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Am I Childless Because I Don't Fear God Enough?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about whether the fact that God gave the Hebrew midwives families because they feared him indicates that childlessness is a sign of not fearing God enough and whether it's a genetic fallacy to point out the eugenics philosophy of the founder of Planned Parenthood when arguing against abortion.

* Since God gave the Hebrew midwives families because they feared him, does my childlessness mean my husband and I aren't fearing God enough?

* Is it a genetic fallacy to point out the eugenics philosophy of Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, when arguing against abortion?

Transcript

[Music] [Bell] I'm Amy Hall, I'm here with Greg Koukl and you're listening to the #STRask podcast. Welcome. Hi, Amy.

Hi, Greg. Let's start with a question from Marie. My husband and I have struggled with childlessness for several years.

Exodus 121 says that God gave the Hebrew midwives families because they feared him. Does this mean that we are not fearing God enough to be given families? Or was this a specific blessing for these midwives only? No, this is God bless you, Marie. I know this is a tough circumstance that you're in.

It's one of the hardest things that I think a married woman has to face if she is not able to have a child, at least at the moment. And there were a number of people in the Bible that were like that. Elizabeth was one, Hannah was another, and they ended up being heard by God and having children all late in life that were magnificent.

God used them in a magnificent way. But that is by no means a promise that that's going to happen to anyone else in the same situation who prays the same way. In this particular case, God was giving a particular blessing to a particular people in a particular

circumstance.

He does not always do that. So there could be all kinds of faithful people, women who are childless, that God does not reward their faithfulness in that way. So this is descriptive.

This isn't meant to demonstrate a pattern that faithful people get blessed with children. Those faithful people were blessed with children, but that doesn't mean all faithful people get blessed with children. Now, by the way, I don't think there's anything wrong with citing that before God, not as a promise, but as an example of him acting with mercy.

And in fact, there are lots of passages that I pray. Knowing I'm not praying a promise in context, but I am using the concept and my holding before the Lord is saying, "You know what you did for them? Would you do the same for me?" You know what you did? In fact, I did it yesterday. Now I'm thinking about it.

This was the, I think, is it the widow? This Elisha provides for food and the oil that she was able to sell and take care of her family, then her son died and he raised the son. Well, he told her that there's a famine coming, so you need to leave and go somewhere else. And so she went and lived with the Philistines for seven years, and when she came back, she wanted her land back.

And so what happened was that Elisha brokered something with the king so that this woman got not only her land in her house back, but all of the produce for the last seven years. So in other words, she did not suffer loss personally, even though there were seven years of famine, there was some produce from that land that belonged to her, and so she got paid back. Now, this doesn't always happen.

Sometimes people suffer loss for a long period of time, and they don't get, you know, in another passage what the locusts have devoured restored to them. But in this case, she did. And so I'm praying, Lord, I'm facing similar circumstances.

I want you to do for me what you did for her. That's a legitimate prayer. Now, I can't say you promised because you did it for her and you got to treat me fairly the same.

I can't do that, which is, I think, the nature of the question. Well, it's not about fairness. It's about whether they're rewarded for godliness, and maybe if we don't get rewarded in a similar situation, we're not godly like they were.

That's not the equation. I think it's a specific blessing, like I said, under that particular circumstance. But there's no reason not to pray.

Lord, I have followed you. I am your servant. I am your daughter.

And this is what you did for them. Please do that for me. And then see, God may say yes, he may say no, he may say wait.

I think there's an idea behind this question that every one of us has to wrestle with, because even if we don't think it intellectually, I think it's usually lurking behind a lot of our thinking. And I know we've talked about this before, Greg, especially when we've discussed unanswered prayer in the past on this show. But the idea that maybe I don't have a child because I'm not faithful enough, behind that is this kind of assumption that we have.

And part of this is cultural part of it, I don't know, just being human. This idea that if we do things right, then everything will work out perfectly for us the way that we have imagined in all the perfect ways. And that's just not the case.

