

Why do bad things happen to good people? – Teaching

The deep philosophical question that many Christians have asked. Some Christians have left their church or even their faith over this issue, while other Christians accept a harsher answer to this question. In the end, the answers to this question tend to be lengthy and confusing to cold and harsh. It really doesn't have to be!

The real answer to this question lies within the question itself. The question *assumes* that being good will get you only good things in return. **Truthfully, this type of believe is *actually* Hinduism and Buddhism, known as karma.** They really need to ask a Hindu or Buddhist why karma failed them and not a Christian. Christians can get this concept mixed up with “*you reap what you sow.*” That's in **Galatians 6:7**, but if you read on to **verse 8**, those verses are referencing sowing into the flesh versus sowing into the spirit. But, this type of thinking, good people receiving only good things, is a works mentality and the Bible says, “without faith it's impossible to please Him,” Hebrews 11:6. If only being good did get you good things, then there wouldn't be a need to pray or depend on the Lord for anything. How could you ever convince anyone they need Jesus? We do need Jesus! Heaven is our home. Jesus tells us a parable in Matthew 25 about the kingdom of Heaven, and when the Master returns, He'll settle accounts. We're looking to hear the Master say to us, “*Well done, thou good and faithful servant.*” The Lord is not just looking for a *good* servant, but also a *faithful* servant.

Let's break this question down in case we need to minister to some hurting and misguided people. We don't really want to tell them to go ask Buddha, but it's ok to tell them, “*Buddha has failed you.*”

Are we always good people?

Sometimes we think we're good, and we're accidentally just not!

Luke 18:19 NKJV

So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

Our society is very driven towards masking sin as a good thing, and we as Christians don't even realize it. Not too long ago, there was a popular Christian radio station discussing in one of their weekly segments with listeners sharing how to do secret shopping for *free money*. They went on and on sharing where to go, tips on being efficient, and boasting how this has become some big thing with their listeners. The problem is when you think about what they're doing and what the Bible says, it's walking out of love for money, or lying for money. As I was listening to the callers boast about the money they made and how fun it was, the Holy Spirit pointed out the truth to me. We aren't supposed to tattle on anyone; whether it's written experiences, showing/telling prices or just taking pictures. Love is supposed to believe, speak, and show the best of everyone. Even if someone decides to take a Christian stance as a secret shopper, they're not giving the company what they're asking for, and so therefore, they're being deceptive towards the company's request. The company wants truth from this natural realm, while our truth comes from the heart of the Father.

Another popular *oopsie* that we accidentally get sucked into is writing reviews online that are less than 5/5 stars or 10/10 stars. The Holy Spirit has a different view on this than our culture. In our culture, we, as Americans, get angry and want to tell the world how we're upset. As Christians, we tell ourselves, “*But I'm warning people,*” like Paul warned everyone in **2 Timothy 4:14**,

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.

Overcooking your English muffin, burning your French fries, or getting your coffee order wrong isn't doing you much harm. May I point out, Paul didn't even say what “*much harm*” Alexander did. Knowing Paul was stoned, shipwrecked, starved, and more, it must have been pretty bad!

Matthew 7:1-3 NKJV

¹ “**Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.** ³ **And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?**

People are accidentally, because of our culture, sowing in for a judgement. People think and say, “*I’m telling it like it is.*” But that’s not what the law of love is about!

Ephesians 4:15 NKJV

but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

Ouch! Paul just told us to grow up when we don’t speak the truth in love. That’s our standard when writing reviews. Imagine you owned that particular business, and you’re rating yourself. **The standard for ourselves is the one God will be using to measure your reviews of other people’s businesses.** That’s how it works, and some people here *may* have to go home and remove some reviews. Just smile and look straight ahead! **It’s better to take them down today and repent, than answer to God’s face for what you wrote on Judgement Day.**

Some Christians, very unknowingly because of our society, sowed in for a steady stream of judgement. Society gets all of us at one time or another with accidentally agreeing to unjust judgements, especially with today’s popular *reality tv* and competition shows being based on judgments and point of views skewed by the editors. For that reason, it’s best to regularly ask the Lord if you have opened yourself up to receive a judgment.

Another popular accidental thing Christians do is not guard their mouth. Sometimes people say things without thinking, “*What’s really behind what I’m saying.*” Here’s some examples:

“He’s charming.”

Oxford Dictionary defines charmed as (of a person's life) unusually lucky or happy as though protected by magic.

“Works like magic.”

Oxford Dictionary again, “the power of apparently influencing the course of events by using mysterious or supernatural forces.” Not of God, of course.

