

A PUZZLING PARADOX

**IF GOD CAN &
WHEN GOD DOESN'T**

AUGUST 27, 2017

WONDERFUL MERCY CHURCH

If God Can and When God Doesn't: Which Is It?

- “If you delight yourself in the Lord he’ll give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:4) ...OR...
- “What make you think it’s a good idea to get what you want?”
- What would the impact be if these two things lived comfortably side-by-side for us, not in conflict or contradiction, but in beautiful mystery?

Not Getting What We Want Can...

- **Lead us to him:** “When we don’t get what we want, ...we are more apt to remember God. We learn what it really means to trust him. We remember the bigger story. When we don’t get what we want, ...we have to face ourselves and our addictions. We have to deal with the various ‘medications’ we use to cope with life.” [Kent Carlson, *Renovation of the Church*, InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.]
- **Lead us away from him:** we may withdraw in our disappointment

Getting What We Want Can...

- **Lead us to him:** out of gratitude and an awareness of our dependence upon him
- **Lead us away from him:** we may develop a sense of entitlement

Life With God: Guesswork Or Predictability?

- Every real relationship involves mystery, and that's what Father is constantly inviting us into, deeply and truly
- Everything God does with us—when he grants the desires of our hearts and when he does not give us what we want—is designed to elicit a response to the invitation, “Come to me”

Our Life With God

- With every interaction with us God is reprogramming our internal GPS
- Our flesh, this world, and the enemy of our soul move us in quite a different direction

Genesis 3:8-10 NLT

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees.⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”¹⁰ He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

Our Life With God

- When he gives us the desire of our hearts, God is cultivating in us a *Come to Me* change of direction
- We come to him as a good, good Father who loves to give good gifts to his children; as Peter said, who else would we go to? He alone has the words of life!

Our Life With God

- When he doesn't give what we want, God is cultivating in us a *Come to Me* change of direction
- In our desire and disappointments he's beckoning us, "Come to me. Trust me to do what's best for you."
- What God is after is authentic relationship with us—a relationship that is simultaneously reliably steady and an unpredictable adventure

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