

Why A Dark Night of the Soul?

What is God's purpose in allowing or possibly inducing a dark night of the soul? Is He just toying with us for divine delight or tampering with our spiritual equilibrium to amuse Himself? Is He entertained by the physical and spiritual anguish of those who have committed themselves to Him?

Description:

“ . . . these times in the believer's pilgrimage often correspond to what the ancient Christian writers called 'a dark night of the soul' in which the Spirit secretly does a deep work in the human spirit—a work that is so profound but feels so foreign to the Christian's experience that it is often interpreted as the absence of God.” John Coe, *Musings on the Dark Night of the Soul: Insights from St. John of the Cross on a Developmental Spirituality*.

God's Purpose:

I believe God's goal is to produce in you and me a simple childlike trust which is no longer shaken by the threat of darkness or despair. Our journeys through the dark nights of the soul wean us of self-trust and develop a confidence that God remains good and great no matter what happens in the world or to you and to me as His subjects.

I invite you to dialog with me regarding the purpose of Dark Night of the Soul.

Jim Anderson, NCD Director of Pastoral Care
Productiverest@brainerd.net

The Outcome of Such Times Expressed in Scripture

^{NIV} **Job 42:1** Then Job replied to the LORD:

² "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.

³ *You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.*

⁴ *"You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.'*

⁵ *My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.*

⁶ *Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."*

Psalm 73:21-28 A psalm of Asaph. ²¹ When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, ²² I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. ²³ Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. ²⁴ You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. ²⁵ *Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.* ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷ Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. ²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 ¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. ¹⁹ The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.

Luke 22:39-45 ³⁹ Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." ⁴¹ He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; *yet not my will, but yours be done.*" ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

2 Corinthians 1:8-10 ⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹ Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

Psalms 62:11-12 ¹¹ One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, ¹² and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.

"His goal, in the language of John Wesley, is that we be made perfect in love, that Christ's love becomes our love both toward God and others."

By Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*

"When we make it through the wall we no longer have a need to be well known or successful, but to do God's will." By Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*

...

Trust Beyond Score Keeping:

Luke 10:17-20 ¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." ¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

1 John 2:12-15 ¹² I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. ¹³ I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father. ¹⁴ I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.