

The Power Behind
Anger Resolution

**Understanding Why God
Lets Things Happen**

Session Four

The importance of asking the question:

Why Did God Let It Happen?

The Tragic Death of a Son

A pastor and his family developed a genuine love for the Russian people and decided to travel there to minister in whatever ways they could. In order to raise the needed support, they arranged for meetings in churches. After the first Sunday morning service in which they told about their plans, their three-year-old boy excitedly ran across the street and was hit by a speeding car. All efforts to save his life failed, and he died.

This pastor was asked, "Why do you think God allowed your son to be killed, especially when you were trying to serve God?" He gave a stoic response, "We don't question why, we just trust God and go on." After further discussion, however, the pastor faced this question and was able to see potential benefits that were beyond anything he had imagined. At the funeral, he shared these benefits with the grieving family and friends, who were given fresh hope and courage by his words.

In contrast to the response of this pastor is that of another father. His little boy was also killed in a car accident. After a time of shock, grief, and sorrow, he became bitter at God, and because he could not understand why a loving God would let his innocent son be killed, he rejected the faith that he claimed.

An Unjust _____¹

A famine became so severe that a father dispatched his sons to a neighboring country where grain was available. What started out to be a routine shopping trip ended up with these sons being falsely accused of being spies and then put in prison. Their pleas of innocence went unheeded, and their efforts to exonerate themselves only resulted in further charges and greater grief to their father. It is obvious that they asked this question:

"Why is this distress come upon us?"

After this question was posed, they came up with the right answer, and as a result, they were freed from prison and given provisions and gifts. The significance of this account is that the answer was not directly related to the present event but actually went back to a previous injustice they had committed, and now they were able to see the connection between past sowing and present reaping. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (Genesis 42:21).

The _____² of a Nation

After David became king of Israel, God brought a grievous famine upon the land. The famine lasted year after year for three years. Finally David asked the Lord why He was letting the famine happen. It is significant that it took David three years to ask the question, but as soon as he asked it, God explained the cause of the famine. "It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites" (II Samuel 21:1).

David could have said, "But that was under Saul's administration, and I had nothing to do with it." Yet, by inheriting the throne, he inherited the outstanding liabilities that went with the administration.

The _____³ of Tumors

A deadly plague of tumors broke out among the men of the Philistine city of Ashdod. The people obviously asked the question, “Why is this happening?” They recognized the connection between the tumors and the presence of the ark of the Lord, which they had taken in battle from the nation of Israel. Therefore, they sent the ark to a neighboring Philistine city, and a major outbreak of tumors also occurred there.

The men of this city quickly concluded that the presence of the ark of God had brought on this great evil. They decided to “give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand” (see I Samuel 6:1–9).

God further confirmed the cause of their tumors and the instruction of their priests by making the oxen that were carrying the ark go back to Israel by a certain route.

A _____⁴ “Thorn”

The Apostle Paul experienced a “thorn in the flesh” that was so distracting and grievous that he earnestly prayed on three different occasions that God would remove it from him. He probably asked the question, Why have You given this to me when I am working so hard to advance Your kingdom? When God answered that question, Paul was able to turn a weakness into a strength.

Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. . . . And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me (II Corinthians 12:7–9).

Reasons to Know Why Things Happen

1. To know how _____⁵ together for good

God is sovereign, and nothing happens in His universe without His approval. Not even a sparrow can fall to the ground against His permissive will. (See Matthew 10:29.) What is even better is that He makes sure everything happens for the good of those who love Him. This is true even if what happens looks like a tragedy at the beginning, because God writes last chapters, and He knows how it is all going to come out.

When Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, it looked like an evil thing that had happened and, in fact, they meant it as such. But years later, Joseph said to his brothers, “Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” (Genesis 50:20).

If we have God’s assurance that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28), we have a significant starting point from which to discern why He lets things happen.

2. To _____⁶ that happens to us

In order to thank God for all the things that happen to us, we must exercise our wills, but we are also instructed to rejoice in all things. This is an act of the spirit and depends upon our understanding of why we are rejoicing. Thus we must ask these questions: How

will this tragedy work out for good? How will God's promise, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end," (Jeremiah 29:11) take on special meaning?

