



Spirit of Grace Herald

THE MINISTRY OF DENNIS
& BENEDICTA POLLOCK

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What is God After?

A common dilemma for Christians has to do with why God does not immediately answer our personal prayers for relief from major suffering. As His children, we know we are loved by God, we know we are the apple of His eye, we know that He cares deeply for us. And yet sometimes we find that even in our most heart-crushing experiences, there is seemingly no response, or at least no immediate response, when we cry to our Heavenly Father for deliverance. And why should we be going through all of this anyway? Surely God saw what was coming, and could have headed it off through divine intervention. Why did He just sit back and allow things to come to this?

We must recognize that God's primary objective for His children is *not* a pain-free, stress-free, struggle-free life, but rather that they might be conformed to the nature of His Son Jesus Christ, and pain, difficulties, and struggles are some of His chief tools in bringing this about. The Bible tells us:

-)] **Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Hebrews 12:11).**
-)] **We also glory in tribulations, knowing**

that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:3,4).

-)] **Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings... (1 Peter 4:12, 13).**

Tough Love

Imagine seeing a five-year-old little boy in the store with his mother. He sees a candy bar and immediately asks her to buy it for him. Momma, knowing that they will shortly eat dinner, and recognizing that the sugar in that candy is hardly the best thing for her son, tells him no. The boy asks again, this time in a louder voice, "Momma, buy me this candy." Again Momma tells his no.

Now he really loses it and stomps his feet, screaming at the top of his lungs, "Momma, you must buy me this candy – if not, I hate you!"

How shall Momma respond? What would you think of Momma if she immediately backed down and said in an apologetic tone, "I'm sorry, my sweet little boy. Of course I will buy you the candy." Any mother who responded that way to such a hateful, selfish, demanding request would be guilty of a form of child abuse. She would be working effectively to turn her son into a monster who will grow up to be selfish, abusive, egotistical, uncaring, and who will experience a lifetime of

broken relationships and failed jobs.

A wise mother would not only refuse to buy her son the candy, but would apply a little discipline that involved the sting of pain. This would serve as a wise counselor to the little fellow for future reference. She would apply this discipline and administer some pain-therapy, i.e. a spanking, not because she hates her son, but because she loves her son. But in her mature love for her little boy, she prefers that he experience temporary pain in the present, in order that he might experience far less pain and suffering in the years to come.



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God is not so different. The Bible says, "He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly" (Proverbs 13:24). **So the answer to the question: "How can a loving God allow His children to experience pain and struggle?" is "very easily."** He does not enjoy seeing us suffer, but sometimes He knows that a dose of pain in the present may provide a remedy for more severe pain in the future. Sometimes the pain is a chastening for our disobedience, but at other times, it is simply a divine training course to produce maturity and patience in the lives of His children.

NEXT MONTH — MISSION TANZANIA



We have scheduled a mission in Tanzania in October. As we normally do, we will be preaching the gospel of Christ in an outdoors venue in the evenings, and teaching believers the fundamentals of the Christian faith in the mornings.

After our last mission we shared with you about how we had incurred debt from unpaid flight bills. **Thanks to the loving generosity of our partners, we have been able to pay that debt, Praise the Lord!** This has freed us to plan this October mission.

Our budget is approximately ten thousand dollars for this mission, and at present we need that entire amount to be able to cover our expenses, and not go into any debt this time. Your designated contributions toward this mission are vital. Please pray about joining with us, and sending us a generous check (or contributing through our website) to help us with this outreach.

We preach in Africa because God's great program of the gospel is for all people. Jesus declared: **"Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."**

Please pray about partnering with us in our mission toward the people of the continent of Africa.

And don't forget to pray for us, and for this mission!

Thanks for caring!