

# WHEN GOD DISAPPEARS: REMEMBER

Affliction makes God appear to be absent for a time, more absent than a dead man, more absent than light in the utter darkness of a cell. --- Simone Weil

Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering by Timothy Keller  
Where Is God When It Hurts? by Philip Yancey

Big Idea: Neither blessings from God nor burdens allowed by God are dependent upon my behavior.

Big Question: What should we remember in our suffering?

Main Scripture: Job 1:1-12

Job 1:1-5 <sup>1</sup> There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. <sup>2</sup> He had seven sons and three daughters. <sup>3</sup> He owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 teams of oxen, and 500 female donkeys. He also had many servants. He was, in fact, the richest person in that entire area. <sup>4</sup> Job's sons would take turns preparing feasts in their homes, and they would also invite their three sisters to celebrate with them. <sup>5</sup> When these celebrations ended—sometimes after several days—Job would purify his children. He would get up early in the morning and offer a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said to himself, "Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular practice.

Job 1:6-11 <sup>6</sup> One day the members of the heavenly court came to present themselves before the Lord, and the Accuser, Satan, came with them. <sup>7</sup> "Where have you come from?" the Lord asked Satan. Satan answered the Lord, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on." <sup>8</sup> Then the Lord asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil." <sup>9</sup> Satan replied to the Lord, "Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. <sup>10</sup> You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! <sup>11</sup> But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

Job 1:12 <sup>12</sup> "All right, you may test him," the Lord said to Satan. "Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don't harm him physically." So Satan left the Lord's presence.

Nobody deserved suffering less than Job, and yet few have suffered more. --- Phillip Yancey

1. Our primary goal is to please God

Job 21:15 <sup>15</sup> Who is the Almighty, and why should we obey him? What good will it do us to pray?

It seems to me quite disastrous that the idea has been presented of Christianity as an other-worldly, unreal, idealistic kind of religion that suggests that if we are good we shall be happy. On the contrary, Christianity is fiercely and even harshly realistic, insisting that there are certain eternal achievements that make even happiness look like trash. --- Dorothy L. Sayers in "Creed or Chaos?"

2

You have meaning only when there is something in life more important than your own personal freedom and happiness, something for which you are glad to sacrifice your happiness. --- Timothy Keller

2. Nothing happens without the permission of God.

The belief that because we cannot think of a reason God would allow something means there cannot be a reason God did, is more than a fallacy. It is a mark of great pride and faith in one's own mind. --- Timothy Keller

3. No matter the situation we have the presence of God (*PAD*)

Psalm 34:18 <sup>18</sup> The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

Hebrews 4:14-16 <sup>14</sup> So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. <sup>15</sup> This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

The God on whom we rely knows what suffering is all about, not merely in the way that God knows everything, but by experience. --- Timothy Keller

On the cross Jesus was without any comforts of God—no feeling that God loved him—no feeling that God pitied him—no feeling that God supported him. He was without God. All that God had been to him before was taken from him now. He had the feeling of those condemned, hearing the words, "Depart from me, I never knew you." Jesus said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The answer? For me. He was forsaken so I wouldn't have to be. The ocean of Christ's sufferings is unfathomable. -- Robert Murray M'Cheyne