



## GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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Subject: Love

# QUESTIONING GOD'S GOODNESS

*Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. Job 13:15, NKJV*

Afflictions come to us in all sizes and shapes. I am thinking of two individuals in particular--one of whom sustained brain damage in a sports injury and then faced a life-long physical impairment, and another who has grown bitter over the loss of a baby girl found dead in her crib. Both of them talk of God's love. The first speaks of it as a comfort and a strength; the other as an obstacle--"How could God really love us and allow this to happen?" In one case the injury drove him to God; in the other, it drove her away from God.

Roy Zuck wrestled with the trauma of tragedy and the love of God when his daughter was injured in an automobile accident. After sixteen operations Zuck wrote, "Affliction comes in various forms. It may be disease, divorce, death or surgery. Sometimes it means confinement to a wheelchair, prison cell, or nursing home. If you have faced any of these or other troubles, you may have cried, "God why me? How can a good God allow suffering to come to me—or to anyone, for that matter?"

What do you do when you begin really to question the goodness and love of God for you as an individual? Grow bitter? Withdraw from the scene or avoid the issue? Face schizophrenia of belief when you say certain things (you use the language) but inwardly doubt the goodness of God?

Based on the e-mail and letters that have come to our office over a period of many years, I have noticed that three issues cause us to doubt the love of God. 1. Suffering which we feel God could stop if He loved us, or, He cannot love us if He could prevent suffering and does not. 2. Injustice in the world. 3. Prayers which are unanswered according to our specifications. What do you do when you wrestle with the issue?

**Guideline #1: Realize that God loves you unconditionally--regardless of your feelings or your emotions.**

Though you may not feel it or believe it, the writers of Scripture state His love and goodness as a fact.

**Guideline #2: Strive to understand the reason behind your argument with God's goodness and love.**

Three individuals have faced these issues and have come forth with books that have dealt with the question at length. Perhaps their names will ring a bell as you search for an answer for yourself. They are: C. S. Lewis, author of *The Problem of Pain*; Edith Schaeffer, who wrote *Affliction*; and, Phil Yancey, author of *Where Is God When It Hurts?* These, along with me and scores of others, have come to understand that there is profit in pain and that there is gain from grief.

When you are hurting, a theological or philosophical answer does not quite ring the bell. For me to tell you that suffering is the result of the Fall, when man turned his back on God, does not assuage the anguish or the pain that you are undergoing. It does not restore your confidence in a God who is good and who loves you.

**Guideline #3: Trust God's heart when you cannot see God's hand.** In time you may come to view the issue which troubles you as did Dr. C.E.M. Joad of the University of London. It was the suffering of World War 2 that troubled Joad when it came to a loving, just God. As he viewed the suffering of the concentration camps, he reasoned that the suffering and injustice of the world only demonstrated that an opposite had to exist, and that opposite, he finally came to believe, was a loving and just God. And when He came to know God, peace finally filled his heart, just as it can yours. Knowing Him takes away the need to know exactly why some things happened because you become assured He is in charge no matter what happens.

(Resource reading: Job 42)