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Why DO bad things happen to good people. This is an age old question, that for years has stumped even the best of scholars. The thing people need to realize is that there is no black or white, yes or no answer to this question. It can not be analyzed, or sorted out by scientists or analysts to create a simple why or why not answer for the lay person. The simple fact is, heartache, tragedy, and suffering is something that everyone experiences. The thing people need to grasp hold of is understanding and the dealing of these tragedies when they arise.

Take the story of a man named Job for example. Twenty-five hundred years ago when the earth was ridden by sin and disarray Satan appeared to God and told him to look at all the sin that was going on in the world. Gods simple reply to that was, Yes, but have you observed my servant Job? He is obedient and faithful to me even though all around him are sinning against me."

"The reason for that is because of all that you give to him! Take from him all that you have granted , and then see how loyal he is", replied Satan.

"Very well", said God," It is done." And with that, he accepted Satan's challenge. With out warning to Job, God destroyed Jobs house, killed his children, and slaughtered Job's cattle. He then cursed Job with painful boils all over his skin, so to make his every movement filled with excruciating pain. Many times Job's wife asked him why he didn't just curse God, and ensue Gods wrath to strike him dead. Job's friends told him to denounce his faith in God, after all look where it got him. Yet Job remained faithful to God's will. When God saw how devoted and trustworthy this humble servant was to him, he appeared to Job and rewarded him with a new home, new children, and a new fortune. God came through for a servant who was faithful and true. Most people in this situation would have questioned God at the first sign of problems. Job on the other hand knew that God had a plan for his life, and that the things that were happening to him, all though painful, were all part of God's intricate plan. Job put his trust in God even in the worst of circumstances, and God rewarded him for his faithfulness.

Where is God when things in your life just aren't making any sense? Is he even around all the time, or is it just at his convenience? How much does he really care about the little stuff? These questions pose a great, thought provoking topic! The fact is, God is there all the time. He does interact with us on a daily basis- especially in four specific areas.<sup>1</sup>

1. God is working in our lives, even when it seems like he isn't listening or it seems like he has taken an extended vacation from your life.

Whether it seems like it or not, God is always working in your life. His intricate plan is constantly being spun out. Just because there may be a point in your life where it seems like things are going slow or that it seems like God isn't working, doesn't mean that he isn't. "With God, even when nothing is happening- something is happening."<sup>2</sup> That is the cool thing about God. He is always at work in our lives in his own unique way, even when our prayers seem to be going unanswered. It is important that your faith in God is not based on ephemeral emotions, but on the authority of the written Word.<sup>3</sup> Jesus told us that he would never leave us (Matthew 28:20).<sup>4</sup> He said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am also." (Matthew 18:20).<sup>5</sup> He is "a friend that sticks closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24).<sup>6</sup> God promises to us time and time again in his Word that he will always be there for us no matter what the circumstances. All we need to do is call on his name and he will answer.

2. God's has his timing all planned out and it is always perfect, even when he seems way off!

Dr. James Dobson once said, "One of the greatest destroyers of faith is timing that doesn't fit our preconceived notions. We live in a fast paced world

where we have come to expect instant responses to every desire and need. Instant coffee. Instant potatoes. Instant cash from the little money machine. Instant relief for sore muscles and minor backache. It's all most our birthright to make the world jump at our demands. But God doesn't operate that way. He is never in a hurry. And sometimes, He can be agonizingly slow in solving the problems we bring to his attention. It's almost enough to make an impatient believer give up and try something else."<sup>7</sup> It could not have been said any better. The whole thing that God want's to know is, how much do we really trust him? Will we ever give up on him just because things aren't going our way? Take the story of Lazurus for an example. Lazurus, a very good friend and devoted follower of Jesus, had become deathly ill. His sisters, Mary and Martha sent for the aid of Jesus in their time of need. For days they watched for Jesus, and for days they saw no one. After days of no response from Jesus, and a steady decline of health, Lazurus died. His sisters were grief stricken! "Why didn't Jesus answer our call? Doesn't he care?" The fact is, Jesus cared more than anyone. He appeared then four days later to the tomb of Lazurus, and called him fourth from the tomb. You see, Jesus was not late at all. By His clock he was right on time. He had used the resurrection of Lazurus as a display of God's great powers to on looking unbelievers. God let everything play out in his own sweet time. And He will do the same for you if you just let him.

3. For some odd reason, we are incredibly important and precious to God.

After all the trouble that we give God. After all of the times we turn our backs on him, after all of the crap that we put him through, he still loves us very much. He would have it no other way. God knows everything about us and cares for us no matter what we do to him. Psalms 139 says: "O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways."<sup>8</sup> You see Jesus knows everything, and everything has already been planned. We can't tell him what is what. That isn't the way it works. His plan is the final law and we have to trust him and follow his guidance. If we do this then he promises that he will work everything out for us in the end.

4. You can't fight with God and hope to win. It just doesn't work that way.

Picture if you will Richard Simmons, and Myke Tyson going head to head. Who would win? Um... if you guessed Richard Simmons then I think you need to loose some unwanted fat...between your ears! This crazy little senario is just a hint of what it is like for us to try to "box" with God. We can't win! We can not demand from God. He will reveal in his own sweet time. I mean he is the creator of the universe! I think he has that right! God is a very loving and caring God, but one thing he does not mess around with is demands. Don't be upset if God doesn't grant a request or a plea from you. If he closes the door in your face don't be upset! Know that it was done for a reason, and that he played out the "peices" just like he wanted too. If we trust in the Lord will all our ming soul, and strength then he will lead us where he want's to. And a person in God's will, is a person on their way to heaven.

When heartache, and problems arise it is important to remember that God is doing everything for a reason. Seek him and know that he is holy. He want's to lead the life that he has given you in the direction that he want's to. Just put all your trust in him and remember, he does care for you and will be there for you. Even when "bad things happen to good people"(you!).

#### WORKS CITED

1 Dr. James Dobson, Holding On To Your Faith-Even When God Does't Make Sense. (Tyndale House Publisher, Inc.: c1993) 45.

2 Dobson 49.

3 Dobson 49.

4 The Illustrated Bible, Living Values Edition, (David C. Cook Publishing Co.: c1989) Matthew 28:20.

- 5 The Illustrated Bible, Matthew 18:20.
- 6 The Illustrated Bible, Proverbs 18:24.
- 7 Dobson 50.
- 8 The Illustrated Bible, Psalms 139.

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