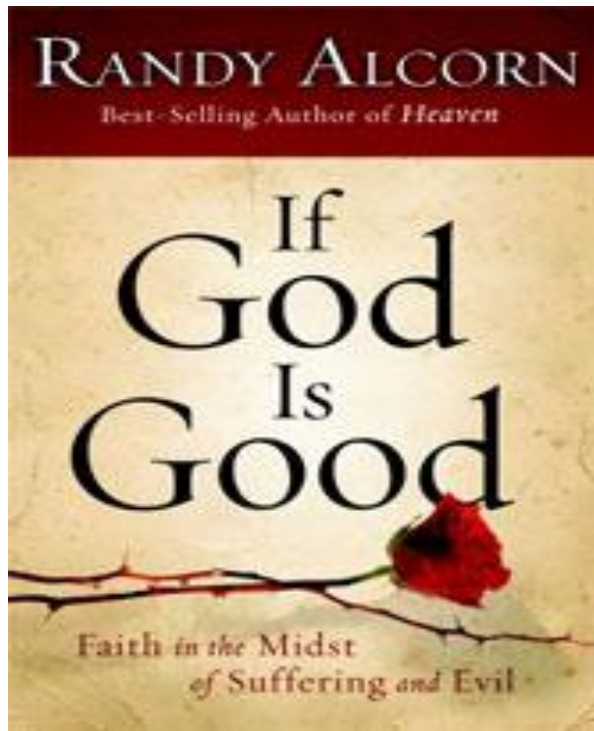




Love God. Love People. Change the World.



If God is Good.

Lesson #4

**Christian Life Assembly
Winter 2010 ABF
Jim Hoffman**

Questions

- If you agree that many Christians believe their performance guarantees health and wealth – where did the church ever get such an idea?
- 2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine . Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. NIV (What evidence do you see that we have reached the time cited above?)

The perspective we need if we are going to understand evil and suffering...

- **Deut 10:17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. NIV**
- **Since we cannot overstate the greatness of God we should try to – 😊**
- **When God is revealed he glorifies himself.**

The perspective we need if we are going to understand evil and suffering...

- To attempt to resolve the tension between good and evil is a waste of time without a proper perspective of who God is.
- Good only comes from God, evil only comes from disconnection with God.
- 3 John 11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

NIV

The perspective we need if we are going to understand evil and suffering...

- It's not enough to believe 'in' God – one must believe what is true about God to have any peace at all with the problem of evil and suffering.
- As a culture we are theological weaklings – the average Christian is more likely to believe an internet story about God than what scripture reveals.
- Somewhere along the way doctrine became for 'old people' and when the young got old they didn't know doctrine.

The Perspective We Need...

- “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The most portentous fact about any man is not what he may at any given time say or do, but what he, in his deep heart perceives God to be like. That our idea of God corresponds as nearly as possible to the true being of God is of immense importance to us. Compared with our actual thoughts about Him, our creedal statements are of little consequence. The idolatrous heart assumes that God is other than He is – in itself a monstrous sin – and substitutes for the true God one made in his own likeness. Before the Christian church goes into eclipse anywhere there must first be a corrupting of her simple basic theology. She simply gets a wrong answer to the question, ‘What is God like?’ and goes on from there.” A. W. Tozer

The perspective we need if we are going to understand evil and suffering...

- **2 Tim 4:3** For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine . Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.
NIV
- **Have we reached the time cited above? If so, how did it happen?**
- **What is the solution?**

The perspective we need if we are going to understand evil and suffering...

- Many believe their performance earns status (points) with God and the better they serve Him the safer they are.
- This is false! There is an undeniable link between the blessing that flows from living by the principles of scripture, but there are no promises.
- Like the book of Proverbs – many of the scriptural admonitions generally work for us, but apart from the spiritual absolutes there are no guarantees.

Examples ...

- Psalm 50:15 And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.
- Ps 37:25 I have been young, and now I am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Or his descendants begging bread.
NASB
- Ps 34:9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. KJV
- Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. KJV

Promises ...

- **Jer 29:11** For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
- **Rom 10:9** That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. NIV
- **1 John 5:1** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, NIV
- **1 John 5:12** He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. NIV

Performance brings blessing?

- There are certain benefits for living righteously in this life, but insulation from life is not among them.
- Job's friends thought he was suffering for some hidden sin and told him so to his face – many Christians today would be more discrete and say such things behind his back. 😊
- I do believe that obedience brings blessing, but some blessings really are disguised.



Questions / Comments