

# AlbertMohler.com

## Is it Legitimate to Question God?

Wednesday, November 12, 2008

A recent caller to my radio program raised an issue of obvious personal urgency. He explained that he and his wife had recently experienced the death of a young child. He spoke of his faith in Christ and of his desire to be obedient. “But, can we question God?” he asked.

Of all possible tragedies, the death of a child is singularly horrific. The caller did not relate details of this tragedy, but we all heard enough to feel the unspeakable grief experienced by this young Christian couple. Do they have a right to question God?

It seems to me that the answer is both yes and no. Beginning with the biblical affirmation that God is omnipotent and omniscient, sovereign and ever-reigning, we start with the understanding that whatever comes to pass does so by the express command, ordination, or permission of the Father. Thus, the Creator is at all times responsible for his creation — and for his creatures.

So, is it legitimate to question God?

Perhaps we should consider how God has revealed himself to us as Father. Considering a human father for a moment, we can recognize two different ways of questioning his ways. The first way would be to rest secure in his love and fatherly care, but to express confusion over his ways. Even the most faithful and trusting children wonder about their parents at times. What are they up to? Why did they make that decision rather than the other? What was the purpose of that action? As close as children are to parents, parents often perplex children by acting like adults. In this mode of questioning, the child never questions the father’s love and faithful disposition, but does admit confusion — and perhaps even disappointment.

The other way of questioning a human father is to question his character, his faithfulness, or the authenticity of his love. This is an altogether different mode of questioning. In this second pattern of questioning, the child questions the father’s heart, not merely his actions and ways.

Now, move from considering these two different modes of questioning a human father to a parallel set of approaches to questioning our heavenly Father. It is not unfaithful to admit and to articulate a sense of perplexity and pain in observing the ways of God. There are times when we cannot offer an explanation of God’s ways. At times, we cannot even detect any possibility of a purpose. We can admit this to ourselves, to our brothers and sisters in Christ, and to our heavenly Father.

The other mode of questioning God, on the other hand, constitutes sin and implies unbelief. We cannot remain faithful and question God’s own faithfulness. His love for those who are in Christ is beyond question. His character is a constant and his love never fails. He is not loving and gracious toward believers at one moment, only to turn into a malevolent deity the next. He never changes.

In this light, it would be sin to question God in this second sense — the sense in which we might question whether God really loves us, or if He is really faithful to his promises. This is not the questioning worthy of a believer, but of an



unbeliever.

In Numbers 23:19 we read: “God is not a man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has He spoken, and will he not fulfill it?” To question God’s faithfulness is to assault his character. Finite human beings are incapable of understanding the wisdom of God, except when that wisdom is mediated to us through the miracle of revelation. We are not promised that all of our questions will be answered on earth.

We are promised, however, that on the Day of the Lord every believer’s eyes will be dry, and every tear will be wiped away. We will understand all things in a transformed light. We will know in a fully revealed sense what it means when we are promised that nothing can separate us from the love of God. On that day will not be God’s interrogators or questioners, but worshipers who will see him face to face.

Is it legitimate for a believer to question God? Yes and no. Even the Apostle Paul admitted to being perplexed [2 Corinthians 4:8], but by his own affirmation he was not crushed. We have no right to question the steadfast love of God for us, however, because this insinuates that God is either unable nor unwilling to keep his word. As the Bible reveals, He is neither unable or unwilling. He is ever faithful, even as his ways are “past finding out” [Romans 11:33].

One day, we will be beyond asking any questions about God’s ways. Until then, it may help to remember that even the Apostle Paul was sometimes perplexed. Perplexed, that is, but not unfaithful.

---

Content Copyright © 2002-2010, R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