By discovering specific benefits of each unwanted event in our lives, we can sincerely rejoice in that event.

3. To _____⁷ after Him

God designed mankind to have fellowship with Him. Fellowship requires an agreement of spirit and an intimate understanding of each other's ways. God certainly knows our ways, but He wants us to understand His ways.

This is no small task, as explained by God in Isaiah 55:8: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

God does not want us to be ignorant of His ways; therefore, we have the prayer of David, "Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths" (Psalm 25:4).

Jesus said to His disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). For this understanding, believers are given the mind of Christ. (See I Corinthians 2:16.)

Attitudes Necessary for Understanding

Not everyone will understand why God allows things, especially tragedies, to happen. Those who understand must have certain attitudes and outlooks. These attitudes preclude false ideas that lead to disillusionment and bitterness. They prepare the heart and mind to think with wisdom and respond with joy.

1. Develop a spirit of _____⁸.

Jesus begins His discourse of the blessed person with the quality of humility. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). God uses the mind-set of a child to demonstrate the proper kind of humility. (See Matthew 18:4.) He explains how such an outlook helps one know why things happen. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matthew 11:25).

2. Learn the _____⁹.

To know the mind of God and why He does things requires wisdom, and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The spontaneous response of being in the presence of God is humility, and the fear of the Lord is the continuous awareness that we actually are in the presence of God. To fear the Lord is also to hate evil, pride, and arrogance. Thus, those who fear the Lord will mourn over their sin and grieve over their violations of God's ways.

3. Have a _____¹⁰.

A meek person is one who yields his rights to God and brings all his actions under God's control. This attribute of emptying self is what Jesus used to describe Himself. "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29).

With this attitude, He understood all that the Father did. God promises the same understanding to us if we have meekness. "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalm 25:9).

4. Use _____¹¹.

A person will naturally respond to events from a human perspective and may become disillusioned and discouraged. However, a spiritually discerning person will have a different response because he will see things from God's perspective. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness and seek God with a whole heart will develop spiritual discernment and understanding. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14).

5. Know _____¹².

The ways of God are summarized in His commandments, and those who love His commandments will not only be wise to know His ways but will demonstrate a love for the Lord, which He will reward by revealing more of His love and His ways. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (John 14:21).

6. _____¹³ your heart.

It is only the pure in heart who will understand why God does some of the things He does. God requires this condition of the heart before He shares the secrets of His heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God [they shall see as God sees]" (Matthew 5:8).

7. Be a _____¹⁴.

A peacemaker is one who brings the natural inclinations of man into harmony with the holy standards of God. This is possible only through a transformation of the heart by the power of God through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. A peacemaker sees the bigger picture and has the goal of helping others share his perspective so that in the midst of disasters they can say with Job, "The LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).

Concepts to Understand the Ways of God

In addition to having the right attitudes to understand the ways of God, we must also have the right concepts of God. The concepts of God relate to the way He made things and how they are to function in harmony with His larger purposes.

1. God _____¹⁵ us in His image—spirit, soul, and body.

During the creation of the world, God said, “Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1:26). This is a direct reference to the triune God. Each member of the Godhead has specific functions. Similarly, there are three distinct parts of our being: the spirit, soul, and body—each with a specific function.

- **The _____¹⁶ communicates with the Spirit of God.**

The human spirit is at the heart of one’s being and has the capacity to communicate with the Spirit of God as well as with the spirits of other people. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (I Corinthians 2:11). The spirit is the home of qualities such as wisdom, faith, joy, peace, creativity, conscience, discernment, and spiritual energy.

- **The spirit also communicates with the _____¹⁷.**

The Greek word for *soul* is *psuche*. It relates to the mind, will, and emotions. With the soul, one is able to communicate with the souls of other people. The soul is also able to respond to God under the leadership of His Spirit in us. (See Psalm 42:5.)

