Easy To Sulk, Better to Love

Abigail Bevan 3 May 2016



I was reading Job 23 and was reminded of a word brought by an elder of our church, who shared about trusting God, even when life seems unfair. He mentioned how it often seems to be those who are really obeying God and doing everything right who end up being given the biggest cups of suffering. Jesus is the perfect example of this.

This morning I had a discussion with my son, Wesley, about why I want him to learn to be self-controlled and loving, even when things don't go his way. I explained to him that love is not about being nice when you are given everything you want – that's a selfish, emotional response, though a harmless one.

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Love is a choice. Love is pouring ourselves out in unselfish sacrifice, even when the very people we're serving are the ones causing us pain. Again, Jesus is the perfect example of this. I said to Wes that the best thing is sometimes for me not to give him everything he wants at the exact moment he asks for it. Sometimes it's necessary to ask him to wait, or even for me to say no to him. My heart as his parent is to teach him, even to model for him, a loving response in these situations.

I want Wes to learn to love, to be unselfish and generous, even when he's inconvenienced,

confused or hurt. I want him to learn to communicate how he's feeling, but in a way that is respectful. And then, if the situation remains the same, even after he's explained why he doesn't like the status quo, I want him to learn to accept the decision with joy. It's easy to accept with a sulky face and storm away to cool off. But that's not loving. It's not good for anyone involved.

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Acceptance with joy is the understanding that even death is just a shadow. That suffering doesn't have to cause us to live in crippling bitterness, fear or misery. Actually, with Jesus enabling us, we are invincible – nothing can touch us. Does this mean we will never experience heartache, pain, disappointment or fear? No. It just means that these emotions don't have to control us. We can choose to love despite these human gut reactions, like Jesus did in the garden of Gethsemane. It's often not easy to choose love. Jesus experienced such trauma that He sweated blood. But then He **chose** love. As one fully God but also fully man, He showed us that it is possible to choose love in **any** situation.

Love is often really difficult, but it's worth it. Choosing love means accepting a peace and joy that is able to defy circumstance. It means walking in an intimacy with God that is so full of romance, adventure and fulfillment that everything else in life becomes strangely dim. This is what we were created for. To choose love. To learn that love always wins. To learn to trust that God is good, even when He doesn't seem safe.