Well, that perception goes all the way back to Job, which is the oldest book of the Bible. Yes, and everyone, and like I said, even if you intellectually know that's false, when you actually get into the situation and you're facing the difficulty, questions about did I do something wrong, why, how can I trust God if he's going to let these things happen? But when we look in the Bible, what we see is sometimes God protects people. You know, I think about Peter being rescued from the jail, and then I think about Stephen being stoned to death, or John the Baptist being beheaded.

Or Paul sitting in multiple jails for years. Yes. It's not that God is for the faithful people making everything work out.

Instead, I think he has two things in mind. He has his glory. So there are certain ways sometimes he's glorified by a miracle, or the miracle of a child, or saving people in some way, or healing them.

And sometimes he's glorified by people remaining faithful to him despite the suffering. They're showing that he is more valuable to them, and they trust that he is real despite, and they trust his character despite the fact that they are going through these sufferings, and that glorifies God. And so... Those are the and others in Hebrews 11.

Right. Faith delivered, faith delivered, and others, you know, not delivered, but also by faith. So, suffering can show God's glory, and it also works for our good, as we see in Romans 8, 28, and 29, where God makes us like Christ through our suffering, through all sorts of different ways.

So as long as we understand that those two things are God's goal, his goal is not our comfort and not our perfect lives, his goal is his glory and our good, and that will involve all sorts of things that we wish it would not involve. But as long as we understand the right long-term goal that God is working towards, we won't suspect that he is holding out on us or that he's making a mistake or all those things. In fact, I think that we just need

to hang on to a few different things as we're going through suffering, and one of them is the fact that God loves his people.

We certainly see that on the cross. We see that throughout the Bible. We know this is not because of a lack of love for you.

We also know God knows how to change your situation. It's not because of a lack of knowledge or wisdom or any of those things. And we also know that he's the power to change the situation, considering the fact that he raised Jesus from the dead.

There's not anything greater that you could do that than raising someone from the dead. So, if he loves you and he knows how to change your situation and he has the power to change your situation, it's not because of a lack of ability, it's not because of a lack of knowledge, it's not because of a lack of love. When you put all those things together, the only conclusion we can come to is that there is a good purpose for what we're going through, even if we don't know what that is.

So, all we can do, we can't trust him to fix things, we can't trust him to change the situation, we can't trust him to make our lives perfect, but we trust him, we trust his character, and that's the only thing we can hold on to going through this. And his wisdom in making the choice regarding us that he thinks is best. As long, I think knowing that our suffering has meaning is something that can help us get through it.

The hardest thing I think going through something like this is this temptation to think that God doesn't really love you. So, whatever you can do to remind yourself, you know, Paul says in Ephesians that he prays for them to understand God's love, because he says that's how you will be filled to all the fullness of God when you understand the depth of his love. So, I think by thinking about the cross, by reading various books about who God is, who Jesus is, what he's done for us, we can kind of saturate ourselves in this idea of God's love to get us through these times.

Amy, one of the passages that for me has meant a lot in speaking to your point about the suffering is not for naught, even if we're not rescued, it's for a purpose. Is 2 Corinthians 4 verses 16 through 18, and this is where Paul is talking about the outer man is, you know, wasting away the inner person is being built up. And then he has this, he ends the thought with this phrase, "Momentary light affliction," which Paul is trying to put things into perspective.

It doesn't seem momentary, but compared or light. But it's momentary compared to eternity and it's light compared to what we get from it. And that's where the verb comes in.

"Momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory." And so, you know, when I experience difficulties that I can't pray away, I have an assurance from this

passage and I have to keep going back to it and reminding myself that as I persevere in this difficult circumstance, I am in a certain sense to trade on the metaphor of another passage laying up treasures in heaven where neither maw nor rust can destroy, nor thieves can break in and steal. And so that's where my focus needs to be. Okay, the satisfaction isn't coming in this moment, but this struggle as I go through it with Christ is producing something for which there's no comparison.

Paul makes that point in Romans 8, suffering through this present age, do not even compare to the glorious editor of the Father. And we're called, as we're going through suffering, to not give into the temptation to sin in any way, to relieve our suffering or whatever it is to get comfort in some way. So that's what we need to focus on.

What is the godly thing to do in the situation I'm in right now? In fact, that's almost precisely the way Peter puts it at the end of chapter 4 of 1 Peter, for those who suffer according to the will of God, commit yourself to a faithful creator. There's the trust in doing what is right. Just as Jesus did.

