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Jones Road Church of Christ

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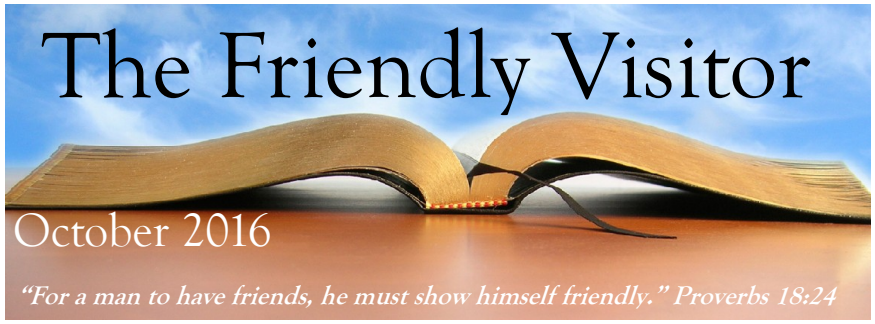
"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."
James 1:2-4



Have You Ever Been Mad at God?

By J.R. Bronger

"I have been mad at God many times. I would go outside and shake my fist at God and let him know how angry I was. It just isn't fair." These words were blasted out like the heat from a furnace from one whose life is hard and growing harder. All one has to do is sit through the funeral of a child; look into the dying eyes of a loved one, or try to comfort a woman whose husband of 30 years leaves her for a younger and prettier woman and you will often see those who are "mad at God."

I must acknowledge that life is unfair. This unfairness is seen on nearly every page of the Book of Job. It was hard for Job to swallow and it is as hard for us today as it was for him. Job and his friends try to understand Job's tragedies but they can't. They all agree that God should reward those who do good and punish the evil doers. Based on this premise, the friends conclude Job must be an evil doer—but Job is confident that he has not committed some secret sin. This is so unfair. "*Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, so that I am a burden to myself?*" (Job 7:20). It almost appears that Job feels that God is not doing so well at running the world, and I think this is why the Book of Job seems so modern and relevant, because we too often struggle to understand life's unfairness.

Why do the innocent suffer? Why, for example is a child molested and killed by some drug-crazed psychopath? But then the drug dealer who supplied him lives in a multimillion dollar mansion and sends his children to private schools with security guards. This is unfair!

Faithful Christians who die in the prime of their lives but atheist

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entertainers flaunt their disdain for God and live to ripe old ages. It certainly isn't fair that liars, cheaters and unscrupulous businessmen are able to amass riches while godly men lose their jobs and perhaps their homes. Believe me I would love to be able to say to the parents of a beautiful six-year old girl stricken with a malignant brain tumor "Don't worry, the world is fair, you just pray and your daughter will recover." But I can't—because life is unfair, and when we are beaten to our knees because of it we tend to become angry with God.

Before continuing, I want to ask the reader to pause and consider this question: "Have you ever been angry with God?" Has God made you mad? Has there been such unbearable trauma in your life that you just could not restrain yourself from lashing out at God?

There are those who when faced such a crisis of faith turn away from God. Anger turns to hatred and they want nothing more to do with God. They conclude that because God is fair (just, and righteous) then life should be fair. Therefore, when life is unfair they conclude that God is unfair and they bail on Him. They feel betrayed by God: "This is so unfair."

Then there are those who seem to have great spiritual resilience; they are able to face the difficulties and unfairness of life with an unshakable faith. Like Paul they voice, ". . . *the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day* . . ." (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

I believe there is reason some become angry with God during life's disasters while others are drawn into a deeper relationship with God during these difficult days. Once a man, whose wife was dying with cancer and who, himself, had recently been involved in an automobile accident that left him nearly blind and suffering from migraines to the point he was no longer able to work as a psychotherapist, was asked about his disappointments with God. "Have these tragedies soured you on God?"

Was he angry with God? Had the misfortunes of his life embittered him? Was he disappointed with God? After thinking for a few minutes he answered "I don't feel any disappointment with God." Then he explains; "The reason is this. I learned, first through my wife's illness and then especially through the accident, not to confuse God with life. I'm no stoic. I am upset about what happened to me as anyone could be. I feel free to curse the unfairness of life and to vent all my grief and anger . . . (but) I don't blame God for what happened."

What he was expressing is something all believers need to learn. We tend to think that life should be fair because God is fair—but life is not God. He went on to say: "God's existence, even his love for me, does not depend on my good health."

Do not fall into the trap of thinking that because God is fair life will be. Life is not God! Our faith in God must transcend life. If we can develop a relationship with God apart from life's circumstances (unfairness) then we will hang on when the physical breaks down.

If we conclude that life must be fair because God is, then when life deals us a tremendous blow, we become angry and leave God, then all we really had was "contract faith," not genuine faith (2 Timothy 1:5). Contract faith is "I'll follow God if life is fair, but when it's not I will seek support elsewhere."

Genuine faith, however, is anchored in Christ despite the brazen unfairness of life. "*For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day*" (2 Timothy 1:12).

The greatest illustration of life's unfairness is in Calvary. The sinless died for sinners—the innocent was beaten, spat upon, cursed and mocked, and there was nothing fair in that. Consider Paul's profound observation: "*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation*," (Romans 5:6-11).

Every Christian savors the benefits of the death of our precious Savior—but there was nothing fair about His death. As Pilate said: "*I find no fault in Him*."

So, the next time you feel a tinge of anger, or disappointment with God, take your eyes off the unfairness of life and focus on Calvary.

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