

No Such Thing as a God of Love!

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"Dear Mr. Wilson:

Recently, our daughter, who has a PhD and is antagonistic toward religion, and I had a discussion while watching TV. We happened to see news about the cyclone that hit Myanmar (leaving 130,000+ dead and two million homeless). Later, we saw a report of a deadly earthquake in China (leaving 70,000 dead). I have been a Christian for the past eight years and my daughter and I have had many discussions about God recently. She said, "Mom, there *may* be a "higher power," but there is no such thing as a "God of love."

She said, "If there is an all powerful 'God of love,' He **would not** allow the weather and earthquakes to kill thousands of innocent people. 'A God of love' **would not** allow human misery to grind on and on as it does in Darfur and Zimbabwe. Loving parents (she has two children) **do not** let siblings hurt each other and neither would 'a God of love.' "

She added, " 'A God of love' is an imaginary god. Christianity is no different than the other religions of the world. Since the beginning of time, people have created mystical gods. Religion is a perpetual curse. It masks the realities of life at best and at worst, it justifies killing those with whom it disagrees." I could not give her a good response. Can you help me sort this out?

Sincerely,
Karen"

Hello Karen:

Thanks for your e-mail. The basic problem with your situation is that your highly educated daughter does not understand **the curse of sin**, therefore, the title, a "God of love" is inconsistent with what she thinks a "God of love" should be doing. To make matters worse, your daughter confuses God with religion.

God is one topic and people's behavior (religious practice) is another. If your daughter would open her heart and mind to consider the plan of salvation, she would find answers to her objections, as well as overwhelming joy, because God is love and unbelievably generous!

She is a prisoner to skepticism and this attitude can hold her in a self-imposed wilderness of darkness for a long time. **"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."** (1 Corinthians 2:14) Nevertheless, do your best to engage her in spiritual discussions whenever possible. Here are a few issues you may be able to discuss:

Through the ages, people have wondered why God permits evil people to torture, kill, and maim

others. People have also wondered how a "God of love" can permit earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, and fires to destroy people's possessions and their lives if He is in control of Earth. How can a "God of love" permit tens of thousands of people to starve to death or die in an epidemic? How can a "God of love" permit cruel men, like Hitler, Stalin, Idi Amin, and Pol Pot to impose so much suffering and death?

These are rational questions and the Bible offers some profound insights into these difficult questions. However, to understand anything about God's actions, a person has to first understand that **God's highest priority is to prevent suffering and death on a tiny spec of a planet called Earth.**

God's highest priority is to prevent the third occurrence of sin and He has a very thoughtful way of achieving this result. (The first occurrence of sin involved Lucifer and a third of Heaven's angels. The second occurrence involved Adam and Eve and their offspring. For an in-depth discussion on God's plan to keep sin from occurring again, please see Chapter 10 in my book, *The Seven Seals and the 144,000*.)

God's love, God's omnipotence, and God's willingness to let injustice abound appear to be in conflict, but these conflicting concepts properly align and make perfect sense once a person understands "the rest of the story." Many people find a certain satisfaction in condemning God for everything that is bad.

After all, *it is easier to condemn God than to understand God.* Lucifer led a third of God's angels astray through political criticism. Lucifer twisted the truth so that God's behavior looked evil. What would you say of a court where only the plaintiff's side of the argument is given? Would that be fair? Of course, not. And judging God's actions (or lack of action) without hearing His side of the story is also unfair!

Many good-hearted people have erroneously concluded that God is not loving because He permits evil to exist. However, the presence of evil proves that God grants the power of choice to His subjects! If He were a control freak, He would not let His subjects make any choices.

So, the presence of evil speaks volumes about human beings and the choices *they* make. If we were as loving and wise as God and could see each situation as God sees each situation, I believe we would do the same things that God is doing! I make this assertion on the basis that God is both selfless and consistent. In other words, God never deviates from doing what is righteous and loving in *every* situation. (Psalm 89:14) God is not arbitrary. He does not violate or circumvent justice and fairness for personal advantage.

We cannot see the big picture as God sees the big picture right now, so we must "trust God" until the time comes for "the rest of the story" to be told. When that day comes, we will see that in each circumstance, God's actions were loving and appropriate. Think about this: *Faith in God, when seen in reverse, proves that God is love.*

That is why we have the Bible. It tells us over and over that trusting God is trust well placed. As a Christian, you know that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to die in our place.

While there is no greater display of love in all the universe than this, there's more to God's love than Jesus dying on the cross – it is called "eternity with God."

Let us take each argument your daughter presented and address them. First, she claimed, "A God of love **would not** allow the weather and earthquakes to kill thousands of innocent people." Tornados, floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes have killed millions of people through the centuries.

These horrific events have been ongoing for thousands of years and their presence tells us that God rarely interferes with nature's violence. In fact, Jesus predicted Earth would become increasingly unstable near the time of the Second Coming, ". . . **There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.**" (Mark 13:8) From the human perspective, death caused by these calamities is horrible because (a) the amount of death is overwhelming, and (b) death represents the end of the most precious thing there is – life!

