

TRUSTING GOD - Jerry Bridges

GOD'S POWER OVER NATURE



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- **Does God control natural events such as:**
 - **Weather**
 - **Disasters**
 - **Physical Afflictions**
 - **Childlessness**
- **Yes He does**

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God Controls The Weather

- **Complaining about the weather is extremely common**
 - **It's too hot**
 - **It's too cold**
 - **It always rains on the weekends**
 - **It always rains on my vacation at the Shore**

G O D ' S P O W E R O V E R N A T U R E

God Controls The Weather

- **Weather does not “just happen”**
- **We are not unlucky victims subject to nature’s impersonal whims**
 - **He’s not a “cosmic clockmaker” – he does not wind up the universe like a toy and walk away from it**
 - **He sets up physical laws governing His universe; BUT, they operate, and are energized by, His sovereign will and control**

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God Controls The Weather

Psalm 147:16-18

He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes. He casts forth His ice as fragments; Who can stand before His cold? He sends forth His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow and the waters to flow.

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God Controls The Weather

Jeremiah 10:13

When He utters His voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, And He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain, and brings out the wind from His storehouses.

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God Controls The Weather

Amos 4:7

Furthermore, I withheld the rain from you while there were still three months until harvest. Then I would send rain on one city And on another city I would not send rain; one part would be rained on, while the part not rained on would dry up.

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God Controls The Weather

- **Common theme in these Scriptures:
God is in control over all weather events**
- **“Believers are never victims of powers of nature or fate.
Chance is eliminated.” G.C. Berkouwer**
- **Question: How can Christians practice an active Biblical perspective in light of this revelation of God's sovereignty?**

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Complaining Or Thanksgiving?

- **Christians are prone, in practice, to overlook Divine Providence**
- **We show our self-centeredness**
- **We don't give thanks for good weather**
- **We must learn to see God's sovereign and loving hand**
- **We are to give thanks in every trial, good or bad**
- **All events are designed for our molding and pruning**

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Complaining Or Thanksgiving?

- **Complaining about “bad” weather is a favorite pastime for people – Christians (regrettably) are no exceptions**
- **This is an ungodly practice**
- **Let's not mince words – complaining is sin ! (Numbers 11:1)**

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Complaining Or Thanksgiving?

Numbers 11:1

Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD; and when the LORD heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.

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Complaining Or Thanksgiving?

- **Why is it wrong for Christians (or even unbelievers) to complain about the weather or weather events?**
 - **We display a practical unbelief in His grace**
 - **We deprive ourselves of the peace that comes from recognizing our heavenly Father is in control of whatever weather we are experiencing at the moment.**

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Complaining Or Thanksgiving?

- **How can we practice our faith in regards to His sovereignty in the weather and weather events?**
 - **Remember God's sovereign and loving hand in all acts of providence, both joyful and heart-rending.**
 - **Remember we are blessed many more times by good weather than bad**
 - **Do not overlook Divine Providence changing our plans based on weather**

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Natural Disasters

- **Why does God allow natural disasters?**
 - **Judgement? The Fall?**
 - **We should not attempt to dig too deeply**
 - **We have no direct revelation from God for natural disasters**
- **Natural disasters suit His glory, His good purpose**
- **His people must acknowledge these disasters display His glory and are for their good**

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Natural Disasters

- **Why does God allow natural disasters to occur?**
- **It's OK to ask BUT it's not OK to place Him "in the dock"**
- **Nevertheless He accepts direct responsibility for natural disasters (Isaiah 45:6-7)**

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Natural Disasters

Isaiah 45:6-7

“That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.”

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Natural Disasters

- **He not only accepts responsibility He informs us He creates disasters and directs where they occur**
- **Difficult to reconcile this with His mercy and compassion**
- **Nevertheless we must remember “all circumstances are under the watchful eye and sovereign control of our God”**

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Natural Disasters

- **What to do? Remember!**
 - **He “causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good”**
 - **We are blessed far more with good weather than unwanted**
 - **All events are designed by a loving God to conform us to the image of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ.**
- **Christians need to stop complaining about the weather**
- **We must learn to have practical thankfulness for all weather**

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Physical Afflictions

- **Another area which can trouble us**
- **He sovereignly ordains every person's afflictions**
- **Afflictions do not happen because of non-existent blind chance. It is His direct action (not genetics)**

(Exodus 4:10,11)

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Physical Afflictions

Exodus 4:10,11

Then Moses said to the LORD, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” The LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”

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Physical Afflictions

- **And again we read of God's direct actions in physical afflictions**

Romans 8:20

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it...

- **Afflictions occur because He will be glorified in the midst of afflictions**

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Physical Afflictions

- **If we truly believe God is in control, what conclusions may be drawn?**
 - **He is evil to cause such suffering**
 - **He is good, despite our afflictions**
- **Christians rightfully recoil from believing God is evil**

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Physical Afflictions

- **We must acknowledge and embrace He is good in the face of physical afflictions**
- **All things happen for our good to conform us to the image of His Son**
- **We glorify Him as we more fully display Christ**
- **Is this not our whole raison d'être? What is the chief end of man?**

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Physical Afflictions

- **How can we work out practical ways to walk in this knowledge? What can we offer to:**
 - **Sufferers of chronic sickness and debilitating illness?**
 - **Sufferers of Autism? Depression?**

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Childlessness

- **God also afflicts couples with childlessness**
- **He controls the conception of children**
- **He superintends children in the womb**

Psalm 139:13

“For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb.”

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Childlessness

- **We must learn to trust Him even if afflicted with childlessness**

Lamentations 3:31-33

“For the Lord will not reject forever, for if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant lovingkindness. For He does not afflict willingly or grieve the sons of men.

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Childlessness

- God does not waste pain
- He uses it for our good and His glory
- We either practice acceptance or resignation in our trials such as childlessness
 - Acceptance: completely trust Him
 - Resignation: trials accepted reluctantly

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Childlessness

- **Actual / Practical Childlessness**
- **You have a child but the child has a severe debilitating illness/condition**
 - **Cancer, heart, pulmonary, etc.**
 - **Difficult watching your child suffer and unable to fix**
 - **Knowing you could lose your child at any time**

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Childlessness

- **Mental/emotional: children who are “on the spectrum”**
 - **May have to keep your child on a leash**
 - **Your infant does not take naps**
 - **The father who will never walk his daughter down the aisle**
 - **The mother who realizes her child will never thrive on her own**

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Childlessness

- **How can parents of children physically/emotionally disabled children trust and glorify God?**
 - **They (we) must trust Him in His grace and mercy**
 - **They cannot resign themselves to His design for their child**
 - **He is glorified when they accept what He has given them and are truly thankful for the gift of this child**

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Conclusion

Habakkuk 3:17-18

“Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive tree may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls – yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

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Conclusion

- **Habakkuk learned how to gracefully and full accept God's Providence in the face of impending doom**
- **He resolved to face the coming trials in joyful acceptance**

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Conclusion

Habakkuk 3:19

“The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer’s feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills.”

- **Habakkuk learned to depend fully and completely upon God for his joy**

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Conclusion

- **We must become like Habakkuk**
- **We must learn to trust, love, and worship God in the teeth of suffering under ALL afflictions**
- **We need to do this even to our hurt; even when His ways don't make sense to us**