

You Cannot Blame God for What Happened to You

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My name is Diego Medina. I'm 37 years old. I grew up in Puerto Rico in a Catholic background. Not really heavily involved, but we used to go to church. And there was a time where I was even an altar boy and helped around the church. And I remember growing up, my family was very spiritual besides believing in God, besides having the Catholic faith, Christ, God, the saints - all kind of saints. Even my second name is after a saint. We all believed in spirits, talking to the spirits, trying to read the cards and things like that. So very spiritual. So I would have a concept of God and I had people around me that talk about God, but He was out there. And there was really no standard to live by. You pretty much do what you thought was right in your own conscience. And if your conscience didn't condemn you, then it was good. There was no standard, per se. There was no law, no Bible.

So, I remember growing up, these authorities in my life, the influence of my family, the priests of the church. I'm looking at their life and everybody's just doing what they think is right, and no fear of God. So I'm doing the same thing. Even my priest for a time, this man that I trusted and my family trusted, he actually molested me - sexually molested me. And even that, seeing this man doing that - touch me where he wasn't supposed to - ways that are wrong, and then the next Sunday I'm sitting in the church and he's preaching. He's ministering the communion. He's representing God, and the God that we all knew at the time. The God that I knew was God out there. The right or wrong was pretty much what you thought was right or wrong and what people around you allowed you to get away with.

So even that experience of being sexually molested, I could have used that as an excuse to say, "Forget You, God." "I'll have nothing to do with You." I was sexually molested, so I'm going to indulge in homosexuality. I'm going to indulge in promiscuity and just going out there and enjoy sin and lust and sexual lust. But by the grace of God, it didn't happen like that. I didn't use that as an excuse. That was (unintelligible). Yeah, it was hard to deal with. Traumatic, difficult. [It] affected me, but it was not an excuse for me to do what was wrong. It was not an excuse for me to disobey God. Having this figure, this man that represented God at that age, I could have easily just said, you know what? Forget you. God is not real. Or this "god" is not worth it to serve if he's this type of man.

But he's a man with struggles. He will have to answer to God for what he did. And I have to answer to God for how I reacted to that and how I deal with my own life. So, rejecting God for a man doesn't make sense. You may wonder why did that happen? If God is a loving God, why did He allow that to happen? But we're not here to question God. He created us. We're here to trust in Him.

And even today, even now looking back, I can see how that experience and the healing of that experience, God has used it in my own life to be able to relate to my wife, to be able to relate to other people. So at the end, Scripture fulfilled itself: all things work for good to those who trust or love God and are called by Him. It's not an excuse. And it's not worth it to reject

God for what a person did - for one man. Or in your case, could be [what] one woman did to you.

So, I just went on in my teenage years. I had a few friends that they assisted to a different church - a protestant church. They were very faithful. They would go every week without failing, but I noticed that between them and I, there was really no difference. I was actually - not going to church - I was actually a better, more moral person than they were. So, my concept of God and fearing God really didn't exist. I didn't know what was acceptable before God. I thought everything was acceptable as long as your conscience was clear.

So, I just went on with my life. There was a time that I was by myself, no longer with my family. And I had a lot of time on my hands. And a freedom to actually be myself. And the true person that was in me came out and I really enjoyed to indulge myself in sexual immorality. I dishonored my mother by the way I spoke to her and by the way I spoke of her. And my objective in life, my whole life was around scheduling my sin: where I was going to go tonight to dance and have a great time and what lines I was going to use to pick up a girl and hopefully seduce her and take her home. And that was my whole life. And I really enjoyed it at the time. It was the only reason for living. And I was able to sleep like a baby. You know, I didn't really have any remorse or my conscience wasn't awakened condemning me. It was normal. It was perfect. It was actually the right thing to do.

I remember one time losing my job, and by the providence of God ending up in San Antonio where I live today. And there was one family member that was a believer. She had Bible study at her house and everything. So I come to San Antonio and I don't know anyone, so I started going to her house. And I pick up my Bible for the first time really which I had for a long time. And I started reading. And I started seeing the God of the Bible. And I realized that it was not the god that I knew before. The god that I knew before was a god that was there to hear my prayers - my selfish, self-centered prayers - and to answer them. And I remember growing up praying and getting everything I asked for. So that was a great god to serve. And the one time that he didn't answer my prayer, he didn't give me what I wanted, I said forget you. I don't need you. And from that day on, all my accomplishments, everything that I did in life which by my own standards I was very successful, it was all because of me and not because of God.