- **The body houses the soul and is intended to be controlled by the spirit.**

The human body is like a tabernacle that contains the treasures of the soul and the spirit. The physical senses of taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell have the primary function of protecting us from things that will damage the soul or the spirit. The secondary function of our physical senses—pleasure—is to be under the control of the soul and the spirit because the body of a believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

If we defile that temple with sensual pleasure, there will be severe consequences. Even with proper care, the physical body will wear out and die. Yet, if one lives in harmony with the Lord, the inward spirit will be strengthened as the outward body deteriorates. “Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (II Corinthians 4:16).

2. We can experience _____¹⁸ and _____¹⁹ at the same time.

When tragedies take place in our lives, it seems unrealistic to think that we can have joy at the same time that we are grieved and in deep sorrow. In reality, both joy and sorrow can be experienced at the same time, because joy is a function of the spirit and sorrow is an expression of the soul.

Paul had continual sorrow because the nation of Israel had rejected their Messiah. At the very same time, he had abounding joy because of the growth in the lives of the Gentile believers. (See Romans 9:2, Philippians 4:1.)

- **A weakened _____²⁰ can result in a stronger spirit.**

3. God's ways are _____²¹ to our natural inclinations.

God warns, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). Because of the tendency to act foolishly, we are not to lean upon our own understanding. (See Proverbs 3:5-6.) The ways of God seem like foolishness to man, but in reality, the natural tendency of man is foolishness in the sight of God. (See I Corinthians 1:25.) The life that wins, therefore, becomes a paradox.

- By _____²² ourselves, we are exalted.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Peter 5:6).

- By _____²³ to ourselves, we discover life.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:25).

- By _____²⁴ generously, we receive much.

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (II Corinthians 9:6).

- By _____²⁵, we are leaders.

"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11).

4. All believers are _____²⁶ (blood covenant).

When a person is born again by the Holy Spirit of God, that person becomes a living member of the spiritual Body of Christ. God uses the analogy of the body because every cell and every member have important functions.

If one member is damaged, the entire body is affected. Therefore, we are to look out for the welfare of each other and edify one another to the mutual benefit of the whole body. Each member of the body is given a particular spiritual gift, and that gift must be developed and used for the strengthening of the whole body.

Sometimes things happen to us in order to alert us to spiritual needs in another part of Christ's Body. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Corinthians 6:19).

5. The things we own _____²⁷.

Ownership carries with it responsibilities. Therefore, a worthy goal of our lives is to "own" as little as necessary so that possessions do not hinder the purposes for which God made us. Paul understood this concept very well and stated, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8).

Based on the goal to not be encumbered, God encourages us to dedicate all our goods to Him, so that we are stewards of His resources, rather than owners of our possessions.

6. Satan's activity is _____²⁸.

When bad things happen to us, we are inclined to say that Satan is responsible for them. This may be true, because death and destruction came into God's creation through the deception of Satan. However, Satan is not stronger than God, and he is able to go only as far as God allows him to go.

This fact is clearly illustrated in Satan's dealings with Job. Satan had to get permission from God for whatever he did, and though God gave permission, He also set limitations that Satan could not exceed. It is on this basis that Job was able to say, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21) and Paul was able to view the messenger of Satan as a means of God's grace. (See II Corinthians 12:7.)

Even in the transgressions of people against us, God allows only that which accomplishes His bigger purposes. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).

7. God _____²⁹ for the physical damage He allows.

When God allows a person to experience physical loss or pain, His goal is to compensate for it with spiritual power and gain. The following points are examples of this compensation.

- **If we lose an earthly father, God becomes a special Father to us.**

God is a "father of the fatherless" (Psalm 68:5).

- **If we suffer trouble, we can give spiritual health to others.**

"So then death worketh in us, but life in you" (II Corinthians 4:10-12).

- **If God allows us to be poor, God can make us rich in faith.**

"Hath not God chosen the poor of this world [to be] rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom . . . ?" (James 2:5).

Why Does God Allow Sexual Abuse?