According to the Bible, God's perspective of death is quite different. The Source of Life does not view death as the end of life. Rather, God sees death as a temporary condition – a state of suspended animation! (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) Because human beings are under the curse of sin, we must die.(Romans 3:23, 6:23)

Earth itself is cursed and it will be destroyed eventually. (Genesis 3:17, Revelation 21:1) God does not usually disrupt the geophysical laws that He created to govern Earth, He sees death as a temporary state, and He will resurrect every dead person at the appointed time.

God has an incredible plan to rescue human beings from the curse of sin, but this plan takes a long time (in human terms) because God is resolving the sin problem so that sin's curse will never surface again. To help us deal with the inequities and chaos that sin produces, God sends love and grace to all suffering people. (John 16:7, Romans 3:29,30) Contrary to the adage that "Time heals all things," it is God's Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who heals all things.

Your daughter said, "A God of love" **would not** allow human misery to go on and on as it does in Darfur and Zimbabwe." The misery index in many countries is deplorable. For thousands of years, evil people have flourished and imposed much suffering on others. Jeremiah asked God about this, "**You are always righteous, O Lord, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper?**

Why do all the faithless live at ease? You have planted them, and they have taken root; they grow and bear fruit. You are always on their lips but far from their hearts." (Jeremiah 12:1,2) The Lord's response was, " **'But if any nation does not listen, I will completely uproot and destroy it,' declares the Lord.**" (Jeremiah 12:17)

In other words, God generously gives nations a measure of time and resources to thrive. If the leadership of a nation embraces righteousness and fairness, it will prosper and the standard of living will improve for everyone. If a nation becomes decadent and degenerate, that nation will be uprooted and destroyed. (Ezekiel 14:12-21)

God manages the nations of Earth according to His "full cup principle." (The full cup principle is: When a majority in a nation become degenerate and corrupt, God sends a warning message. If the message is rejected or ignored, God then raises up a "destroyer" to impose total destruction.)

Sin brings ruin. People in various places are growing desperate. Inhumanity and injustice are increasing. God sees every injustice and He does not forget. The Bible promises that God will raise the wicked from their graves at the appointed time and extract restitution.

"Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord." (Romans 12:19) Foolish people may think there is no God; they may think that God does not see their murders, thefts, or hear their lies; they may think that God does not concern Himself with violence, cheating, and dishonesty.

This is self-deception. Jesus said, **"Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. . . ."** (Luke 12:7) **"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God."** (Luke 12:6) God records every injustice and at the appointed time, a God of love will apply the golden rule: "As you did unto others, the same will *now* be done to you."

Your daughter said, "Loving parents **do not** let siblings hurt each other and neither would a "God of love." Her statement is true to a point. When children are minors, parents are charged with the responsibility of training their children to love and respect the freedom of others. But parents cannot stop adult children from hurting each other.

Adam and Eve experienced this with their first two sons! Cain killed Abel. So here is another way of looking at her argument. God gives human beings a great deal of freedom! We can hurt one another or we can help the hurting. We can be of service to those less fortunate or we can seek fame and fortune.

We can chose to please self or we can live to help others. We can manufacture guns and bombs or we can build schools, hospitals, and churches. Because God is love, He has given us the freedom of choice. Because we have the power of choice, God has imposed a golden rule on all of us. If we violate this rule, we will have to pay its penalty. What your daughter does not understand is this: The penalty for wicked behavior is not imposed on people who choose to live wickedly until the end of the 1,000 years.

This distant date provides little solace for those who want to see justice "right now." I wish more people understood that Judgment Day *is surely coming*. God has set a date when all mankind will stand before Him. (Acts 17:31) In human terms, this date may be slow in coming, but God will resurrect the dead and He will ensure that every person receives his due reward. God's love is the perfect balance between justice and mercy. On Judgment Day, mercy will be shown to the merciful and justice will be imposed on the unjust. **"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."** (Matthew 5:7)

In closing, your daughter said, "Religion is a perpetual curse. It masks the harsh realities of life at best and at worst, it justifies killing those with whom it disagrees." History also proves that this

comment has some validity, however, her comment does not encompass the whole topic. Whether she realizes it or not, each person has a spiritual dimension. God created us with a desire to be near Him, to know Him, and to love Him. This natural desire is the reason that religion flourishes all over the world in various forms.

Of course, the practice of religion is not to be confused with the attributes of God. God is the source of truth and no religion understands the whole truth. The two are separate and distinct. Religious practice is an expression of what people think or believe about God.

Our actions, even the actions of your daughter, reveal our beliefs about God. Everyone practices a religion of some kind. Agnostics, Catholics, Moslems, Jews, Protestants, Eastern Mystics, and the Heathen have beliefs about God and each person acts accordingly. History demonstrates that humanity has done horrible things out of devotion to a false understanding of God and yes, history also demonstrates that many good things have happened because of people's love for God. So, do we determine whether God is love by the harmful deeds of the many or by the generous deeds of a few?

I hope this helps!

Larry Wilson