

Are You Mad at God? This John 1:12 Shift May Help

Life happens ... although not always the way we want it to.

Sometimes we're surprised by amazing events beyond our wildest expectations. Other times, we're blindsided by our worst nightmares come true.

When that happens, do you get mad at God?

After all, He's sovereign, right? He's in control.

God is omniscient. Nothing surprises Him.

And He is omnipotent—He is all-powerful.

So if something horrible is heading toward one of His children and He doesn't stop it, shouldn't we be mad at Him?

And if we should not be mad at God, why not?

If you're a Christian—a child of God, according to John 1:12—isn't God supposed to be loving and merciful and compassionate to you?

Yes, God is love. He is merciful and compassionate. But where did we ever get the idea that we should be protected from suffering?

We live in a broken, sin-sick world. A world that needs a Savior. And that Savior suffered to bring us a restored relationship with the Father. So if Jesus suffered, why do we think we should be exempt?

Perspective

When we do experience suffering, perspective makes all the difference.

If I think I don't deserve suffering, my perspective is governed by comfort and convenience. If I understand life is not about me, but rather glorifying the God who loves me, my focus changes. It will be less about running from suffering and more about using that suffering as a means to point others to the God who loves them, too.

It's not easy. But God never promised it would be. Still, it all comes back to perspective.

When my husband was first diagnosed with terminal cancer, I attended a workshop on suffering. The presenter, a gentleman by the name of Mike Gaynor, told the story of how his son, who had Downs Syndrome, was killed in a car accident. A reporter wanted to interview him, but he declined the interview. Her response? "I understand. You're probably mad at God right now."

But he could not leave her with that impression, so he said:

"Mad at God? How could I be mad at the God who just ushered my son into the glories of heaven, giving him a completely healed body and placing my son in His presence for all eternity? Mad at God? No!"

My Choice

And so, now that my husband's earthly life painfully ended due to pancreatic cancer, I have a choice. I could be mad at God. Or I could say:

"Mad at God? How could I be mad at the God who just ushered my husband into the glories of heaven, giving him a completely healed body—no more cancer, no more pain—and placing my husband in His presence for all eternity? Mad at God? No!"

That's the perspective I choose. It's not all about me. It never was.

Am I sad? Yes.

Do I miss him? Absolutely.

But God can use even my sadness for His glory:

- For with the comfort He comforts me, I can comfort others, because I've walked the path they walk (2 Cor. 1:3-4).
- And with the peace He provides, those around me can see the presence of the Holy Spirit is real, in a way they would never notice if suffering were absent from my life (Phil. 4:7).
- Even as I grieve, I grieve not as one who has no hope. So I'm able to affirm the assurance of heaven through faith in Jesus Christ to those who desperately need that hope (1 Thess. 4:13).
- Finally, if I never experienced suffering, how would I ever experience God as my refuge, provider and heavenly Father?

Are you struggling with pain and suffering or perhaps watching a loved one suffer? Instead of being mad at God, consider changing your perspective. Start with a personal relationship with the God who loves you more than you'll even know. Your life will never be the same. {eo}

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