“Holy cow.”

Quoting from Wikipedia, “In Hinduism and Buddhism the cow is a sacred animal and those who try to hunt, kill and eat it should be seen and treated as demons.”

“Good luck.”

Back to Oxford, “chance considered as a force that causes good or bad things to happen.” What force?

These words have changed meaning overtime to mean almost nothing, because of their usage by so many people, but their roots are actually all from the dark side.

“Knock on wood.”

There are many explanations where this phrase may have originated. Here’s one from History.com, “One common explanation traces the phenomenon to ancient pagan cultures such as the Celts, who believed that spirits and gods resided in trees. Knocking on tree trunks may have served to rouse the spirits and call on their protection, but it could have also been a way of showing gratitude for a stroke of good luck.”

“Fingers crossed.”

Oxford Reference, “The act of crossing the fingers (i.e. middle finger over index finger) ‘for luck’, or to ward off ill luck (e.g. after walking under a ladder) is one of our most well-understood gestures.”

“Jinx.”

Merriam-Webster, “one that brings bad luck, also the state or spell of bad luck brought on by a jinx.”

This list isn’t meant to call anyone a bad person. Sometimes we follow the flow of society without thinking, like when we aren’t paying attention to the speed limit, just following the flow of traffic, and the police pull you over and you wonder, “*What did I do?*” Some Christians are unknowingly inviting “*mysterious forces*” into their life, and when they reap a harvest, wonder, “*Why would God let this happen to ME?*” Am I being dramatic? Let’s take a quick look at scripture.

Matthew 12:36-37 NKJV

³⁶But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Is it important what we say? Absolutely! The universe was created by Words, and the Battle of Armageddon will be won by words. Words are powerful. One more scripture, then we'll move on.

Proverbs 18:21 NKJV

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

What does the Bible actually say?

I think the more important question is **what does the Bible actually say about protection** from bad things, and is there a role for people to play? For some of us, growing up in church, you might have been taught that if you're holy, properly set apart for God, then protection will just fall upon you like rain. In some churches people pretend to be holy by acting like they have no problems, and that's exactly what that type of teaching produces, **pretending**. Jesus took our shame. We should *never* be ashamed to ask for help! Let's look at what the Word has to say about protection...

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 NKJV

¹ Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, ² and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

³ But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. ⁴ And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

⁵ Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Paul was asking the church of Thessalonica to pray for him. Paul asked that he be **delivered from unreasonable and wicked men**. If Paul needed that level of prayer prayed over himself, then so much more do we! He does go on to say that the Lord will establish them and guard them from the evil one. But notice what Paul said of the church first, that the Word of the Lord would run swiftly through him as it did with them. The Amplified says it this way,

"the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be honored [triumphantly celebrated and glorified], just as it was with you"

That's a huge compliment! Then he notes they have confidence the church is doing what they were commanded to do. So this guarding against the evil one, or bad things not happening to good people, wasn't just a heavenly blanket that fell from the sky like gentle rain upon them, it came as a result of them honoring, celebrating, and glorifying the Word, and keeping God's commands. That's exactly how we can receive guarding against evil. Anytime you read Paul's writings, take note of his prayers.

Protected by Angels

Psalms 34:7 NKJV tells us we have promises of angels protecting us,

The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

Here David is writing about protection of angels based on our fear of the Lord. David feared the Lord to the point he honored Saul when he was trying to kill him. If you fear the Lord, you'll keep His commandments. That also reflects back to what Paul said concerning the Thessalonians, which we just read.

There are many Psalms which speak of protection, but I want to point out what David was doing when he wrote these. He would get his harp and play under the anointing (power of the Holy Spirit). These Psalms would pour

out of his heart. He was spending time in praise and worship with the Lord, and that's exactly what we should be doing so we can expect better results in our walk with the Lord.

One of my favorite Psalms, **Psalm 91**

¹He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

The entire Psalm is about receiving protection from the Lord, but I'm going to skip down to verses 14 and 15.

¹⁴Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. ¹⁵He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

Dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, setting your love upon Him, and knowing His name are the requirements for this Psalm to be activated into your life. I like KJV and NKJV, but here are some other translations to give you a full idea of "**set his love upon me**," means.

Young's Translation: Because in Me he hath delighted

Contemporary English: If you love me and truly know who I am

The Voice: Because he clings to Me in love

New Living: I will rescue those who love me.

