

The Adequacy of God through Trials

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you need the most in this world?
2. What have you learned about knowing God?

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died-more than that, who was raised-who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39 ESV)

Simply put, God is adequate for our needs.

God is many things and we spent an entire semester looking at those things, but one of the most significant attributes of God is that He is adequate for all our needs.

In the words, "God is for us," are covenant language; what is being proclaimed here is God's undertaking to uphold and protect us when people and circumstances are threatening, to provide for us as long as our earthly pilgrimage lasts and lead us finally into the full enjoyment of himself, however many obstacles may seem at present to stand in the way of our getting there. (Packer p. 262)

God is adequate for our desire for material things

No good thing will finally be withheld from us... In saving us God went to the limit. what more could he have given for us? What more had he to give? We cannot know what Calvary cost the father, any more than we can know what Jesus felt, as he tasted the penalty due to our sins. If the measure of love is what it gives, then there never was such love as God showed to sinners at Calvary, nor will any subsequent love-gift to us cost much...All things will be given us, because they all come to us as the direct fruit of Christ's death. The unity of God saving purpose makes such further giving necessary, and therefore certain. (Packer p.264)

What does "all things" mean?

"All things" is not a plethora of material possessions, and the passion for possessions has to be cast out of us in order to let the "all things" in. For this phrase has to do with knowing and enjoying God, and not with anything else. The meaning of "he will give us all things" can be put thus: one day we shall see that nothing- literally nothing- which could have increased our eternal happiness has been denied us, and that nothing-literally nothing- which could have reduced that happiness has been

left with us. (Packer p. 270)

You are called to go through this world as a pilgrim, a mere temporary resident, traveling light, and willing, as Christ directs, to do what the rich young ruler refused to do: give up material wealth and the security it provides and life in a way that involves you in poverty and loss of possessions.

Having your treasure in heaven, you are not to budget for treasure on earth, nor for a high standard of living-you may well be required to forego both. You are called to follow Christ, carrying your cross. (Packer p. 268)

Most Christians know the fearful feeling that God may not have anything more for them beyond what they have already received; a thoughtful look at Calvary banish this mood. (Packer p.264)

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith. Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:25-34 ESV)

God is adequate for our desire for reconciliation/salvation

Christ and "all things" go together as ingredients in the single gift of eternal life and glory, and the giving of Christ for us, to remove the "sin barrier" by substitutionary atonement, has effectively open the door to our being given all the rest. (Packer p. 265)

Paul does not for a moment deny that Christians fail and fall, sometimes grievously, nor does he question that the memory of sins committed after becoming a Christian is far more painful than are any thoughts of one's moral lapses, however gross, before that time. But Paul denies emphatically that any lapses can endanger our justified status. The reason, he says in effect, is simple: Nobody is in a position to get God's verdict reviewed! (Packer p. 272)

If it is God, the Maker and Judge of all, who passes the justifying sentence-that is, who declares that you have been set right with his law and with himself, and are not now liable to death for your sins, but are accepted in Christ-and if God has passed this sentence in full view of your shortcomings, justifying you on the explicit basis and understanding that you were not righteous, but ungodly (Rom 4:5), then nobody can ever challenge the verdict, not even "the accuser of the brethren" [Satan] himself... God justified you with his eyes open. He knew the worst about you at the time when he accepted you for Jesus' sake; and the verdict, which he passed then, was, and is, final. (Packer p. 273)

The sovereign Lord who justified you will take active steps to see that the status he has given you is maintained and enjoyed to the full. (Packer p. 273)

God is adequate for our desire for protection

Opposition is a fact: the Christian who is not conscious of being opposed had better watch himself, for he is in danger. Such unrealism is no requirement of Christian discipleship, but is rather a mark of failure in it. Are you afraid of [opposition]? You need not be, anymore than Moses need to be afraid of Pharaoh after God said to him, "I will be with you" (Ex 3:12). (Packer p. 263)

Whatever "flesh" or "man" may do to [a Christian] from the outside, so to speak, in the deepest sense nothing can touch him for his real life is the inward life of fellowship with a loving God, and the God who loves him will preserve that life whatever happens. (Packer p. 262)

If God is our protector we are to let him protect us and not always jump to defend ourselves. When we do so we avail our energies to do God's work, else if we're always looking for ways to get even or fight back, we run the risk of missing the greater needs of people around us.