Very little, very straightforward RX there. Well, this is suffering is the, I think it's the topic everyone has to deal with. It's the most difficult topic.

And I think it's probably the topic the church talks about the least, unfortunately. But this is something we all have to think about. And reading through your Bible will give you the tools that you need to do that.

Like you said, first Peter is a great book for suffering. It's all about suffering. Well, one of the reasons, I think that is one reason it's so much harder for people is because there is a kind of a, I think a shallow triumphalism in the church.

Everything's wonderful. Every Sunday you come in and isn't it great to be here, isn't it great to praise the Lord? Hallelujah. It's good to have read.

Well, I'm guarantee you like at least 25% of the people don't feel that way. Now they're there on purpose. They're there to be fed.

They're rare to be encouraged. But when we are asked to kind of pump up this stuff that we're supposed to be feeling and there's a presumption that we're feeling it, it's just hard sometimes. And I think we're right back to the idea that if I'm following God, my life is going to be great.

So I can't admit anything is wrong because now it looks like I'm not a good Christian. Well, here's another thing to remember. Being a good Christian is glorifying Christ.

So when you are expressing your either your repentance from your sin or your difficulties and your trust in Christ, that is what honors Christ. The fact that you are limited and depending on him. So the more that we're open about that, the more glory he gets.

Not not when we act like we don't need him. Why does that glorify him? We just have so many strange views about how to deal with these things. For worship leaders out there, I'm just going to offer an exhortation.

I have a lot of concerns about the way worship is conducted. I mean, a lot of churches. I just will say I rarely enjoy the worship in most churches.

I won't get into all the things. I don't want to sound like a crab. If worship leaders would just start worshiping and not kind of try to set the scene with these triumphalist phrases, here we are together.

Isn't everything wonderful? Isn't everything great? I mean, there's about 50 ways that they make the same basic idea statement. They're trying to pump up the audience. Why don't you start worship? Just leave us be ourselves in the audience and then give us something that will allow us to connect with God.

That's another problem I have with worship because so much the music is ugly. When I say ugly, I think the melodies are ugly and the words are banal. It's very difficult to connect with God, but then worship leaders a lot of times don't help.

The best worship I've had is when there's almost no interaction from the worship leader. The worship leader just presents music that people could enter into that has a beauty to it. It can be like happy music, whatever.

It has words that are true and they're not all about me and my feelings. Think of all the worship songs where we're expressing how wonderful we feel with God. It drives me nuts.

So just a word to the wise who are worship leaders and if the shoe fits. So one last thing along that note, Greg, note, no pun intended with worship leaders. It is the understanding of who God is that gets us through these times.

So the more in worship that you are directing people to who God is and you're directing them to worship rather than to their own feelings about God or whatever that is, the more you will empower them to go through these times of suffering. Because this is all about knowing who God is and trusting him. Okay, Greg, let's do another question.

This one comes from Julie Spike. Is it a genetic fallacy to point out the origin of Planned Parenthood, which is based on the eugenics philosophy of Margaret Sanger in arguing against abortion? No, it's not because, well, let me back up and put it this way. The, well, I guess it kind of depends on how it's used.

If you're going to say abortion is wrong because Margaret Sanger was involved in eugenics, abortion is right or wrong regardless of what Margaret Sanger did. That's not a reflection on abortion as the issue. That is a reflection on Planned Parenthood, which

promotes abortion.

Okay. So this is about an organization. Now, it turns out that abortion takes the life of an innocent human being without proper justification.

It is according to the Bible, a violation of the Sixth Amendment. And I have been making this case very clearly. I just did it Sunday.

Today's Tuesday. I just did it Sunday for a church. And two days or three days I'll make the same case at CIA.

And I made it four weeks ago or three weeks ago at O'Church, Wisconsin. There is a powerful biblical argument from Luke chapter one that makes it absolutely clear that Jesus and John the Baptist were themselves while still in the womb. John was a, I'm sorry, a fetus and Jesus was an embryo at the time these events took place.

So, biblically speaking, abortion is gross immorality. It is a violation of the Sixth Commandment. Now, I'm just speaking biblically.