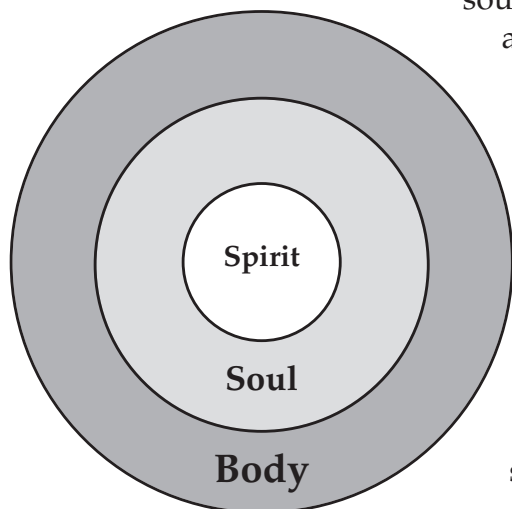
One of the great tragedies in life is sexual abuse. Unfortunately, it is not a new phenomenon, since it is one of the consequences of the Fall of man. God gives severe judgment to those who violate His moral laws. But what about the victims? What possible benefit could they experience from such abuse? The following account provides a framework for applying Biblical concepts.

The Man in Two Prisons

After the Basic Youth Conflicts Seminar was presented in a prison, many of the prisoners had questions about how the principles they had learned could be applied to specific situations. One prisoner presented the following situation.

When I was growing up, my father brought a man into our house who sexually abused my brother and me. We told our father what he had done, but our father chose to do nothing about it. My brother and I became very bitter toward this man and our father. I finally left home and have had many serious problems in life, which eventually brought me here to the prison. How can I conquer my bitterness?

This prisoner was asked to consider three circles. The inner circle represented his spirit, the middle circle his soul, and the outer circle his body. He was then asked the following questions.



“What is the most important part of your being—your spirit, soul, or body?” He replied, “My spirit.” That was a correct answer, and he was then asked, “What is the next most important part of your being?” He replied, “My soul.” This also was correct. Finally he was asked, “What is the least important part of your being?” He answered, “My body.”

It was then pointed out to him that the abusive man had damaged the least important part of his being and that God would judge him for that. However, the prisoner’s bitterness and lack of forgiveness were damaging the most important parts of his being, leaving him in an emotional prison and at the same time not really affecting the one who hurt him.

Next, the question was asked, “Why do you suppose God allowed this to happen to you?” He quickly responded, “That is exactly what I want to know.” It was explained to him that God could have created man to automatically love Him and always do His will. This would have removed evil from the world, and we would not have damaging experiences such as the one he had described. However, God is love, and the nature of love requires a choice. When wrong choices are made, there are consequences, and there are often victims of those consequences.

However, when wrong choices are made, God turns the offenses into benefits if the victim properly responds to them. The powerful potential of the spirit was then explained to this prisoner, and he was asked the following question. “If you had the choice of an undamaged body and an average spirit, or a damaged body and a far more powerful spirit, which would you choose?” He quickly responded that he would choose to have the more powerful spirit. It was then pointed out to him that this is one of the compensations God has for those who are physically abused, but who forgive their offenders.

A clear example of this was Daniel. While Daniel experienced the severe sexual abuse of being made a eunuch, he excelled in spirit as God gave him an unusual measure of wisdom and spiritual understanding. (See Daniel 5:12, Isaiah 39:7.)

Prerequisites for This Power

The first prerequisite for experiencing God’s power is to dedicate your body to God for His service. When this important step is taken, the victim of abuse is able to be more objective by saying, “God, my body belongs to You, and therefore, they damaged Your body.” The prisoner mentioned above was eager to take this step, which is explained in Romans 12:1–2.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The second prerequisite is to fully forgive the offender and ask God to have mercy on him as well. This was the response of Jesus when He died an excruciating death on the cross. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Since Christ was killed for our transgressions, His final appeal for God's mercy benefited all of us.

When Stephen was being stoned to death, he cried out, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). His forgiveness and appeal for God's mercy was effectual for Paul, who was one of those who assisted in Stephen's death by holding the garments of those who threw the stones. Because of Stephen's suffering and his forgiving spirit, all believers have benefited from Paul's subsequent ministry to the Gentiles, which includes his epistles.

