

Lesson Five: Trusting God's Sovereignty

Why did a loving God allow this to happen?

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In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will. ~Ephesians 1: 11

Trust: Confidence in God's character; reliance on His promises even when doubts assail us.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40: 13-14; 28-31; & Romans 11: 33-36

The Ten Attributes of God

1. **My God is sovereign: (The Providence of God)** [*Pro-video*]: **God sees beforehand.** "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'" ~Isaiah 46: 10
2. **My God is righteous:** "The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works." ~Psalm 145: 17
3. **My God is just:** "He is the Rock; His work is perfect; For all His ways are just." ~Deuteronomy 32: 4
4. **My God is immutable.** "For I am the LORD; I do not change." ~Malachi 3:6
5. **My God is love.** "And we have known and believe the love God has for us." ~I John 4: 16
6. **My God is eternal life.** "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish." ~John 10: 28
7. **My God is omnipresent.** "The eyes of the Lord are in every place." ~Proverbs 15: 3
8. **My God is omniscient:** "Lord, You know all things." ~John 21: 17
9. **My God is omnipotent:** "Great is our Lord and mighty in power." ~Psalm 147: 5
10. **My God is truth.** "Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'" ~John 14: 6

God has ordered His universe so that it revolves around His beloved Son Jesus Christ—not around us and our desires. We are not the center of our universe. Jesus Christ is. Too often, we want the preeminence. But Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. May we honor Him as the Center of our lives.

For by Him all things are created . . . He is before all things . . . and in Him all things are held together (Colossians 1: 16). From beginning to end, Jesus Christ is preeminent—surpassing all others.

Trusting God's sovereignty and Christ's preeminence keeps us from drowning in self-pity. Since our times are in God's hand, we are not under the control of our circumstances. Every moment of every day is in the hand of God. God is greater than our circumstances.

Unrealistic expectations can lead to disappointment with God. Disappointment means "not as appointed" or "not as planned." We think we know what a good God should do. At times, it appears that God doesn't care, even though He tells us that He is good. We are disappointed not because God or people failed us as much as we hoped life would deliver only what eternity can. Trusting God in the midst of our pain and heartache means that we accept trials from Him—not with resignation or reluctance. We trust God because He loves us and knows what is best for us. God knows we don't understand His sovereign ways, at times, so He lovingly protects us by telling us what we need to know as seen in His Word.

Ephesians 1: 11: *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1: 11). Paul's words give us a perspective on God's sovereignty. **God not only rules but rules over everything for us.** God's rule is redemptive. Jesus is the most convincing argument that God cares for you. He has promised to be with you in your sufferings. We don't often see God's direct intervention -where God is working behind the scenes through our circumstances and actions of people—which is the way God typically works. **You have eternal life with Christ, and everything you go through now is tied to that reality.** Jesus Christ will reign as the King of all, and you and I will reign with Him. "We no longer live for ourselves but for Him Who died and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5: 14-15).*

Jeremiah's Story: A Handbook of Hope: *For I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. And you shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:11 & 13).*

Job's Story (Chapters 1-42): *I know that You can do all things; no plan of Yours can be thwarted (Job 42: 2). Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him (Job 13: 15).*

I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth (Job 19: 25).

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

Joseph's Story (Genesis Chapters 37-50): *But as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good. (Genesis 50:20). "Evil" in this verse means "to weave." Even though Satan wove evil, God rewove it for good. Satan weaves; God reweaves.*

Carol's Story: *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8: 28). I think this truth settles the matter. Not one circumstance can touch me except with God's knowledge and by His permission. It may be the sin of someone else that originates the action, but by the time it reaches me, it has become God's will for me, and must be accepted as directly from Him. **God's love is being perfected in me (The Secret of His Love: I John 4:12-19).** I need not fear. Nothing can touch me without first passing through God's loving hands and receiving His seal of approval.*

Trusting God's sovereignty is not a matter of my feelings but of my will. I never feel like trusting God when trials strike, but I can choose to do so even when I don't feel like it. We may not understand all of God's purposes and ways, but that isn't important. Know that He is working all things together for your good and His glory, and that is all that matters. **That decision is based upon the object of our trust, the Lord Jesus Christ and His love for us.** Remember: He proved His love for you at Calvary. We honor God by choosing to trust Him when we don't understand what He is doing, or why He has allowed some adverse circumstance to occur.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him . . . There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear (I John 4: 16 & 18).

Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? ~Abraham (Genesis 18: 25)

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms ~Moses (Deuteronomy 3: 27).

In perplexities—when we cannot tell what to do, when we cannot understand what is going on around us—let us be calmed and steadied and made patient by the thought that what is hidden from us is not hidden from Him. ~Frances Ridley Havergal

Study Questions

1. Read **Job 38:1-42:6**. Note God's many questions to Job. What shall we make of this exchange between God and Job regarding God's character?
2. Read **Isaiah 40:12-31**. What encouragement can you find in these verses on God's sovereignty and greatness? **Write verses 28 & 29.**
3. Read **Ephesians 1: 22-23**. **Write the verses.** What does Paul write regarding Christ as the exalted Head of His body, the Church?
4. The Christian life is to be a daily experience of growing in the love of God. How can a believer know that her love for the Father is being perfected? Read **I John 4: 12-19**. **Write verses 17-18.**

Reflection Questions

5. What does God's sovereignty and Christ's preeminence mean to you?
6. List three fears you have about the future. After each one, write: "*God is in control.*"
7. In what ways do **you** identify with Joseph's story?