New Century: Whoever loves me

"**He hath known my name**," is the other requirement. Unfortunately, the Lord's name isn't often explained or spoken of in church, because of the teaching of the Pharisees. After the death of Jesus, before the destruction of the temple, they taught that His name is too holy to write, but in reality, they did it because they were afraid of Rome. Rome told them to stop using His name, because they wanted to make The God of Heaven like another random god. The Old Testament writes His name as YHWH, some translate the W as a V, YHVH. Ancient Hebrew has no vowels and very long story short; they lost the Lord's name, and then lost their own language after the temple was destroyed by Rome in 70^{AD}. The two most popular guesses that I often hear are **Yahweh** and **Yehovah**, which we know as Jehovah in English, the Great I Am, the name He gave to Moses. I don't think it's as important which name people think is correct, but as long as you know He has a name other than the generic God, Lord, Father type names.

To keep **Psalm 91** active in your life, read this Psalm over yourself, family, and friends every day.

(Print it out and pass it out.)

The Bible says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word. By speaking this Psalm over and over you're building up faith and have a confident expectation of the Lord's promise for protection manifesting in your life and those around you.

Healing

Maybe the "*bad thing*," people are referring to happening to "*good people*," could be sickness. This is a very lengthy topic of discussion for another day. I just want to point out that Jesus often mentioned to people that their faith caused them to have their request.

Mark 5:34 NKJV

And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

A lot of us struggle to have faith in healing, and while many people have been healed miraculously many times, others still struggle. We've all had different influences in our lives that impacted our thought life, while that shouldn't matter when it comes to scripture, sad to say it really does.

I like this testimony from a minister that illustrates what we should do when we're honest with ourselves and God when we can't seem to believe God for a healing. She had liver surgery years before, and 2 hernias from it. She injured her surgery and needed God's healing.

"I told the Lord, *"I can't believe for a full healing!"* Why lie? He knows. "So..." I continued, *"Can you please reverse the damage from the last injury?"* I was referring to a very bad surgery with two injuries on top of it. I was ready to believe God for the last injury to be reversed. I put my hands on stomach and just thanked the Lord and sang praises. I don't want to give anyone the wrong impression, I read healing scriptures regularly. But in that moment, I didn't feel anything. I didn't even feel spiritual. I went to bed shortly after. The next morning I woke up with all the 8-month long swelling gone, no more stabbing, and no more burning. Now I'm onto the next phase of believing that the injury from two years ago is healed."

That's a great point she made when speaking with God, *"I can't believe for a full healing!"* Why lie? He knows." If you've been seeking God for something that the answer has not yet come, get real with God, *"I can't believe You for this... but I can believe You for that..."* We can ask the Lord to teach us faith, as we read the Bible, and meet us where we're at. It's better to start taking rocks away from the mountain instead of standing there disappointed while waiting for the whole thing to disappear. We should always remember, **God is love** (1 John 4:16). He's happy to help us meet Him. It's better to take baby steps than to think, *"I can't believe it,"* *"God won't heal me,"* or *"God, why me?"*

Why God? Why?

Sometimes we demand to know why, *"WHY GOD?? WHY?!"* Truth is, **we aren't always ready to hear the answer**. If you know someone that just *can't* move on until they know *why* something happened, instead of searching for an answer that we think they can understand, teach them to pray, *"Lord prepare me to understand why."* This is an extreme example that a minister shared online, but it's a great illustration of how there is **always an answer**, even if we can't see it.

There was a lady I met years ago. She had really bad neck problems from a car accident. She had to have a cadaver bone put in her neck and then had bones fused together. She couldn't get over *why God let this happen* to her, and all the suffering she had been through. I didn't tell her, but I started praying for her healing. One day I saw her, and asked how she was doing. Like a broken record, she went on about her neck story again. But this time she said something different about the accident, the part she always left out, *"I was driving down the street, and I saw the car backing up out of the driveway. It didn't look like it was going to stop, but I HAD THE RIGHT OF WAY!"* she loudly insisted, *"So, I kept going and he hit me."* She continued telling me again about all the physical traumas it caused her and the emotional toll it took on her. I immediately said inside, *"AH! So pride caused the accident!!"* The Lord showed me out of her own mouth that she *knew* but chose not to stop. This woman is going around blaming God, and why He *let* it happen, when in reality, He did not. If this Christian woman was practicing love, love doesn't insist on its own rights, then she would have hit the break and forgot about the incident shortly after. But if I had said it to her, she would have been completely offended at me. **She wasn't ready to hear anything besides pity for herself.**

As I mentioned above, this is an extreme example, but sometimes situations are too difficult for people to hear the truth. I don't mean to suggest we're always at fault, because we live in a fallen world, but sometimes the truth is difficult to hear. There is a young man, who had to hear as a teenager the truth that his mother was a prostitute to truck drivers, and that's why he didn't know his father. The truth can be even more painful than not knowing, which is why not everyone gets their answer.