You are called to be a meek person, not always standing up for your rights, nor concerned to get your own back, nor troubled in your heart by ill treatment and personal slights but you are simply to commit your cause to God and leave it to him to vindicate you if and when he sees fit...Your eyes must be open to see others' needs, both spiritual and material; your hearts must be ready to care for needy souls when you find them; your mind must be alert to plan out the best way to help them; and your will must be set against "passing the buck." (Packer p. 269)

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:19-21 ESV)

God is adequate for our desire for security/comfort

Comfort is, of course, used here in the old, strong sense of that which encourages and nerves, not in the modern sense of that which tranquilizes and enervates. The quest for "comfort" in the modern sense is self-indulgent, sentimental and unreal, and the modern "I-go-to-church-for-comfort" religion is not Christianity. (Packer p. 256)

Here are Christian individuals troubled by the memory of a moral lapse; and Christians whose integrity has lost them a friend or a job; Christian parents whose children are disappointing them; Christians facing serious problems of health or physical limitation; Christians made to feel like outsiders at home or work because of their faith; Christians burdened by the death of someone they feel should have lived, or by the continued life of a senile relative or suffering child who they feel should have died; Christians who feel God cannot care for them or their life would be less rough; and many more. But it is precisely people like this- people, in other words, like us- whom Paul is challenging. "What shall we say to these? Think-think-think!" (Packer p. 259)

[The key to finding comfort is] not as sometimes thought, techniques of sinlessness, but the peace, hope and joy which are the Christian's birthright. Paul knows that "emotional thinking" under life's pressures-that is, the rationalizing of reactions-forfeits these possessions. (Packer p. 259)

Think of what you know of God through the gospel, says Paul, and apply it. Think against your feelings; argue yourself out of the gloom they have spread; unmask the unbelief they have nourished; take yourself in hand, talk to yourself, make yourself look up from your problems to the God of the gospel; let evangelical thinking correct emotional thinking. (Packer p. 260)

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30 ESV)

Why do we struggle with this?

If God is adequate in all these things for, why do we still suffer and why do we still hesitate to live our lives like it is true?

We shrink from accepting burdens of responsibility for others because we fear we should not have strength to bear them. We shrink from accepting a way of life in which we forfeit material security because we are afraid of being left stranded. We shrink from being meek because we are afraid that in we do not stand up for ourselves we shall, be trodden down and victimized, and end up among life's casualties and failures. We shrink from breaking with social conventions in order to serve Christ because we fear that if we did, the established structure of life would collapse all around us, leaving us without a footing anywhere. (Packer p. 270)

It is these half-conscious fears, this dread of insecurity, rather than any deliberate refusal to face the cost of following Christ, which make us hold back. In other words, we are not persuaded of the adequacy of God, because of our secret uncertainty as to his adequacy to look after us if we do... We are afraid to go all the way in accepting the authority of God, because of our secret uncertainty as to his adequacy to look after us if we do. (Packer p. 270)

Or in other words we hesitate because of unbelief. We do not believe God is adequate.

Your God is faithful to you, and he is adequate for you. You will never need more than he can supply, and what he supplies, both materially and spiritually, will always be enough for the present...Think on these things! - and let your thoughts drive out your inhibitions about serving your master. (Packer p. 271)

Human love for all its power in other ways, cannot ensure that what is desired for the beloved will actually happen, divine love is a function of omnipotence, and has at its heart an almighty purpose to bless which cannot be thwarted. (Packer p.275)

The goal of grace, as we have seen, is to create a love relationship between God and us who believe, the kind of relation for which we were first made. (Packer p. 261)

The purpose of our relationship with God in Christ is the perfection of the relationship itself. So God is adequate in this further sense, that in knowing him fully we shall find ourselves fully satisfied, needing and desiring nothing more. (Packer p. 276)

When we realize that, we will better understand what it means to be “more than conquerors.” We are more than conquerors because God is with us and He turns all things, even evil things, into good, thus we need nothing more than Him

Grasp this, hold onto it; let this certainty make its impact on you in relation to what you are up against at this very moment; and you will find in thus knowing God as your sovereign protector, irrevocably committed to you in the covenant of grace, both freedom from fear and new strength for the fight. (Packer p. 264)

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. (Habakkuk 3:17-19 ESV)

The praising, praying, thankful, faithful person has on him the marks of being a child of God. (Packer p. 263)