

Why Life Isn't Fair

The suffering of Job is a familiar one; He encountered the utter devastation of his family, wealth, and livelihood. Yet, the Bible tells us that Job was “blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil” (Job 1:1, ESV).

There is something inside of each of us that screams, “This is not fair!” A good man should not have to suffer the way Job did. Job didn't deserve what he received.

In fact, this was the exact conclusion Job came to. Not at first, but ultimately, as wave after wave of grief slammed him weary, he went from his famous first cry, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21, ESV) to a very long-winded question of, “Why is this happening to me, God? I don't deserve this” (Job 29-31).

And I can't say I blame Job. I've not seen a fraction of the loss and pain Job experienced, and I've allowed the same attitude of entitlement to creep in.

We cannot make God into an equation. If I do _____, then God will give me _____. That's just not the way God works. If He did, we all would be without any sort of hope for good things to come.

To think biblically, we need a shift of our view of what is fair. Fact is, none of us deserve the mercy and grace of God because we're all sinners. Even Job, the “blameless and upright.”

God graciously sent a good friend, Elihu, to speak truth to Job. “Listen to this, Job. Stop and consider God's wonders” (Job 37:14). Elihu probably didn't understand the answer to every why, but he clung to the truth of God's character; that God is a good, loving and merciful God. A God

of wonders, incapable of wrong.

So, no, Job didn't deserve what he received. He didn't deserve the blessings he had to begin with. He didn't deserve the mercy of God shown through the kindness of His own rebuke to Job's questioning (Job 38-41). And he certainly didn't deserve the outpouring of grace God showed him through restoring Job's health, livelihood and family.

And the biggest gift of grace? God's presence. Through God's purposeful allowance of suffering, Job experienced the abundance of seeing—really seeing—God as wonderful.

“Then Job answered the LORD and said: ‘I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. “Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?” Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. “Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.” I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes'” (Job 42:1-6, ESV).

What do you think about Elihu's conclusion about God, regardless of circumstances?

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