

What Does the Bible Teach About Disabilities?

Exodus 4:10-12

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- “Then Moses said to the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue. 11 So the LORD said to him, Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? 12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

Is God Responsible for Disabilities?

- The disciples made a common assumption
 - John 9:1-3 - “Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.”

Is God Responsible for Disabilities?

- When tragedies happen to good people, or the young or innocent, people ask, “Why do they deserve such a fate?”
 - Acts 28:4 - “So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.”

Is God Responsible for Disabilities?

- To Calvinists, nothing happens that God did not plan and approve. This leads to the erring conclusion that God is the cause of evil
 - James 1:13 - “Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.”

Is God Responsible for Disabilities?

- I submit to you that we are completely mistaken in our view of disability. At the risk of sounding politically correct, but for a more noble reason, I believe we should describe such persons as “otherwise abled.”
- “Aerodynamically the bumblebee shouldn’t be able to fly, but the bumblebee doesn’t know that so it goes on flying anyway.” (Mary Ash)
- “Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you’re needed by someone.” (Martina Navratilova)
- “When you hear the word ‘disabled,’ people immediately think about people who can’t walk or talk or do everything that people take for granted. ...I find the real disability is in people who can’t find joy in life and are bitter.” (Teri Garr)

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Some physical trials come because this is not a perfect world
- When God made the world, it was perfect
 - Gen. 1:31 - “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Adam and Eve sinned; the world became fallen
 - Gen. 3:17-19 - “Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Sometimes it is a punishment for sin (King Uzziah became a leper when he rebelled against the worship of God)
 - 2Chron. 26:16-21
- Sometimes it is the result of someone else's sin
 - Lam. 5:7 - "Our fathers sinned and are no more, But we bear their iniquities."

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Some sins bring a high risk of disease in consequence
 - Rom. 1:26-27 - “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Sometimes the Adversary tempts people to abandon God - Job 1:6-12
- When Job did not curse God, Satan attacked his health - Job 2:7-10

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Sometimes trials come to test or to increase our character or usefulness in the Kingdom of God
 - James 1:2-4 - “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- 2Cor. 12:7-10 - “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Heb. 12:11 - “Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- God limits the severity of the trial
 - 1Cor. 10:13 - “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Sometimes afflictions come “just because”
- We cannot know what the future holds
 - Ecc. 9:1-2 - “For I considered all this in my heart, so that I could declare it all: that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God. People know neither love nor hatred by anything they see before them. 2 All things come alike to all: One event happens to the righteous and the wicked; To the good, the clean, and the unclean; To him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As is the good, so is the sinner; He who takes an oath as he who fears an oath.”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Some events have no relationship to the moral condition of the victim
 - Ecc. 9:11-12 - “I returned and saw under the sun that The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all. 12 For man also does not know his time...”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Some things happen randomly or by chance; God expects us to do our best regardless of our lot in life
 - Luke 13:2-5 - “And Jesus answered and said to them, Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Some are afflicted to highlight God's glory and power.
- The man was born blind so that Christ could heal him.
- Sarah was barren so that God could work the miracle of Isaac's birth.
- Lazarus died so that Jesus could show power over death.
 - John 11:4 - "When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- In other words, some are afflicted to serve a Divine purpose.
- It is no more our role to determine that purpose than it is for us to explain the Providence of God; just glorify God.

From Whence Do Disabilities Come?

- Are you a man or a woman? Glorify God in that role.
- Are you gifted with public speaking or skilled in private conversation? Glorify God in that role.
- Can you contribute two talents of gold or just two mites? Glorify God with your offering.
- Do you have the physical ability to walk easily into worship services or must you have assistance getting into the building? Just come in and glorify God in worship.

We Are Not God

- God has always held the afflicted in a special place in His love, and He expects His children to do the same
 - Lev. 19:14 - “You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the LORD.”
 - Deut. 27:18 - “Cursed is the one who makes the blind to wander off the road. And all the people shall say, Amen!”
 - James 1:27 - “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

We Are Not God

- When tragedy occurs, when a baby is born disabled, or an accident leaves a person paralyzed, do we know why it happened?
- We must trust God and just do our best with what we are given.
- God knew what Moses could and could not do better than Moses knew. God had already figured out how to make it work for His glory and for Moses' salvation.
- God made us as we are. Before we were born, he had already figured out how to make us so that we can glorify Him and be saved, regardless of how we view our limitations.

We Are Not God

- “Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” (Francis of Assisi)
- “My advice to other disabled people would be, concentrate on things your disability doesn’t prevent you doing well, and don’t regret the things it interferes with. Don’t be disabled in spirit as well as physically.” (Stephen Hawking)
- Moses, God made your mouth. Use it to praise Him and confess Jesus
- Christians, God made us. Use what we have been given to glorify Him and save our souls