Another true story about not hearing why: A few years back, a Christian family, that was very involved in the ministry lost their teenage son in a car accident. He wrapped a truck around a pole making a left turn late in the night. The teenager wasn't currently attending church, so some people went around behind the family's back saying, *"He's in hell."* While others, heartbroken for the family, told them how God wanted or needed him in Heaven. The truth of the matter was the family had been well warned multiple times about their teenage son's driving and driving that particular truck. The mother would lightheartedly and dismissively respond, *"He's fine. He's ok,"* and ignore the warnings. After the accident happened, the father was so distraught that he wanted his best friend, who went to the scene of the accident, to pray and raise his son from the dead. His friend loved the couple that just lost their son, but lovingly tried to tell him that he couldn't do that. The father unzipped the

body bag anyway, placed his hands on his son's chest, and forced him to try to pray and raise him from the dead. It was a very sad situation. One of this teenager's sisters became very angry at God. She refused to serve Him or even go to church because she was angry why God let this happen, and why God took him. This is a very sad story, but this same type of situation happens a lot in Christian families. People get badly hurt and because they don't know why, they blame God.

Next time you minister to someone that *feels* separated from God as to why something bad happened, encourage them to pray that the *Lord prepares their heart for the answer*, it will come when they are ready to hear it. That family, who lost the son, was in no condition to receive blame on the mother and father. When their wounds heal up, the truth will come to them. I learned to pray this way many years ago, and I can attest to the fact that your answer will come. I have ALWAYS received my answer. Sometimes I didn't want to hear it, maybe more than sometimes, but the answer always comes!

This study can go on and on, but one more example in the Bible, **Shalom**, or as it's translated for us, **peace**. What exactly is **Shalom**? A very popular translation is **nothing missing, nothing broken**. We're actually promised in the Bible that we can have **great shalom** in our lives.

Shalom Shalom

Psalms 119:165^{NKJV}

Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.

Hebrew: Great **shalom** have those who love Your **torah**, and nothing causes them to stumble.

Torah is normally translated as law, but it really means teachings, or instructions. Shalom is normally translated as peace, but a better definition is nothing missing nothing broken. We are promised great shalom by simply loving the Lord's teachings. How easy is that? If you could hear your spirit man, it's so excited when you take out the Word. It's the only time it gets to eat. Imagine if you fed your body as much as you fed your spirit. What would you look like? One of those skinny cows from Pharaoh's dream, or a fat cat that can barely walk? But in all seriousness, if your life feels like it's missing **shalom**, make sure your peace sandals are bound to your feet, you forgive freely as God forgives you, you're not in strife, you cast your cares on the Lord, and you're regularly feeding on the Word. (There is a long teaching on peace in my armor of God series)

How do we get good things?

The answer is to dig in the Word and find out what blessings are available to you and take them by faith. Let's go over a couple of **blessings**, or good things happening!

Deuteronomy 28:2^{NKJV}

And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God:

Blessings overtaking us! I like the sound of that, but before we get too far, notice the second part says, "*because you obey the voice of the Lord.*" The previous verse says, "*diligently obey,*" and "*observe carefully all His commandments.*" The voice of the Lord to us is always the Word first!! The Bible is God's Word speaking to us, Old and New Testaments. Our commandment is love. So, let's see these blessings. I'm going to paraphrase, but you should read this chapter for yourself and expect these blessings in your life. Remember, Jesus fulfilled the law, He never removed or downgraded blessings!

Blessed wherever you go. Blessed to have children. Blessed animals, and this includes your pets. Blessed food. Amen, we need that with all the processed food, right? Blessed when you leave, blessed when you return. The Lord will cause your enemies to be defeated and scatter. This includes enemies at work, while you're obeying the command of love towards them. Blessings on your stuff. We need our stuff to last. Appliances and vehicles aren't made like they used to be. You will lend and not borrow, that's money! And the last one, I want to quote: verse 13: And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be

beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.

I can't stress enough there is a responsibility on our side. Ball is in our court! Again, sometimes Christians think, *"Because I go to church, and do good, I should have all this."* We must make sure we meet *HIS* requirements, not what we *think*.

The giving blessing.

