THE ELUSIVE "WHY"

It's not the *"how"* that most of the time troubles us, no, it is the *"why"* which often troubles and even, at times, torments us.

Some people who are usually devoid of spiritual insight, attempt to answer life's difficulties by saying that the reason that bad things happen to good people can be explained by science, psychology or simple physics; People get sick because of viruses and germs; People attack other people because they "lack impulse control," or have suffered an abusive childhood; People are injured in traffic accidents because of the laws of physics.

Those answers only describe the *how* and do nothing for explaining the *why.* Take for instance, a mother, who learns that she has inherited a rare disease and will probably die before her children are grown, she may fully understand *how* she came to be ill—it was hereditary—but she will still agonize over the more difficult question "Why?"

A fact—life is often unfair.

Different people have different explanations as to "why" life is unfair and no one reason seems soul-satisfying for all situations. The "why" in many cases seems as elusive as a fluttering butterfly that avoids the catcher's net.

We are therefore faced with the question of "how" to deal with life's unfairness most of the time without knowing the "why." "Life" (the process of living) is not the same as the actions of "God." God is *present* in all situations (especially those of His children) but God does not *cause* all situations. Life may be unfair, yet God is always just!

A fact—there are some events in life that we have absolutely no steering wheel with which to guide those events (they are out of our control) and worse of all we can find no satisfying "why" for those events.

As children we learned that our behavior either brought correction or praise depending on our conduct and our parents' judgement applied because of our conduct. We came to realize that punishment, in some form, came when we performed badly and when we did perform badly, we learned to expect punishment. Few, probably, were the times when we received punishment at our parents' hand that we had no idea *why* we were being punished. We usually always knew the why. We humans tend to transpose mentally the "punishment for bad" and the "reward for good" into our sojourn through life. That's the reason that life

can be so perplexing—we sometimes seem to be punished and we can find no solid "why." So, once again, we are left with only seeking a "how" in order to deal with the situation.

We must sometimes shake off the "punishment/reward" mentality in the Christian life and understand that there are more reasons for our situations than we realize—reasons known to God alone. We must face the fact that there are events which take place in our lives which no one knows *why* those particular events have befallen us.

Most of the book of Job is a continual discourse on discovering the *why* of Job's calamities. Job's comforters plumb the depths of reason and emotion in their quest to aid Job in discovering the *why*—all without any real success. Only we the readers who stand outside and beyond the times of Job are told the reason for Job's distress—a view which *neither* Job *nor* his comforters could possibly see. Job, without finding the "why" was left with only the "how" in order to deal with his situation.

Could it be that sometimes when we struggle in vain to find a "why" amid the unfairness of life that somewhere beyond the veil "a reader" sees and fully understands the situation from a perspective we are not permitted to have—and we are left with only the "how" to deal with the situation in this realm?

After all, it is vital to us as God's children to be able to perform, in Christlikeness, the "how" in all situations regardless of whether we understand the "why" or not— our response to life's situations is a better gauge of our walk with Him than our ability to "understand all mysteries." Often, we must forego the "why" and be busy about the "how." And as the old song stated, *"We will understand it better by and by……"*

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