Basic Questions to Determine Why God Let It Happen

1. Will it produce _____³⁰ so I can receive more grace?

The very nature of the Christian life is to walk before God in humility. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). God hates pride and brings quick and severe judgment to those who have it. He gave us the ultimate example of humility by laying aside the glory and majesty of His heavenly position and coming into the world as a helpless Baby. Though He is the King of Kings, He was born in a stable and grew up in a city that was despised in His day.

He instructs all of us to humble ourselves so that we can represent His nature and so that He can exalt us in due season. If we fail to humble ourselves, He will use other people and situations to accomplish this necessary objective.

The reward of humility is receiving more of God's grace so that we have the desire and the power to do God's will. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5).

2. Will it develop more _____³¹?

We are told in the first chapter of James to welcome trials and tribulations as friends, rather than intruders, because those trials are designed to build our faith and develop Godly character qualities in us. We are to let this process go on until the character of Christ is fully developed in us. Therefore, when things happen to us, we should go through a list of Godly character qualities and identify the ones that are needed for a right response. Some obvious ones might be patience, gratefulness, endurance, wisdom, sensitivity, forgiveness, compassion, and joyfulness.

3. Will it fulfill God's _____³² or _____³³?

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6).

God uses the reproofs of life to chasten us and draw us back into fellowship with Him. If we fail to recognize His reproofs and instead react to them, we will only set ourselves up for greater discipline. "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1).

In discerning God's reproofs, we must be aware of the laws of the harvest: we reap what we sow, where we sow, more than we sow, and in a different season than we sow.

4. Will it equip me to _____^{34?}

The Great Commission will be fulfilled only as we become skilled and effective in making disciples. The ability to disciple others will be determined largely by how we can help others see God's ways in their trials and tribulations. Therefore, God gives us these experiences so that we can find His wisdom in them and pass it on to others.

God "comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:4).

5. Will it prepare me for _____^{35?}

David, Joseph, and others are examples of how the harsh treatments of those they served were actually preparations for future leadership. These individuals knew the pain of injustice and rejection, and therefore they were able to demonstrate kindness, compassion, wisdom, and justice to those under their jurisdictions.

6. Will it result in the _____^{36?}

One of the most important goals in the Christian life is to experience the power of God's love. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love]" (I Corinthians 13:13). The trials and tribulations that God allows in our lives are the means by which we experience genuine love. Therefore, "we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5).

7. Will it reveal _____^{37?}

Another goal of the Christian life is to have a greater knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was willing to suffer the loss of all earthly things in order to know Christ more intimately. He understood that this was possible only by entering into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. When Jesus suffered for us, He did not threaten or retaliate, but committed His soul to the righteous dealings of His heavenly Father. As we follow Christ's example, we grow in our knowledge of Him.

Why Does God Allow Financial Problems?

God created wealth, and it is He Who gives us power to get wealth. He also uses financial reverses as His discipline when His principles are violated. The financial pressures in the following list might have a relationship with the list of causes. Sometimes there is more than one cause, and in other cases, none of these causes may apply. They are simply presented as a personal checklist to help answer the question “Why did God let it happen?”

Financial Pressures

1. Personal assets devoured by depreciation, taxes, etc.
2. Riches being lost through unwise decisions, exorbitant interest, etc.
3. Little to show for great investments of time and energy in business ventures
4. Deterioration of home, landscaping, car, or other assets
5. Unexpected sorrows and grief because of painful circumstances
6. A sudden reversal in the amount of personal assets
7. Being in bondage to lenders
8. Major business pressures
9. A bad name and reputation
10. High insurance and fear of theft
11. Unexplainable financial problems
12. Not having sufficient money for food
13. Turmoil within the family
14. Not being able to get a job
15. Inability to make ends meet
16. Lack of success in business and life, in spite of much work and effort
17. Fervent prayer with no results
18. Public ridicule for running out of funds on a building development
19. Lack of God’s blessing on financial ventures and personal welfare

