

Question: Sometimes I get so discouraged with life that I find myself questioning God's ways in the world. Isn't it wrong to question God?

To question God's ways with a spirit of defiance as if we know better than he does is foolish arrogance. As the prophet Isaiah said, "Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?'" (Isaiah 45:9 NIV). However, throughout the Bible we often see how the Lord God has graciously accepted the questions and doubts of his people in their confusion and pain. His response primarily depends on our attitude and approach to questioning him.

The reasons for not questioning God are based on his infinite power and wisdom as opposed to our limited ability to understand the world and life. A maker understands how that which he has made can best function. As creator of all things in our vast universe, God knows things that all of our scientific investigation will never discover. The letter to the Romans proclaims: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 'Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?' 'Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen" (Romans 11:33-36).

On the other hand, the Bible often tells us about confused and hurting people crying out to God for an explanation of things happening in their lives. A majority of the Psalms are "complaints" of God's people, in discouragement, questioning God's ways and seeking understanding and help. For example, the author of Psalm 13 cried out: "How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? (Psalm 13:1-4).

Job also questioned God's ways as he faced severe physical and emotional pain. He questioned why God had even bothered to make him (Job 10:18). Why God hid his face? (Job 13:24). Why the wicked lived so long and became so powerful? (Job 217). Why did God not respond to Job's anguish? (Job 33:13). At one point, Job cried out: "Even today my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. If only I

knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments” (Job 23:1-4). Job was mistaken in some of his preliminary conclusions, but God did not chastise him for his questioning of this situation in life. No, it is not always wrong to question God. He can handle our frustration, confusion and discouragement.

When you have questions about God and his ways in our world consider that our unanswered questions does not mean there are no answers. In fact, our cries to God may bring a much needed opportunity for him to help us in ways not possible otherwise. Our Lord God may not give the answers because we are incapable of understanding. He did not answer Job’s “why” questions. However, God did reassure Job by directing attention to his works of creation. By observing God’s handiwork and care for animals, Job was able to see reasons to trust God’s power, wisdom and goodness (Job 38-41). Like Job, we need to maintain an attitude of faith in God’s wisdom even when we can’t understand. This is one reason the writers of the Psalms followed their complaints and questions with statements of trust in the Lord (Psalm 13:5-6).

Don’t be afraid to question God with honesty in your heart. But always be ready to listen for his answer and learn how to trust him even in the most difficult circumstances in life. Our God is faithful. In his wisdom, he may not always give what we ask; but he will never forsake us (Hebrews 12:5). He will be patient as long as we are genuine with him.

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