

## Why Did This Happen, God?

LYSA TERKEURST

*"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:12-13 (NIV)*

Has God ever hurt your feelings? I'll be honest, sometimes I'll read those verses from Philippians in our key verse and think to myself: *This is a tough pill to swallow.*

*Content in any and every situation?*

*Really?*

When my middle daughter, Ashley, was younger, she was a state champion gymnast. To see her do gymnastics was like looking at God smile. She was beautiful, graceful and captivating to watch.

Then one night while practicing for one of the largest tournaments she'd ever competed in, she fell. It was a move she'd done hundreds of times with the greatest of ease. But this time something went terribly wrong and that one mistake destroyed her gymnastic dreams.

We spent a year going from doctor to doctor, only to be told she'd never be able to support the weight of her body on her injured shoulder again.

I'll be honest ... this was a tough pill to swallow. Watching a 14-year-old girl wrestle with the fact that her dreams were stripped from her doesn't exactly lend itself to feelings of contentment. Now, I know in the grand scheme of life, people face much worse situations. But in her world, this was huge.

It was so tempting to want to wallow in the "why" questions and tell God He'd hurt our feelings.

*Why did this happen?*

*Why didn't You stop this, God?*

*Why weren't my prayers answered?*

Have you ever been there? Have you ever had a big situation in your life where you just couldn't process why God would allow this to happen? Maybe it's one of your young children having behavioral issues that seems crazy complicated and daunting. Or one of your older children having issues with addictions and devastating life choices. Or your husband being distant or possibly even destructive in making choices that are harming your marriage. Or another year of singleness that brings you wave after wave of grief, while watching others celebrating the gift of true love.

It's so tempting to wallow in the "why."

Asking why is perfectly normal. Asking why isn't unspiritual. However, if asking this question pushes us further from God rather than drawing us closer to Him, it is the wrong question.

If asking the why question doesn't offer hope, what will?

*The what question.*

In other words: "Now that this is my reality, what am I supposed to do with it?"

**Philippians 4:8** says, "Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things."

I like to call this verse, "Directions on Where to Park My Mind."

And that's exactly what Ashley had to do with her dashed gymnastics dreams. Instead of wallowing in why did this happen, I've had to help her say:

*This is my reality. Now what am I going to do with it?*

*What can I learn from this?*

*What part of this is for my protection?*

*What other opportunities could God be providing?*

*What maturity could God be building into me?*

Switching from the why to the what questions paves the road to parking our minds in a much better place.

Is it always easy? No.

But is it a way to find a perspective beyond situations where we feel God has allowed something in our lives we don't understand and we absolutely don't like?

Yes, it is, and I pray this helps you today. Because even if our circumstances aren't good, we can trust God's purpose always is.

*Dear Lord, I want to process everything I face in life through the filter of Your love. I know You love me. But sometimes it's just hard to understand the circumstances that come my way. I find myself consumed with trying to figure things out rather than looking for Your perspective and trusting You. Thank You for this new way to look at things. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

#### **TRUTH FOR TODAY:**

**Isaiah 55:8-9**, "'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.'" (NIV)

**Philippians 4:8**, "Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things." (NIV)