Possible Causes

- God may not rebuke the devourer over our resources if we fail to tithe—Malachi 3:10-11
- God reduces a man who is unfaithful in his marriage to a piece of bread—Proverbs 6:26
- Failure to honor parents—Ephesians 6:2-3
- Failure to demonstrate diligence and care in maintenance (slothfulness)—Proverbs 24:30-34
- Having a goal of becoming rich and storing up personal assets—I Timothy 6:10
- Involvement in financial schemes that offer quick riches—Proverbs 28:22
- Going into debt—Proverbs 22:7
- Partnerships and co-signing—Proverbs 6:1-5
- Withholding rightful wages—James 5:1-4
- Extravagant personal items—Matthew 6:19-21
- Cheating widows and fatherless—Proverbs 23:10-11
- Refusal to work (laziness)—Proverbs 20:4, 13
- Greed and taking bribes—Proverbs 15:27
- Lack of initiative and diligence—Proverbs 22:29
- Pride and no fear of God—Proverbs 22:4
- Failing to keep vows made to God, especially in marriage—Ecclesiastes 5:4-6
- Bitterness toward a wife—I Peter 3:7
- Lack of wise planning and counting on funds that never come through—Luke 14:28-30
- Having an attitude of getting rather than giving (being stingy)—Deuteronomy 15:1-10

Examples of Using This Approach

When a difficult situation occurs, our first response must be to thank God for it. Then we must ask the question, Why did God allow this to happen? At first, it might be difficult to think of any benefits, but by asking the right questions, we will soon be able to make a significant list of benefits that God intended if we respond in the right way. Here are some examples.

Why did God allow a loved one to die?

- To force us to consider eternity
- To give us an opportunity to witness
- To remind us of the brevity of life
- To motivate us to have a clear conscience
- To appreciate those who are living
- To comfort others who are sorrowing
- To better understand God's love
- To reevaluate our priorities

Why did God allow Joseph to suffer?

- To overcome attitudes of pride
- To develop a servant's spirit in him
- To train him to be faithful
- To prepare him for leadership
- To test him in moral purity
- To teach how to respond to false accusations
- To be an "energy-giver" in prison
- To teach him how guilty men think
- To prepare his brothers to repent
- To learn patience in God's timing

Why was I born with a defect?

- To conquer pride to obtain more grace
- To remind me that my body belongs to God
- To teach me to rely on God's approval vs. man's
- To teach me sensitivity and kindness
- To help me see my perfect condition in Christ
- To understand changeables vs. unchangeables
- To see my greater value in Christ's Body
- To help me concentrate on my spiritual gift

Why did God allow me to lose my job?

- To rely on the Lord rather than employers
- To seek "daily bread" vs. monthly checks
- To catch up on home repairs
- To develop frugality and resourcefulness
- To spend more time with the children
- To appreciate wife's home responsibilities
- To evaluate weaknesses on the job
- To learn grace in accepting help
- To consider many home-industry ideas
- To evaluate the possibility of relocating
- To build family unity in a struggle
- To engage in prayer and fasting
- To concentrate on spiritual leadership
- To sell unneeded items in garage sales
- To learn how to suffer need

Why did God allow my parents to divorce?

- To give me a new relationship with God Who is a Father to the fatherless
- To develop a forgiving spirit in me
- To help me see the seriousness of marriage vows
- To teach me new responsibilities
- To allow me to share in the sufferings of Christ
- To teach me how to honor both parents
- To develop a hatred of evil
- To teach me how to be a peacemaker
- To help me learn how to comfort others
- To increase my awareness of dependence on God
- To motivate me to learn how marriage should work
- To give caution in my choice of a life partner



How to Use This Approach to Resolve Anger

1. Make a list of the situations that cause you to get angry.

2. Find benefits for each cause of anger.

Example: Being falsely accused

Benefits of being falsely accused:

1. I can identify with Christ, Who was also falsely accused.
2. I can affirm my innocence by not responding with an angry spirit.
3. I can return good for the evil done to me and be rewarded by God.
4. I can calmly explain the facts to clear up any misunderstanding.
5. I can ask my accuser if I have offended him in any way.
6. I can develop a forgiving spirit toward my accuser.
7. I can patiently wait for God to vindicate my innocence.

Benefits of your situations:

- **We tend to get angry over the very incidents God designed for our spiritual benefit. Therefore, He instructs us to give thanks in all things and to rejoice in them. This initial response gives us an objective outlook.**

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11).