



What in the World Is God Doing?

God is the only person to whom I can say whatever I want....

You've probably heard the story about the Christian who was caught in a flood. The rain came down, the water rose, and he sat on top of his house praying. A man came by in a boat to rescue him, and the Christian said, "No, I'm fine. I'm a Christian, and God is going to save me." Later someone came in a helicopter and lowered a ladder, admonishing him to climb up to safety. Again, the Christian refused, saying he trusted God to save him. Shortly thereafter, the water rose over his head and he drowned. When the Christian found himself before God's throne, he asked God why he didn't answer his prayer. "I *did* answer your prayer," God said. "I sent a boat *and* a helicopter!"

I got a great e-mail recently from a man who told me about an unusual way I had taught him about love. He wrote:

"You've taught me a lot about God's love. I drive a truck, and the radio is right above my head. After listening to your last tape, I ejected it but left it in the radio. While driving I was cut off, and just when I really started getting angry, the tape popped out and hit me on the head. Your tapes have more than one way to teach us to be loving!"

Did you ever think that God is the God of circumstances? "From him and through him and to him are all things" (Romans 11:36). When we fail to see that, we miss much of what God is doing in the world and in our lives. God sometimes acts directly and, of course, speaks through his Word...but we miss so much of what God is doing when we fail to recognize that the circumstances of our lives are ordained by a loving Father who knows what he is doing.

Quite early one morning I was praying, but, frankly, I wasn't in the mood to pray, and I told God that fact. My morning devotional time isn't always very "spiritual." In fact, if you came into my

study and heard me praying, you'd probably be shocked. God is the only person to whom I can say whatever I want—the only one who can deal with me at my worst and still love me.

I did my best to worship and my best wasn't very good. So I prayed, "Lord, I don't even know how to do this right. I'm not sure if my worship pleases you. If you teach me, I'll try to do it better."

Two days later, I got a book from my friend, Bruce Fogerty, titled, *How to Worship Jesus Christ*, by Joseph Carroll. That's amazing enough. But let me tell you about the note Bruce sent along with the book. He said, "Steve, I was praying and the Lord told me to send you this book. I hate doing it. It's one of my favorites—the only copy I have. I've tried to ignore what God said, but he won't leave me alone. So, I'm reluctantly sending it."

I, of course, told Bruce that I would read it and give it back to him the next time I saw him...but I also told him about my prayer—a prayer nobody knew about except my heavenly Father.

What is happening in your life right now? It isn't an accident—recognize that the circumstance is from him. That's why Paul said that we are to give thanks to God for all things (Ephesians 5:20), because all things are from him.

The upside to this whole biblical teaching about the God of circumstances is this—every circumstance comes from a God who loves you and will make sure that every circumstance will benefit you and glorify him (Romans 8:28). The good stuff comes from him, too. The raise you got, the love of your wife or husband, the laughter of your children.

God often says something like this to me: "Child, look at me. Listen. Wake up! It's all from me. Quit complaining and trust me." He says something like that to you too. He asked me to remind you. □

—Steve Brown