

Why Do Bad Things Happen to God's People?

I used to believe God never used physical affliction to do a spiritual work in the hearts of His people. I was taught that God has many means at His disposal to deepen our love and purify our faith, and sickness and infirmity were not among those tools.

Affliction always comes from the hand of the enemy, I was told, and Christ would never send such a thing our way because He died to deliver us from all the works of the enemy. So sickness is never God's will for the saint, and if it lingers then there's something wrong. These were things I believed and preached—until infirmity hit me.

The Fragrant Aroma

✘ Have you ever been tempted to restrain your emotions in a worship service because someone might misunderstand or become uncomfortable? Often women have been accused of being overly sensitive or sentimental. But when your outpouring of love and thankfulness goes beyond words to tears, don't be embarrassed. I believe the Lord receives those tears as worship.

Four times in the gospels, the story appears of a woman's lavish gesture of worship—anoointing Jesus with a very expensive jar of perfume. Three of these reports are likely descriptions of Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, whose ministry to Jesus occurred during the final

week of His earthly life (see Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-9; John 12:1-8).

The fourth account, however, though similar in detail, is a report of a separate event involving a different woman and occurring earlier in the life and ministry of Jesus than the week of His passion (see Luke 7:36-50).

The Power of a Mother's Prayer

✘ I remember seeing my mother kneeling at the side of her bed and praying aloud for each of her children and grandchildren. That memory is forever etched in my mind and I will never forget sensing a strong presence of God through her intercession. I came away with a sense of reverential fear and trust that no matter what would happen to any of us, God would honor her prayers on our behalf.

My mother is in glory now and it's a comfort to know that the Lord continues to honor those prayers. It encourages me to continue to pray for my own children and grandchildren no matter how uncertain their futures or what they are currently facing.

I am sure that there are bittersweet moments for each of us whose parents have gone on to be with the Lord. We remember them. We miss them. We now realize how wise they really were. Our hope in the Lord is that we will see them again and enjoy His presence together.

Except for Eve, the mother of all living, we've all been

blessed with mothers. Our mothers helped shape who we are today—for good or not so good. We learned from their example and from their mistakes. And when we had children of our own we realized what a challenge they faced raising us.

Some of us are privileged to have our moms around to help us with our own children. They bring the wisdom of experience and offer their time, love and energy to the task. What a blessing to have a doting grandma to pour unconditional love on our offspring!

But even with all that, the Holy Spirit is our best adviser, teacher and counselor. He knows what's best for each child and can give us the insight to know what each needs and how to pray His will concerning each one. God hears a mother's prayer.

I am thankful for His instruction and "coaching" as I grappled through years of raising an autistic son in a ministerial fish bowl filled with well-meaning parishioners giving "expert" advice concerning things they knew nothing about. Without the Lord, we would not have made it. Time and time again, He would admonish me to trust Him with our son.

That was not an easy task. We would place him on the altar so to speak, and then quickly take him off, load ourselves with worry, then place him on the altar again. Then we'd call on the Lord for help and take one day at a time doing as He directed. The result was miraculous! Today, he's a grown man who loves and serves the Lord, is gainfully employed and active in the men's group at church. Surely, God is worthy of our trust.

Surely, He knows what's best for us and for our children. He is totally trustworthy.

Sometimes we worry when we don't see our children going in the direction we feel would be best for them. Yet we have His promise that if we raise them and train them in the way they

should go, when they are old they will not depart from them (see Prov. 22:6). Though they may stray as they try to find their own way in life, they will return to what was instilled in them (see 2 Tim. 3:15). It's a promise.

Perhaps you are a single parent wrestling with raising your children and working full time. You feel exhausted and overwhelmed. You wonder how you are going to make it through another day. Take heart. You are not alone. The Holy Spirit will provide and direct you each step of the way. Our Father hears a mother's prayer. Trust Him.

