**IF I WERE GOD I WOULD …**

Admit it. We have all said, at least silently and to ourselves, “If I were God I would do this differently.” Every single one of us have wanted to play God during a crisis in either our own life or in the world. For instance, *now*. If I were God I would stop this pandemic so that innocent people would not die, or suffering people could get well, or laid off employees could get back to work to feed their family, or …

Think through the Bible stories of even the greatest men and women who questioned God’s wisdom, or challenged His love, or doubted His power to get involved in a crisis. From Patriarchs, to Kings, to Prophets, all have doubted God’s intentions, either quietly or verbally. See if you have felt like some of these great men. I sure have.

**Noah**. This “*preacher of righteousness*” (2 Peter 2:5), this godly man who “*found grace in the eyes of the Lord*” (Genesis 6:8) must have been stunned beyond belief when told of God’s plan to drown every man, woman and child on planet earth. After all, he had many family members who would perish in this global flood. Methuselah, his grandfather, lived to the very year of the flood. His father Lamech was alive almost for the entire construction of the ark, dying just five years before the flood. Noah had many siblings who would die, for it says, “*After he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and had sons and daughters” (Gen. 5:30).* His in-laws (wife’s parents and siblings, and their families) would all die. This can’t be! If I were God …

**Abraham**. When this great patriarch was given the inside scoop on what God was about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah, he challenged God with this question: “*Would you also destroy the righteous with the wicked*?” Then followed it with this challenge, “*Far be it from You! Shall not the judge of all the earth do right*?” His righteous nephew Lot and his kinsmen were living there (see 2 Peter 2:7). Surely there were 50, no 45, 40, 30, 20, 10 righteous souls in all of the country! After all, godly men like King Melchizedek, a high priest of “*God Most High*,” lived near there (Gen. 14:18). There just had to be people God should spare from this scorched earth policy! If I were God…

**Job**. We all have sympathized with this righteous man’s circumstance. It was so *wrong* to allow this man to suffer whom God Himself described to Satan, *“Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”*  Throughout the book this man (and all of us) question why bad things happen to good people. If I were God…

**David**. When this “*man after God’s own heart*” (Acts 13:22) was informed by Gad that David’s sinful pride in numbering the army was going to bring a curse upon Israel, he was given three options. Three years of famine, three months of defeat, or three days of plague upon the land. In great distress David said, “*God’s mercies are very great, so let me fall into His hands*” (I Chronicles 21). For the next three days a plague descended upon the nation. Think of this, only 50,000 Americans have died in this Covid pandemic over a five-month span, but the angel of God killed 70,000 Israelites in three days! (I Chronicles 21:14). Just when David looked up and saw the angel about to strike the city of Jerusalem he cried out:

*“Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father’s house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued.”* David is saying, “God, this is not fair. I should die, not them!” In other words, If I were God…

**Jonah**. We all know the famous story of the prophet who fled from God because he hated the Assyrians for torturing people while building an empire. In this ironic twist, he knew God would show mercy if he preached judgment (Jon. 4:1-3). God’s final question to him gets to the heart of the matter: *“And should I not pity Nineveh … in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left?”* If I were God…

**Habakkuk**. The nation of Judah had become so corrupt that this humble man could not understand why God didn’t punish them, now! “*Lord, how long shall I cry and you not hear me*?” When God finally did answer he heard something that made his ears tingle and his heart break. God was sending wicked Babylon to destroy Judah and carry them into captivity! This led to the prophet’s follow-up question, *“Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?”* (Hab. 2:13). Why, If I were God…

Yes, if I were God these stories, and hundreds of others both in the Bible and in history would have turned out much different.
There would never have been a world flood.
Or the destruction of Sodom.
Or the death and destruction upon poor old Job.
Or 70,000 corpses due to David’s little pride problem.
Or the escape of barbarians like Nineveh.
Or the brutal burning of Jerusalem and 70 year exile into pagan Babylon.
Or the non-stop wars that have ravaged human history since the dawn of time.
Or the epidemics and pandemics that have scourged entire continents.
Or the killer tornadoes, tsunamis, hurricanes, typhoons, blizzards, hailstorms,
 firestorms, floods, mudslides, and other natural catastrophes. Or the …

Yes, and history would be much different, wouldn’t it? But would it be better? Would the world be a better place if God took away all free will? If God removed all disease? If God removed all storms or natural weather patterns? To change even one thing God has either allowed, or done, in history would be to say I am wiser and more benevolent than God. It is to believe my ways and thoughts are higher than God’s (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Perhaps it is best to quote Habakkuk’s take on this and let that stand as an answer to our own foolish playing God. Friends, I have learned two great truths in my 67 years of living: 1) There is a God. 2) I’m not Him. Habakkuk agrees:

Habakkuk 3 17 Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines;
 Though the labor of the olive 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—
18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.
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.

Until tomorrow… *Trust God*. He knows what He’s doing.

I love you.

Rick