

real life

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There, I said it. The sky didn't crumble. My heart didn't stop. And the world marched on.

I know; I'm in dangerous territory. Foolish actually—for being angry with God leaves me nowhere else to turn. But I'm here, so I might as well admit it.

Sometimes in my disappointment, I lose focus. Godly families lose their homes. Chronic illness attacks Spirit-filled wives. And good people die while criminals prey on innocent children. Frankly, it outrages me.

At times, I project this anger and fear into demands on God.

"God, you can do anything?" I remind Him. "You promised restored health, the return of the prodigal, and plans for a good life. What's going on here?"

And on my most spiritually shallow days, I get Him good, "Why didn't you just kill the devil, God?"

Somewhere along the way, I lost perspective.

Initially, I came to know God out of fear. I learned of His righteousness and of His wrath and I came to Him for salvation. When I made that commitment, I wasn't looking for anything God could do for me other than save me from Hell.

Where did I get sidetracked? When did I start believing God should always heal me and my loved ones and protect us in ways I deemed suitable?

I guess it happened when I started thinking of God as some sort of slot-machine, Santa-Claus image who magically granted all my wishes if I'd been nice rather than naughty.

How did I lose the reverence and awe of God? Did I forget the excellence of the Holy Spirit? The Sovereignty of God? The wonder of the cross?

My vision skewed as I tried to bridge the chasm between my preconceived notion of some sort

of magical exemption from adversity and God's abiding presence in the midst of pain. That's one difficult divide.

The truth: no one is exempt from hardships and heartaches. The Bible warns us of dark hours, "Do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering" (1 Pet. 4:12) and "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33).

Yet God's Word also promises His presence: "(The Lord) will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged" (Deut. 31:8) and "Surely, I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20).

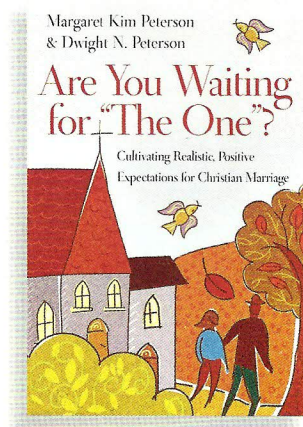
I've learned life isn't always fair. But I'm comforted knowing that Jesus understands. Jesus had one of the hardest lives I know, yet He experienced joy and triumph because He focused on His Father. And He intends for us to do the same—in spite of difficult circumstances which we may never comprehend.

I still don't have the answers and there are days I still battle anger at the injustice of it all. Yet as a child of God, Jesus advocates for me. I am under His covering—His protection, provision, and healing. And as an overcomer, Jesus set the example for me.

Jo Ann Fore | Johnson City, Tennessee

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