

THE BIBLE DOESN'T SAY THAT

WEEK 4

“ These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with a group or Bible class. ”

Certain phrases are said with good intentions in an attempt to bring comfort: “God must be up to something.” “God must think a lot of you to test you with this.” “God will never give you more than you can handle.” All of these popular expressions place the culpability for people’s struggles and trials solely on God. In a sense everything does happen for a reason because God has wired the universe to operate on the principle of causality. But exercise caution attributing cause while attempting to explain every effect.

1 **EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON... but the reason is not always God.** We should give God credit where it is due, but should not give Him credit for what He did not do. What are some of the problems with attributing evil acts to God?

2 When hard things happen, the “reason” could be our choices, the actions of others, or even the work of Satan. What are some examples in the Bible of each of these explanations?

3 One reason for hard things in life is the fallenness of the world. **Read Romans 8:20-22.** How do these scriptures shape our understanding of the “fairness” of life?

4 In the book of Job, God reacts strongly to the notion that He needs to “explain Himself.” How can the search for a reason be an affront to God? And why is it that understanding the reason for a difficult circumstance often proves to be unsatisfying?

5 **Read Romans 8:28.** Paul is not saying that God causes all things, but he is saying that nothing can cause God

to stop working to bring good out of all things. Give an example of this principle from the Bible. Share an example of this principle from your own life.

6 **INSTEAD OF SEARCHING FOR A REASON... focus on where God is at work.** The reason anything can work out for good is because God is at work. Sometimes we can see God at work and it helps us cope. But sometimes we cannot see God at work and must struggle to trust. It is not wrong to groan about the hardness of life, but how do we keep our groaning from becoming griping? How do we “grieve with hope”?

7 **THERE IS A REASON... why hope can trump the mystery and pain.** **Read 1 Peter 1:3.** How does the resurrection of Jesus change how we interpret everything that happens in our lives? Why is the empty tomb the reason we can cope with mystery and pain?

ACTION STEP *When we cannot see what God is doing, let’s remember what He has done and promises to do. We don’t need to analyze the reasons, and we don’t need to minimize the pain. We need to see God at work in Christ and emphasize the hope. As you go through this week take some time to remember God’s promises and what He has already done in your life (write some of them down or share them with a friend) and take a moment to say, “Thank you!”*