the form of a test of true loyalty: **Genesis 3:4-6:** It becomes a test not just of obedience, but also of loyalty. Satan gave them a different perspective by telling a partial truth. Were they going to really trust and believe in the one who put them in the garden, or were they going to trust and believe Satan?

God's Precious Promises



Isaiah 55:10-11: (NASB) ¹⁰For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.



When we have a traumatic experience of grief, we have a choice of what to do with it. We can go back to those things which were originally most important to us and hang on to them, or let it destroy us.

Mankind went down the path of grief because of disloyalty to God. But yet we suffer because of what Adam and Eve did. Why was this allowed to be a part of our lives? More to follow!

The fulfillment of consequences began: Genesis 3:23-24: If God didn't keep His word and implement the promised consequences, we wouldn't be able to trust Him.

 **How to deal with grief, I just lost my baby, [youtube.com](#)**

- The doctors tried everything... She came to me and just said there was nothing else they could do and that they couldn't save her. I just didn't know what to do. I just screamed. I just lost my baby, just like that.*

Even God's spiritual creations had choices: Genesis 6:1-5: God creates with free will. Taking the risk to create with choice means that the wrong choice is a possibility. Free choice is a major part of the plan of God. **Mankind would further see the consequences of evil intention and disloyalty to God:** Genesis 6:7-8



Did Satan's free will ruin our free will?

 **Stunned with no warning, How to deal with grief, [youtube.com](#)**

- All this stuff went through my head - why can't you fix her? Why can't you do surgery? Why can't you fix her? I wasn't comprehending what they were saying. The family came in and we just sat there in astonishment and shock. Our families are very strong Christians. We all believe in God and we all believe that He has a purpose, but we were all stunned because we had no idea. We had no warning.*

2 Corinthians 4:3-4: If Satan has blinded the eyes of unbelievers, they can't be held fully accountable. How does that fit into God being a fair and loving God? God is bigger than the tragedies and understands us because He created us. Mark 4:14-15: There is a principle in nature that is played out in every aspect of every life ever lived. It sometimes brings us goodness and joy and sometimes brings us heartache and sadness. To grasp the seeming lack of fairness in God's plan, we must take hold of and apply this principle. Once we grasp its depth, we will begin to see His plan in a whole new light...



This principle is the ripple effect...

Dropping a stone in water creates ripples. But the stone can't control where those ripples end up going. Every action causes reactions. Some of these reactions are planned or anticipated and some are completely unintentional and bring results that are contrary to that which was intended. Evil has ripple effects, as does good.

Satan masquerades as an angel of light: 2 Corinthians 11:14-15: Eventually, however, grief and tragedy are going to die.

 **Helping parents grieve, it's unthinkable, [paracletepress.com](#)**

- When you lose a child, something is happening that is just unthinkable. It's something that seems to shatter the foundation of your very life. It breaks the order of the universe and there's no preparation. There is no way anyone has ever simulated this with any other kind of loss.*

We still choose our master:
Joshua 24:14-16:





Why doesn't God override our sinful and selfish choices?

Intro, I will not be broken, Jerry White, youtube.com

I took my junior year abroad at Brown University and went to study in the Holy Land since I was a Religious Studies major. I went camping with two American friends, we went to the northern part of Israel looking for a place to spend the night and pitch our tent. It was April 12, 1984 and I just move out ahead of my friends and it's green and lush and gorgeous and suddenly - BOOM! The earth opens up. My leg was blown off below the knee. It was a pretty gruesome site.

The ripple effect of our lives include unforeseen consequences of our actions - sometimes good, sometimes bad. God allows the ripple effect to take place.

God often allows us to take our own road - even after he has unmistakably told us what road he would have us to take: 1 Samuel 8:4-10: Man's free choice has led us to a life of sin. An outgrowth of sin is tragedy. That's where it comes from. God didn't inherently build tragedy into the Garden of Eden.



Application: The ripple effect of sin is devastating, deep and incalculable. God wants us to understand this so clearly and fully that He allowed the entire human family to be turned over to Satan to experience sin and its ripple effect. The ripple effect takes generations and generations to really show itself.

How to deal with grief, she had Scott's nose, youtube.com

- I had the nursery ready, I washed clothes for her, we had our diaper bags packed, we were ready! We were going to be moms and dads. We had the car seat in the car ready to take her home and we couldn't. So we held her when she was alive... Every family member held her and hugged her and kissed her and saw who she was. She had Scott's nose and she had my eyes...*

The Lord doesn't erase the afflictions from our lives, but God won't abandon us in tragedy. His plan has much more to offer.

