

Why Believing That God Is Sovereign Makes All the Difference

Rest Assured in God's Sovereignty

Most of us would confess freely that God is sovereign. We wouldn't deny that. But it's the application of his sovereignty—that he's in control of all things—that tends to give us a little bit of trouble, in particular with the idea of contentment.

The doctrine of God's providence says that God orders everything that comes to pass to come to pass. And everything, like the Heidelberg catechism says, comes to us as if it comes to us from his very own fatherly hand. That becomes a framework, a lens, for us to see the world around us.

2 Examples

So if, for example, we are afflicted with some type of sickness or a physical condition, the Christian understands that we live in a broken world, that this world is filled with sin, and one of the repercussions of sin is physical affliction—sickness. But we also understand that God is working in the midst of this broken world, for our good and for his glory. So we are able to see our physical affliction as a tool to help us to be more dependent upon God.

Why did the sickness come? We live in this broken world. But God is sovereign, so he's allowed it or even ordered it for the purpose of our good. When I think about God's sovereignty, and I think about contentment, I have to look at my life circumstances and understand that God has allowed these things to come for my own good.

I think of single people who desire to be married. It's natural for someone that wants to be married to find themselves becoming restless. But that restlessness should then drive us back to the question, "What does God have to do with this? If God is sovereign, then he has allowed me to be single at this moment, even though I have this desire to be married."

Instead of grumbling and being discontent, pondering this question leads us to pray and ask God if he would be pleased to bring us a spouse. The sovereignty of God might then tell us that marriage is something that's outside of his will at this point, but we're able to rest in God knowing that, in his love, he has ordered it.

He Has Done It

And so, whether it's physical sickness, marriage, or even a desire for another job that pays the bills, the temptation might be to become discontent. Instead of becoming discontent, think about God's sovereignty; know that this is what he's provided at this point, and you can rest in him. Yes, you can pray, you can get to work, and you can look for opportunities. But do all those things in a way that's not grumbling, but instead resting in God's sovereignty. And then when the new job, the spouse, or the healing comes, we're able to praise God that he has done it, and he's made us more content along the way.

...

Erik Raymond is the senior pastor at Redeemer Fellowship Church in Watertown, Massachusetts. He is a frequent contributor to many websites and periodicals, and blogs regularly at Ordinary Pastor, hosted by the Gospel Coalition. Used by permission.