

Is It Sin to Be Angry With God?

All of us, at one point or another, will experience pain.

Pain is an equal opportunity inflicter; no one escapes its touch. The question is: how will we respond when pain touches our lives?

Many people, at some point in their pain, realize that they are angry with God.

When I received the shocking news that my best friend had passed away, a dozen different emotions washed through me: disbelief, agony, denial and for a moment, distrust.

The logic goes like this: God is all-powerful, God is sovereign, nothing is impossible for God, therefore, God should have been able to rescue my friend and stop her death from happening.

He didn't, though.

Why didn't He? Why didn't God help my friend, her husband and her two children get out of the house on time?

These questions make me squirm just typing them out, but to deny that these questions ran through my mind a time or two would be lying, because they did.

And I am 100-percent certain that they did for others as well.

When questioning God's sovereignty, we can ignore that questions exist, resolve the questions so that our trust in God remains intact or allow the questions to overwhelm us in our grief.

If left unchecked in our heart, these questions will cause us

to doubt God's sovereignty and love for us and will inevitably lead to anger against Him.

Is it wrong to be angry with God in our grief?

Many times I have heard people comfort a grieving person in their anger by saying things such as:

- It's OK; God understands your anger
- God is a big God, big enough to handle your anger
- Go on, get that anger out. Don't hold it in; God isn't offended by it.

And I have always wondered if these statements are really true. How do we really know that God is OK with our anger against Him?

We may rationalize that the angry person isn't truly angry, just hurting. People express their hurt in different ways, and sometimes their expressions look like anger when they're really just pain.

But do we really know that deep inside, they aren't angry at God?

I think these are valid questions, because anger—at its heart—is rooted in distrust, and if our distrust of God's love and sovereignty are not dealt with properly, it will destroy our relationship with Him.

We are mortal, and thus we can only view the physical realm in past and present.

God, however, created time. He is not limited to time, He is outside of time and therefore is able to view all realms in past, present and future all at once.

In fact, Scripture tells us that before He even created the world, He already knew everything we would face in this life: "Your eyes saw me unformed, yet in Your book, all my

days were written, before any of them came into being" (Ps. 139:16).

If this is true, why would God allow pain into our lives?

I believe God allows pain for two reasons:

1. Pain matures us.

Think of a caterpillar in his cocoon. After metamorphosis has occurred, the butterfly must exit the cocoon.

Have you ever watched a butterfly exit his cocoon? It's a long and painful process to watch, and our sympathy toward the butterfly tempts us to reach over, rip the cocoon open and set the butterfly free.

However, doing this doesn't help the butterfly; it actually harms him and will eventually lead to his death, because the struggle he faces exiting his cocoon strengthens his wings so he can fly.

Without the struggle, he wouldn't exist.

The grief process will strengthen us if we allow it to. When those questions arise in our hearts that threaten to disrupt our faith and we choose to take them to God and allow Him to help us deal with them in such a way that strengthens our faith and trust in Him, we mature.

But more than that, having experienced pain enables us to be a blessing to others.

We can't empathize with those in pain if we haven't walked through pain ourselves.

2. We live in a fallen world.

This world isn't our home. And thank God for that!

When sin entered the world, God could have destroyed

everything and started all over, but He chose from the beginning to allow man to express his free will.

He did that because He wanted our trust and adoration of Him to be sincere expressions from the heart, not robotic reactions void of volition.

This was risky because it allowed man to choose not to love and adore Him but to rebel against Him, which is exactly what happened.

As a consequence, evil exists in our world.

Is God powerful enough to eradicate evil? Certainly, but He chooses to limit His power to man's will.

As believers, we live with the hope that one day, when all is fulfilled, He will do away with this sick, evil world, and we will all be together with Him in heaven—a perfect place, void of evil and pain.

That is our hope.

Without that hope. we have nothing.

God understands our anger, but that's not the whole story.

God sees our pain, and He feels our pain.

Jesus, when He hung on the cross, became sin for us. In that moment, He became a murderer, thief, rapist—all of the horrible things on this earth that cause us deep pain.

But He also bore our pain, so that in that moment He also felt all of that hurt, pain and betrayal we feel.

He understands our pain; He understands our anger.

However, He also knows that when we fail to turn to His Word and allow the Bible to act as a filter in those times of pain and questioning, that our pain and questioning of His

sovereignty will cause us to sin in our anger.

How we respond in times when we are angry with God is extremely important.

Lashing out at God, questioning His sovereignty and shaking our fist at the heavens only gives Satan an opportunity to plant more doubt and more distrust in our hearts.

And that poison begins a slow, spiritual death for us.

How to Respond When You're Angry With God

Address your questions.

Don't pretend they aren't there. Pretending the questions aren't there won't make them disappear. Acknowledge them and then allow God's Word to put them to rest.

Perhaps we will never know why certain things happen in this life, but we can trust that God allows things in our lives for a purpose and that He will use our pain for His glory.

Acknowledge your anger.

Telling God that you are angry doesn't scare or offend Him. What offends Him is what is in our heart when we acknowledge it.

Do we genuinely want to restore our trust in Him or are we lashing out because of hate and bitterness?

This is why the Bible says:

“Be angry but do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Do not give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:26-27).

Deal with your anger quickly.

Paul says in the verses above that when we sleep on our anger, it gives the devil an opportunity to begin taking over parts

of our heart.

“Give place” literally means to give him areas of jurisdiction in our heart.

The thing is, he isn’t content with just one little area. Once he has won territory in our hearts, he’ll just continue to go out and conquer more and more regions until he has completely taken over.

This is why when we feel hurt, pain and betrayal, we must recognize those emotions as signals that we need to act, because the enemy will use those emotions as crawl-holes to get in and start his campaign of conquering our heart. {eoa}

This post was inspired by the book: Grieving with Hope by Samuel J. Hodges

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