If God has blessed you with a special-needs child, know that He has given you a treasure. It may not feel that way sometimes. You may feel as if you are the only one carrying the responsibility relating to your child, your spouse, your other children and the household. And if you also work outside the home it's a balancing act like no other. But His grace will enable you to do all He requires of you. You will learn the meaning of unconditional love and enjoy deep fellowship with Him. His love and grace is available—and it's free.

Perhaps your children are grown and your mom is in her golden years and needing care. The tables have turned and you are now the caregiver and she is the one needing your help. It's difficult for her to transition from total independence to needing care and provision. Do you struggle with the demands of your own family and her needs? Well, you are not alone. Honoring your mom in this season takes as much grace as handling a household of kids, a special-needs child, a full-time job and a cranky husband. But God is able to sustain you and go even beyond your need. He is there to give you His sufficiency, rest and restoration as you take time to get alone with Him.

No matter what season of life you are walking through, the Lord is there for you. As a daughter honoring her mother, a mother enjoying her children or one who is pulled in many

directions at once, our God is more than able to provide you with everything you need to make this the most wonderful season of your life. Remember that God answers a mother's prayer. Happy Mother's Day!


The Battle for Marriage Continues

☒ Last Tuesday my organization, the High Impact Leadership Coalition, held an open-air rally in D.C. to oppose a same-sex marriage reciprocity bill, which is currently being pushed through the D.C. city council. Several hundred concerned citizens—including more than 100 pastors—attended because they felt their opinions were not being heard. Many felt that the bill had been surreptitiously advanced.

Get in the Flow


Do your problems get in the way of your relationship with God? Sometimes we let hindrances such as disappointment, pride or the cares of life block the flow of the Holy Spirit in us and we become ineffective for Him.

Terri Cadiente: Living Courageously

Terri Cadiente is a wife, mom, life coach, stuntwoman  and jet-ski world record holder—who once ended up in a gutter.

Terri grew up in a broken home and felt unloved. It “tinted” her perception of life, she says, and she didn’t have the internal structure to know which way to go. The external structure of high school guided her, but after she graduated, when that structure was gone, her life turned upside down. She says, “I just imploded in a big way.”

California Church Builds Interactive Holocaust Memorial

 **May 1, 2009** – Vowing that it will “never forget,” a California church is today unveiling an interactive exhibit honoring the 6 million Jews who died during the Holocaust.

Built by Cornerstone Church in Fresno, the [Holocaust Experience](#) will guide visitors through scenes of 12 major events that took place between 1933 and 1945. The scenes span from the rise of Adolf Hitler to Kristallnacht, or “the Night of Broken Glass,” when nearly 1,000 synagogues were set on

fire across Germany, to Hitler's decision to execute genocide as "the final solution to the Jewish question."

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The exhibit, which will be on display until Sunday, is housed in the church's 10,000-square-foot educational facility and cost nearly \$10,000 to build.

Sight-Seeing In Caesarea

My trip to Israel took me to many interesting and fascinating places. On the second day of my travels, I toured Caesarea, an

ancient port built by King Herod. There I saw ruins of an ancient vomitoruim (my tour guide, Tison Ben David, explains the meaning of the name in the clip) and a reconstructed Roman theater. When biblical history meets archeology, the Bible truly comes to life.

Israel Mourns Fallen Soldiers, Celebrates 61 Years of Independence

Israelis shifted gears on Tuesday evening from mourning its  fallen soldiers to celebrating the nation's 61st Independence Day.

Opening the official ceremony at Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin said, "We have come once again to this hill—on one side the grave of the prophet [of Zionism], on the other the graves of our children—to remind ourselves once again from where we came, and where, with the grace of God, with the blood of our children and with the sweat of our brow, we have succeeded in reaching so far.

Rivlin said that moving directly from Remembrance Day to Independence Day is the "purest preparation" for the subsequent joy. Earlier in the week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a memorial gathering to honor slain Israeli soldiers and that the global threat of terror was greater than ever. "We have no choice but to fight terror until it is obliterated and to defend our lives," he said.