

A Response To Christians Who Are Angry And/Or Disappointed With God
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It is not unusual to encounter Christians who admit, with differing degrees of vulnerability, that they are either disappointed with God, or perhaps even angry with Him. The pastoral response must be one of empathy and heartache, assuming a significant degree of pain and suffering underlying these emotions and beliefs.

In such a time, wisdom says, “Respond to fact with fact and emotion with emotion.” This means offering a response which includes asking questions to understand the nature and extent of the pain and suffering being experienced, while expressing one’s own heartbreak in light of their circumstance.

But at some point, for the sake of their well-being, these Christians need to be loved in a very unique way – by being introduced to, or reminded of, the truth that can set them free from their debilitating emotions. Only then can they know and eventually embrace the disguised love of God, until now, hidden in the shadows of their suffering.

It is my intention and desire to write a very brief and simple response to those struggling with God because of their pain filled, providential circumstances. And in doing so, I hope to expose Christians to their need for strong theological footings in the foundation of their faith.

Let me begin by suggesting that even the best of Christians fail to fully realize and embrace three personal realities:

- 1) How immensely loved they are by their heavenly Father,
- 2) how despicably sinful they are as responsible possessors of a sin nature, and
- 3) how deserving they are of their pain and suffering.

It is important for Christians to know that as those now redeemed by God and whose penalty for sin has been born by Christ, their pain and suffering is in no way to

be viewed as punishment for their sin. However, these same hardships do remain as results of their fallen condition, and some as consequences of their specific sinful behavior.

In addition to this, many Christians fail to realize that not only has God never promised the absence of pain and suffering, but in fact, has clearly revealed to them just the opposite - that “in this world there will be tribulation.” (John 16:33) and that they should “not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among them...as some strange thing were happening to them.” (1 Peter 4:12) The Psalmist declares this in Psalm 90 when he says, “As for the days of our life, they contain 70 years, or if due to strength 80 years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow.”

It is because of such unbiblical thinking that even Christians become disappointed and angry with God. But Scripture is clear that it is this very pain and suffering that God uses to reveal their harmful sinfulness and to drive them to holiness and dependence on God (their only true means of happiness). It is for this reason that James actually tells Christians to “consider it joy when you encounter various trials.” (James 1:2-4)

But unfortunately, Christians often look at life on earth as their final destiny, which makes a pleasurable, pain free life their primary goal. Instead, as Paul Tripp writes, the Scriptures instruct them to view their earthly journey as “a temporary preparation for their ultimate destination.”¹ Or to say all of this in a different way, Christians often fail to realize that their disappointment and anger with God is actually the by-product of embracing faulty, unbiblical presuppositions.

Three of the more prominent erroneous presuppositions are:

1) “I deserve better”

- This is a failure to embrace a biblical worldview of the fall.

¹ Paul Tripp, New Morning Mercies

2) “God’s design for my life should be to experience the circumstances that provide happiness.”

- This is a failure to embrace a biblical worldview of suffering.

3) “The ‘here and now’ is what matters most”

- This is a failure to embrace a biblical worldview of glory.

(Thus disallowing “the glory yet to be revealed” to overshadow “the suffering of this present world”. Romans 8:18)

God’s Word makes it clear that “as a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7) and that “you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

Therefore, it is of the most critical necessity that Christians embrace a biblical worldview regarding the fall, suffering and glory. Only then will they be enabled to experience the freedom God has promised and longs for them to experience, even during times of suffering.