

Even in the Why

By: Bob Lenz

"If there is a God then why..." You can fill in the blank. Why did my dad die when I was in the 8th grade? Why did my brother get cancer? Why is there someone handicapped in my family? Why are there starving children? I wish I had an answer to all the "why's" in life. But know this. To question itself is good. Many people have felt bad when they've questioned God for fear they're doubting Him. Questions allow you to search and dig for answers which I believe will lead you to God. There are no answers to dispel all our questions. What needs to be dispelled are the many wrong answers that have been given in the name of our God and in the name of the church.

"Why is my brother, Tim, handicapped with cerebral palsy? Why does he have mental retardation and many other things? Why am I normal and he's not?" These are the questions I asked my 5th grade religion class teacher after raising my hand. I remember her answer still today. "I guess God loved you more than He loved your brother," she said. I knew she was wrong, but the anger welled up inside me. In that moment I wanted to kill her! Though I wasn't sure how -- perhaps with lead poisoning from my number 2 pencil! As I lunged toward her, my friends stopped me. They ran to get the teacher next door who also happened to be my football coach. He came and picked me up, which was quite a feat, dragged me into the hall and held me up against the wall with my legs swinging beneath me as I yelled and cursed. He continued to hold me, repeating over and over, "She was wrong. She was wrong. She was wrong." Slowly, the words penetrated and I started to cry. See, I thought down deep inside that maybe it was true. Maybe God didn't love Tim as much as me. If that was true, maybe he didn't love my family as much as someone else's family without a handicapped child. But it wasn't true.

We can't get the answers from other people's thinking. We have to look to the Word of God. The Bible tells us that it rains on the just and the unjust. The sun comes up on the righteous and the unrighteous. In John 16 it tells us that in this world you *will* have tribulations. Things will go wrong. People will get sick. People will die. But know one thing for sure. It is not because God doesn't love us.

Someone once asked my mom, "Do you think you have handicapped children because of some sin in your life?" They implied that she was the cause of the handicap. Again, we need to turn to scripture. In John chapter 9 Jesus saw a man who was blind. "Rabbi, who sinned? Was it this man or his parents that caused him to be born blind?" the disciples asked. Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the glory of God would be revealed in him." We live in a fallen world. But God himself in the flesh said that it's not because of sin. It's amazing how God can use something that happened in this broken world to turn it around to show his power and love. So why did someone's dad die? Why did someone's brother get cancer? It's not because God didn't love them. That is simply not true. The proof is in the cross. That gives a pretty big indication of how God feels about you and me.

I can't imagine the situation that you are going through right now. But I want you to know this. God is big enough to handle your anger, your questions and your doubts. That's part of the grieving. That's part of the search. That is a part of faith. It is in those very times when we think that God is furthest away that I believe he is closest. But if you're anything like me, that's the time you want to isolate and push people away. Even more so, it's the time when you want to push God away. Yet those are the two that we need in our life at that moment. They have carried me through my own hard times. The word of God says, "Blessed are you who mourn for you shall be comforted." God is with us even in the "why's". When you go through those hard times, allow yourself to be comforted by Him and by His people. Then in turn, when you hear someone else asking the question "why", you won't give simple cliches. You'll walk with them through the pain and show them that God is Emmanuel – "God with us". He is with us even in the dark times. Even in the "why".

Articles are written by Bob Lenz, Tiffany Thompson and other national youth communicators with Life Promotions Inc., a non-profit youth organization committed to instilling hope, worth and value in youth.

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