

Trusting God's Inabilities

The Bible commands us to trust in the Lord with all our hearts. Also, Scripture promises that “those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.”¹ Such commands and promises focus our attention on God's infinite abilities. But what about his inabilities?

Sometimes God doesn't answer prayer the way we expect. Did he let us down? Did he betray our trust? We question his abilities because we overlook his inabilities.

We could prevent so much of our confusion and consternation by trusting God's inabilities. His inabilities assure us of his dependability when life treats us harshly. Confidence in his inabilities keeps us focused on his reliability when we can't understand what he does or doesn't do.

God's Inability to Do Anything Evil

God performed one awesome miracle after another for the Hebrews he brought out of Egypt. He intended these inescapably noticeable signs and wonders to demonstrate his reality and trustworthiness. Nevertheless, when formidable enemies resisted the Hebrews' march into the promised land, their determination to trust God wilted.

“Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?”²

These people of the Lord accused God of something he was incapable of doing—create evil.

Creativity springs out of the innermost being. Pianists make music because it's part of their person. Chefs prepare scrumptious meals because cooking is their natural bent and training. It's the same way with God. He only creates from what he is and “there is no wickedness in him.”³

God shared his creativity with both angels and humans and did not take it away when they rebelled against him. Therefore, when angels and humans sinned against the Lord, their God-given creativity decayed into ability to create evil. All the evil in the universe springs out of sinners' creativity. Accusing God of evil ascribes unwarranted guilt to him.

We can trust God's infinite inability to create evil. Let's regard God as the cure for evil, never its cause.

God's Inability to Run Out of Anything Good

God can do no evil because he is boundlessly good. Goodness is his nature, his inner most being. God is good because "God is love."⁴ Goodness is God and God is goodness.

Jesus uttered a curious statement: "No one is good except God alone."⁵ What does that mean? Don't lots of people do good things? Don't the angels carry out God's will and protect his children? Yes, God's human and angelic servants *do* good things, but goodness is not anyone's essential nature. Our goodness is the goodness God shares with us. On the other hand, he doesn't need anyone to share goodness with him, because his person is good. His character is excellent and flawless. Truly "no one is good except God alone."⁶

Goodness originates in God, emanates from him and permeates all creation. "Every good...gift is from above coming down from the Father..."⁷ "You are good and what you do is good."⁸

Everything God is, he is immeasurably. Consequently, he who is inexhaustibly good never runs out of anything good to give. We confidently expect God's goodness to spring out of life's pleasant or unpleasant times. His goodness transforms what we regard as bad into benefit. That which is awful he changes to our advantage.

God's Inability to Create Anything Deficient

About 2700 years ago a young Hebrew priest named Jeremiah lived in Anathoth, Israel. As far as we know, nothing distinguished Jeremiah as extraordinary. But one day God's Spirit spoke to this young man:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations,"⁹

Jeremiah reacted by pointing out his own deficiencies. "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."¹⁰

God corrected Jeremiah's claim of deficiency: "Do not say, „I am only a child.“"¹¹

Jeremiah failed to consider God's omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. Our God cannot and never will be able to create anyone or anything deficient!

God never creates before forming a plan for his handiwork. He never acts impulsively, but always purposefully. Everything and everyone he brings into being fits perfectly into his plans for eternity.

Since we are the product of God's creative genius, we cannot possibly be deficient. We are more than adequate for being and doing all he has in mind. God builds his adequacy into his handiwork.

But what about our inabilities? They mean nothing! We must never equate inability with deficiency.

We weren't made to do everything. God designed us to do a few things very well. Concentrate on what you can do, not what you can't do. Be like the Lord who made you. Consider only what you have, not what you lack.

By trusting God's inabilities and abilities we become totally confident in him.

Footnotes:

1. Psalm 34:10
2. Numbers 14:3
3. Psalm 92:15
4. 1 John 4:16
5. Mark 10:18
6. Ibid.
7. James 1:17
8. Psalm 119:68
9. Jeremiah 1:5
10. Jeremiah 1:6
11. Jeremiah 1:7