



Articles and Sermons :: Where are You, Lord?

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Where are You, Lord?

by Charles F. Stanley

Years ago, a friend of mine went to visit a couple in his congregation. Oil had been discovered in their neighborhood, and engineers had told the community that soon they would all be rich beyond their wildest dreams. The couple saw this as the hand of God and figured it was just a matter of time before oil was discovered on their land.

“Pastor,” the man told him, “it never happened. God has forgotten us. They discovered oil on both sides of our property and even on the lot behind us—but not a drop on our land. Our neighbors are selling their homes and moving into the city, but we are left out here alone.”

Do you ever wonder if God has abandoned you? One of the most frustrating things about Christianity is that the Father is often so quiet. There have been plenty of occasions when, after much weeping over a crisis affecting my own life or someone I love, just a word from the Lord would have been comforting—and yet He was silent.

To make matters worse, when we read the Bible, it seems as if God was always speaking to the men whose stories fill the pages. But it does not always work that way for us. The Lord’s silence makes adversity that much more difficult. That’s because our worldview includes a loving God who has presented Himself to us as a Father.

Sometimes adversity comes as a result of things over which you have no control. You did not pick your parents, yet you may be dealing with issues that stem from their problems. You may have lost a job over something that was not your fault at all. Maybe you did your best to respond to an impossible spouse, but that person chose to abandon you and your children.

Situations such as these prompt us to think, If there were a God in heaven, He would not sit idly while I suffer.

The Lord’s silence during our trials raises two basic questions. First, what in the world is God up to when we are hurting and need to hear from Him so desperately?

God’s silence in no way indicates a lack of divine activity in our lives. We are often guilty of judging our Father’s concern for us by how favorable or unfavorable our circumstances are. When adversity comes, we think, Lord, where are You? Why don’t You do something?

God’s involvement must be measured by two things: the development of our character and the fulfillment of His plan. Joseph spent about 13 years facing one difficulty after another. Yet because of those hardships, the Lord saved his family from starvation. Likewise, God uses adversity to accomplish His will in our lives.

Second, what are we to do in the meantime? The answer to that is simple, though not always easy: Trust God. If you are not going to trust Him, that means you’ll be taking matters into your own hands. Then you run the risk of making things worse.

You say, “But you don’t understand my circumstances.” And you may be right. But think about Joseph, who was sold as a slave and then thrown in prison unfairly. No friends, no family, no church, no freedom, no money, no Bible, no apparent answers from God. Yet he remained faithful—and so did his heavenly Father.

Whatever happened to the family who had no oil on their land? A few years later that same pastor ran into my friend, who was smiling from ear to ear. The minister assumed oil had finally been found on his property. “Quite the contrary,” the landowner replied. “And I’m quite glad of it.”

He explained that all of their neighbors had moved to the city, where they bought expensive homes and new cars. They joined country clubs and sent their children to the finest private schools. After a while, though, that lifestyle began to take

its toll. Their marriages started breaking up. Their children rebelled. The families stopped attending church on a regular basis.

“Pastor,” the man told him, “God did us a big favor by not putting any oil on our land. We are still together and love each other as never before. We thank Him every day for giving us what is more important and protecting us from things that aren’t.” God had not forgotten that family. He just had different plans in mind for them.

When the Lord is silent, you have only one reasonable option—trust Him. Hang in there, and wait on Him. He may be quiet, but He has not quit on you. Even through your greatest adversity, He’s working to develop your character and accomplish His will for your life.

Adapted from *How to Handle Adversity* by Charles F. Stanley. 1989. pp. 33-47.