

What Is God Doing In Your Life?

Job 23:10

The book of Job raises questions we often ask. Why do people suffer? If God is omnipotent, then why does He allow suffering? If it is not God's will for people to suffer, and they do, does this mean that God is not all powerful? These are certainly some of the most mysterious questions in all of the Bible.

The Book of Job was written to confirm to us that even good people at times may suffer. Job was the most Godly man who lived on the face of the earth, and yet he lost his family and all of his possessions. His wife and his friends turned against him. Even God did not speak. Heaven was silent, and in Job 23:3 he cried, *“Oh that I knew where I might find Him. That I might come to His seat and present my case before Him.”* Job said, “Not only am I suffering, but in the midst of my suffering, it seems God does not even hear me.” And yet, in the end, God confirms His love and care for Job.

We learn from Job that, even when we suffer and even when that suffering is mysterious, and God doesn't seem to hear us, God is still there loving and caring for us in the midst of the darkness. Job 23:10 has three affirmations that help us when our lives are being tried by fire.

“But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” Job 23:10

This verse in Job sounds a lot like Isaiah 48.

“See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.” Isaiah 48:10

Job comes to three conclusions about his life that comfort us.

1. God Knows My Situation.

“He knows the way I take...” Job 23:10

Job does not find comfort in what he knows. He finds comfort in what God knows. It has become very personal between Job and God. Notice “He and I,” and “He and me.” He’s saying, “I’m involved in something that’s personal, just between me and God.”

The Hebrew word for “know” is “yada.” We say “yada yada yada” rhythmically like, “yeah yeah yeah” or “I know, I know, I know.”

Sometimes life is compared to a pathway. It's compared to a walk, or to a journey. In Psalm 1:6 it says, “The Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” You and I are on the road of life. We are on a journey. Job is saying, “I really don't know the way. I really don't know what my days are going to bring. I don't know what's ahead on this pathway of life.” None of us do. You don't know what's ahead on the pathway of life.

He has just said in verses 8 and 9, “I don't know where the Lord is.” Now in verse 10 he says, “But praise God, He knows where I am.” Amen! Isn't that wonderful to know! We don't ever know what a day may bring. The book of James says, “Boast not thyself of tomorrow, you don't know what a day may bring forth.” You don't know what a morning will bring. You wake up in the morning and start your day, but you don't know what's in the way ahead. You don't know if that day will bring you pleasure or pain.

“But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.” Job 23:8-9

Job says, "I don't see Him working, but I know He is working."

"You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar." Psalm 139:1-2

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." Psalm 139:8-10

Job knew the what - he was in the furnace, but he didn't know the why. Although you and I want to know many times, when we don't know, it is certainly comforting to know that He knows.

2. God Is Refining Me.

"But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold." Job 23:10

"Tested" is the picture of a goldsmith. It's the picture of putting metals in a furnace of fire in order to test those metals. The goldsmith would place the metals and gold ore in a small, portable furnace known as a refining pot. He would heat that gold in the furnace. The gold would turn to liquid. Then the dross, the impurities, would separate from the gold and the impurities would rise to the top. The goldsmith would then take a skimmer and scrape off all those impurities and the gold would settle to the bottom. The goldsmith was very, very skillful. He watches very carefully and regulated the fire. The purpose of the goldsmith is not to ruin the gold, but rather to purge the gold from impurities and refine, or purify, the gold. The Bible says that is exactly what God does in our lives. The trials and the difficulties of life are compared, many times, to refining gold in the furnace. In Proverbs 17:3 it says, "The refining pot for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tries the heart."

Refining is the process where value is distributed. Valuable things take priority as the imperfections are burned away. Nothing accompanies this like suffering.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4

"God knew where Job was – the furnace! But it was a furnace of God's appointment, not because of Job's sin, and God would use Job's affliction to purify him and make him a better man. This is not the only answer to the question, 'Why do the righteous suffer?' but it is the best and it can bring the sufferer great encouragement." – Warren Wiersbe

We get tired of being refined. We don't understand the challenge or difficulty. When you go through difficulty, it makes you think clearly. Suffering will clarify what's valuable.

The Results Of Suffering

- Suffering builds belief - Romans 5:3
- Suffering fortifies our faith - Psalms 119:71
- Suffering stabilizes our strength - I Peter 5:10
- Suffering arrests our attention - Rev. 3:19
- Suffering multiplies our ministry - II Cor. 1:4
- Suffering glorifies God - John 9:1-3, John 11:4

“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” 1 Peter 1:6-7

“When God puts His children in the furnace of adversity, His loving hand knows how long and how much. He keeps His eye on the thermostat, and His hand on the dial. He always knows how long and how hot.” —Warren Wiersbe

3. God Will Accomplish His Purpose.

“I will come forth as gold.” Job 23:10

Job was saying, “I believe God,” and “I trust God.”

The purpose of the furnace experience is to rid us of the impurities and to refine our faith. God knows there are some things in our lives that ought not be there. God knows there are some things in our lives that keep us from being what we really ought to be. He allows furnace experiences and turns up the heat. When the heat is on, that’s when all those sins come rising to the top and you see selfishness, ugliness, harshness, bitterness.

In Malachi 3:3 it says about the Lord, *“He shall sit as a refiner of silver.”*

When does the goldsmith know that it’s time to take the gold out of the fire? When he can see his reflection in the gold, he takes the gold out of the fire. God’s purpose for our life is, through every experience we come through, to make us more like Jesus. Those fires of trial and those fires of suffering and those fires of agony that we experience – God’s total purpose is to make us like His Son, Jesus. Explaining suffering is difficult, but the purpose is always the same—to make us more like Christ.

People suffer because of a fallen world. In Genesis 3:14-24, when man chose to sin against God, not only did man fall from his estate with God, but the creation fell. Therefore, the world in which we live is not the world as God made it, but it is a fallen world. God did not make a world with heart attacks, cancer, tornadoes, and other natural disasters. Much of the suffering we experience comes because of a fallen world.

People suffer because of the breaking of God's moral law. Galatians 6:7-8. When a person breaks any of the moral laws of God, that person is going to suffer. We don’t break the laws of God, we are broken on them when we go against those laws. Many people want to sow the seed of sin and pray for a crop failure. It will not work!

Sometimes we think we’ve arrived. Pride gets in our lives. Lord says, “Well, guess I’ll have to put them back in the furnace. We’ve got some pride we have to get out.” He puts us back in the furnace. That old pride rises to the top, and the Lord has to skim off that. It’s really easy to take things for granted when everything is up on top. When things are going good, it’s real easy to take it all for granted - not pray as much as we should - not read the Bible. But when we get in that furnace, the first thing that happens is we hit our knees. “Oh, Lord, get me out of the fire.”

You are either heading into a furnace, you are in a furnace, or you are coming out of a furnace. Either way, God already knows your situation. God is using your situation to make you more like Jesus. When it’s over, you can be a better person.