You can figure all that stuff out largely without the Bible. That's another way of arguing. But it is entirely fair insofar as an organization is promoting something that is morally grotesque that you identify on different grounds to look at the nature of the organization that is pushing this.

And Margaret Sanger was a new Genesis. She believed that some people had good genes and some people didn't. Is that some familiar? Yeah, that's what Hitler thought.

And that's what the Japanese thought. The Axis powers. Italy was in there too, but they didn't last long in the war.

But Mussolini was admired all over the United States prior to the war. And he was a fascist. So these are the kinds of things that were characteristic of these organizations.

So, what we can say is these organizations were not noble organizations and they continue to follow an ignoble path. And see, I think that would be the best way to put it. She was also a racist.

As my understanding is that one of the things she wanted to make sure happened was that there were less black people, just like for the third right. That there were less Jews. So there's a book about, I'm trying to look at an Amy now wondering if she doesn't have the, it's called, I can't remember it.

What is it about? It's about Margaret Sanger and the history of Planned Parenthood and her background. And I just can't think of it right now. But it really describes everything in her background and her beliefs and whatever.

And this was the founding of Planned Parenthood. Now, look at some organizations are founded on one set of principles they operate now on another, like the Boy Scouts or the YMCA or Salvation Army or whatever. But so they go from good to bad or good to compromise it in some way.

But some other organizations start out bad and go good. So what you have to look is the whole historical thing. Planned Parenthood started out bad and it's still bad today.

Even though they sanitize their behavior with language about women's health and all that, they are, what they're mostly interested in is abortion and promoting abortion. And they won't help you if you're pregnant and you don't want an abortion. Well, I think it's also fair to bring out the past because the philosophy behind each is the same.

So the idea that the children in the womb are expendable or outside the womb or whatever it is, they're expendable for a greater, some other, greater purpose, some other kind of social engineering you want to do. They're some greater good, they would argue. That whole idea that it's fine to prevent the lives of human beings because they are less wanted than other human beings, these ideas play out in both areas.

So it's completely fair to say, look, here is how these two ideas, they fit together. What they're doing now, what Planned Parenthood is doing now, as you pointed out, Greg, is along the same lines of what her views were. They flow directly out of that view of the human being and that view of the expendability of human beings and the undesirability of human beings.

Of some. Right, of some human beings. Right.

This is what Robert J. Lifton in his superb book, "The Nazi Doctors." I know it sounds really gruesome, but he was just simply asking the question, how is it that the medical profession could be leveraged in two participating in the final solution? And one of the ways he mentioned is that they bought the idea of, as he put a killing as a therapeutic imperative, killing as a therapeutic imperative. It is imperative we kill these people in order to improve therapeutically something that needs to be improved. Okay, whether it's an individual life or whether it's the racial configuration, you know, healing for the culture, healing for the race.

Let's get rid of the, this is what is going on right now in Iceland. They're very proud that they have virtually no down syndrome children in Iceland. We've eliminated down syndrome in Iceland.

No, you haven't. You've eliminated down syndrome children. They kill them in the womb.

Amniocentesis is a search and destroy mission. And since none are born, they think they solve the problem. And every once in a while, one or two gets through.

Right. And, but see, this is killing as therapeutic imperative. And Lifton says, when you take that turn, unbelievable evil follows.

And this is what we saw in the third Reich. We saw that we see the same thing in red China with the way a sex selection abortions, for example. A girls are killed because aborted because they're girls, not boys.

And this is exactly what you were just describing with the mentality of Margaret Sanger and Planned Port Parenthood. Then, and same mentality sanitized with different language like my body, my choice. Still the same thing, killing as therapeutic imperative.

All right. One last note, Greg, you mentioned you were going to be speaking about this at CIA. And I just wanted to clarify that's not the central intelligence agency.

That's a good point. It's the cross-examine instructor academy run by Prank Turic. So I just wanted to throw that out there.

I wanted to talk to all these spies. In case anyone's out there really excited. Oh my gosh, great to the CIA.

Yeah, I could tell you where it's going to be at, but I have to kill you. Well, thank you for your questions, everyone. And we'd love to hear from you.

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