Luke 6:38^{NKJV}

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Bosom is an **inner pocket** in their robe, we'd say **wallet** or even more modern, **"will be CashApp-ed to you."** Let's look at how Jesus started this off, **"Give, and it will be given to you."** Sometimes people want the giving blessing but forget the giving part. Just look straight ahead and smile. Have you been giving? Have you been generous with the poor? Just keep smiling and nodding... Let's move on!

Finding favor blessing.

Proverbs 3:3-4^{NKJV}

³Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, ⁴and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.

Write them on the tablet of your heart means memorize it! The requirement here in this scripture is mercy and truth in your heart will make you have favor AND high esteem in the sight of God AND men.

Another way to find favor is in **Proverbs 8:35^{NKJV}**

For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord;

Find the Lord and you will obtain favor. Where do you look for the Lord?

-The Word

-Prayer (boldly enter the throne room of grace- Hebrews 4:16)

-Church gatherings (where two or three are gathered together- Matthew 18:20)

-Praise and worship (God inhabits the praises of Israel, but we've been grafted in- Psalm 22:3)

-Inside yourself (We are the temple, Holy Spirit is in us- 1 Corinthians 3:16)

Reading these scriptures, you might feel like things are performance based. That's not what the Lord is doing, **but He's setting a standard of respect**. Who enjoys giving to a greedy entitled teenager? Who wants to show favor to a known liar? How would you feel about blessing a child, no matter their age, who refuses to listen to you? We're all God's children, and He's setting a standard of honor and respect for His children to have towards Him so that we can receive blessings. Imagine what your life would look like if the requirement to receive blessings from you was begging or making you feel bad? You probably wouldn't have a bank account, vehicle, home, or anything else of value. You would feel used and cheated. We set standards with other people; although, you probably don't notice. Whose college tuition do parents pay for, their children or some random teenagers they never met three cities away? Do you feel different giving a stranger \$40 than a close family member... that doesn't beg for money? There's nothing wrong with standards. Just remember when ministering to a hurt person that you may need to graciously point them to God's standards. For example, we've all heard, *"Why won't God heal me."* First question, *"What scripture are you using?"* Most often, it's none to a very loose paraphrase that they thought up in that moment. You can see the wheels starting to turn in their brain as they think. If they don't know what the Word says, how can they have faith?

Romans 10:17^{NKJV}

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Whatever it is they feel God won't do for them, encourage them to look in their Bible where God did do something and use that as their faith building scripture.

Let's quickly go over the secret of planting the **mustard seed**. We so often encounter the "*God won't do it,*" people, and we should always be ready with an encouraging Word.

Please write this down. Take out your phone and email yourself if you have to.

Matthew 17:20 NKJV

(Jesus talking) ...**if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.**

Mark 4:20 NKJV

But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

How do we plant our mustard seed and reap 30, 60. and 100?

Make sure you're writing this down....

Love, faith, and thanksgiving will get you answers.

First is love.

God is love. We already read that in 1 John 4:16. We're going to add to that **Galatians 5:6**

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

The first step is making sure the ground in your heart is full of love. That's going to clean up your dirt.

Second is faith.

What scriptures are you using to receive your blessing? We already read faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word. We are planting faith scripture into our love ground so it can grow.

Lastly, be thankful.

When we're not thankful, like Israel in the desert, we murmur. We're not thanking God for poverty, sickness, and any other evil thing. We're thanking Jesus for dying for our sins. We're thanking God for the covenant that we have with Him, which includes... whatever blessing you found it in scripture.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

I once heard a lady from another country pray, "*Thank you Daddy God, that you gave us covid.*" Emphatically no, that's not what we're talking about!! Being thankful is thanking God for what He's done for us through Jesus and promised us. Not thanking Him for bee stings, murders, and other works of the enemy.

Next time you're ministering to someone who feels like they need an explanation of why something bad happened to them, don't feel like you have to have the answer. **Being a Christian doesn't mean we have all the answers, it just means we know the One Who has them and how to pray.** We work with the Holy Spirit, we're not to take His place. It's just our job to point our finger and say, "*He's that way!*"

Next time you hear this question, I hope you feel more equipped to thoroughly answer this questions without offending the hurt brother or sister in Christ and empowering them to continue in their faith.

(Prayer Points:

- Lord bless us with wisdom to always know how to point everyone to a deeper place in Christ.
- Please remind us to always speak with grace so You can give us the answers people need to hear.
- Thank you for teaching us and training us with Your Word

- Please give each of us a revelational understanding about planting our own mustard seed.
- Thank you for watching over us and keeping us safe as we go our separate ways

In Jesus' name, Amen.)