God unmistakably planted hope for all in Abraham - a reward for heartfelt obedience:

Genesis 22:15-18: Here is the "counteractive" ripple effect! When God says something, it is going to happen. This is the beginning of countering the ripple effect of sin and tragedy.

How to deal with grief, I grieved, youtube.com

- I was just so mad! I was like, why would this happen to me? I would just cry and I would scream and I would just get mad. I would go to her cemetery every day and that was a healing process for me, that's how I grieved.*

We have a God who is the ultimate parent and can help us work through difficulty.

Here are more plantings of the counteractive ripple effect:

1 Corinthians 15:22: (KJV) *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

1 Timothy 2:5-6: (KJV) *⁵For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; ⁶Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

John 5:28-29: (NIV) *²⁸Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out...*

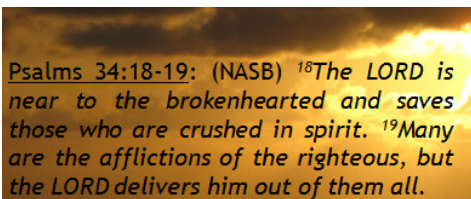
John 1:29: (NRSV) *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Hebrews 2:9: (NRSV) *but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

The theme here is "all." God understand the pain and suffering of our lives. As the ultimate Father, He is doing something about it. The final effect has not yet been seen, but the work is being done.

Life more than the body, I will not be broken, Jerry White, youtube.com

- Losing your limb traumatically, whether in a minefield or some other way, taught me that I am more than my body.*



Psalms 34:18-19: (NASB) *¹⁸The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. ¹⁹Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.*



Thirteen years after losing his leg, Jerry dedicated his life to helping other victims by co-founding the Land Mine Survivor's Network. Landmines kill more people than nuclear, chemical and biological weapons combined.

We can't erase the pain, but we can deal with it in a Godly way.

Romans 5:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

Read these Scripture slowly and carefully. All men came under the ripple effect of sin because of Adam. If that's the case, all men come under the counteractive ripple effect of Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus was the perfect example of Godly obedience.



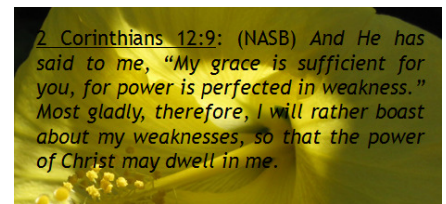
Application: The ripple effect of Godly obedience is magnifying, deep and incalculable. Once we, as a human family, have experienced the ugliness of sin and its utterly destructive ripples, we will run towards Godly obedience and loyalty. We will dwell forever in the light of God's will and bask in the never-ending discovery that each new ripple of His love and plan brings us.



How to deal with grief, how can God allow this, youtube.com

I even had a friend ask me, how can God let something like this happen to good people? But the work He's trying to do is bigger than what we even understand...

If you believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, we know His word will be fulfilled. Ultimately, our permanent relief comes through the eternal fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus came to do the work of buying back the human race from sin, death and the damaging ripple effect they have caused. The result of that purchase has been known to God all along. God's spoken words began the ripple of righteousness long ago...these prophecies are as good as done because the Lord promised them.



Zephaniah 3:8-9: (NASB) ⁸Therefore wait for Me, declares the LORD, For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal. (This is the culmination of the ripple effect of sin and death...but wait! Keep reading!) ⁹For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder.

When Zephaniah wrote this thousands of years ago, the promise was just a little tiny stone dropped into the water that created a tiny ripple. Through the passage of time, that ripple gains such strength because God wrote it. It is going to happen.

Daniel 2:44 Micah 4:1-5: So here is the ripple effect of God's righteousness written in prophecy thousands of years ago that says there will come a time on this planet earth where there will no longer be implements of war. Nation will not go to war against nation.

Revelation 21:4: (KJV) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

While we go through our grief and tragedies, we can find comfort in the promises of God and in His working with us and walking us through these things with Jesus. But later, because of the ransom of Jesus, the pain and sorrow and grief and anguish will be erased forever. We know this because the word of God spoke it, so it is true.

We deal with grief through God's grace.

Philippians 4:7: (NASB) And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**So where is God when tragedies strike the innocent?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Kathy!) and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!**