So being brought to San Antonio, I started reading the Bible. I realize that the God of the Bible was not the god that I knew. He actually had a standard to live by. And His standard was very different than mine. And I remember something happening. I remember not being able to continue sinning and enjoy it. I remember one time telling someone this is wrong. And they tell me that's okay. We'll do it and then we'll go to church on Sunday if that's what you want. And I'm like, no, you don't understand. It's not the fact that we can go to church. It's the fact that it's wrong.

And I started feeling the weight of my decisions, of the way I was living my life. Looking back and seeing, okay, I was sexually molested by a priest, and all the things that I was taught from what I saw. I saw this man that supposedly served the Lord bending the standards that I was reading. And I was just thinking, I thought I was right. If I was able to sleep, my conscience was clear doing what I was doing. But now that I have seen the standard of God, now that I have seen the God of the Bible, it's like, oh, am I wrong? Am I understanding this wrong? Or

everyone in my past, everyone in my life is being deceived. And they've been teaching me something that is wrong.

That went on, I remember, wow, like for six months. Me, from that day on, trying to live according to God's standards. Trying to keep the commandments on my own. And I remember every time feeling more hopeless, more condemned. The law kept coming [down] on me. The more I knew of God's standard, the more I knew of His righteousness, of what He demanded from men, the more hopeless I was because the more I tried to live to that, I couldn't. I wanted to say no to women. I couldn't. I wanted to say no to selfishness, to lying, to stealing on my income tax, to honor my mother - I couldn't. I just was unable to do it.

And when I look at my life and I look at God's standard, and I look at the righteousness of God in the Bible, I was like I'm condemned. I have no hope. And I remember coming home one night very empty. I used to go out almost every night to fill my void. I used to go clubbing, dancing. That was my way out. And I remember coming home by myself that night. I just walked into my room. I screamed out: I have no hope! I'm trying to keep Your law. I'm trying to keep Your standard. And I can't. So I am condemned. And I remember falling on my knees and telling Him, "If You don't save me, I'm done." This is it. I cannot do it. This is Your standard and I cannot live by it. I tried for six months on my own. And I can't. Every opportunity that I have to disobey God, every opportunity that I have to follow my desires, I followed my desires.

So I remember screaming that out, falling on my knees and asking Him, "If You don't save me, I have no hope. So it's up to You. Show Your pity on me. Show mercy on me." And I fell asleep. And I remember waking up the next day. And it was different. It was different. At the time, I didn't understand what happened. I just knew that God heard my prayer and actually, for the first time. For the first time. I felt guided. I actually was able to find a church where there were people I could talk to and edify each other and study together. And getting to know God more and really understanding what just happened in that prayer, and how God through Christ was showing me mercy. Through Christ, He was giving me life. Through Christ, He was giving me hope. I have hope now that I didn't have before.

Before, I just lived for the moment. Before, I didn't care about the future. Before, I just cared about the present - whatever I was doing. When I encountered the God of the Bible, I realized I had no hope, no future. I realized I was helpless and in despair. And when I cried out for mercy, for that God to forgive me for transgressing against Him, for sinning against Him, and He did. In Christ, He did. I actually am able to enjoy life. I'm actually able to rejoice. I look to Him for that hope, for that guidance. I make many mistakes now in my walk as a Christian. Many mistakes. But the one thing that is different is that before when I sinned against God, when I transgressed His law, I had no hope. I had nowhere to run. I was condemned. I deserved His wrath. I deserved to go to hell. And that was it. Now, when I fail, when I sin, I can confess and I can look to the cross and I can ask Christ to give me that security. To just cling to that cross and know that it's not from my performance, it's not from me obeying God's commandments, but it's from His obedience and from His dying on the cross for me that I have peace with God.

And now I see God - this was one thing, I was talking to Nedelka - my wife - this week. Before, I saw God and I referred to God as God and that Being out there. But now, He's my Father. Now when I fail, I look at my Father to correct me. Before, when I sinned, I looked at a Judge, the Creator of the universe to condemn me. It's just wonderful. It's just great. Now, I have

a Father Who is correcting me, disciplining me, and showing me the way to please Him. And He is working in me every day. And it's wonderful! You know, He's an incredible God. And I just want to praise Him and live for Him, obey Him in everything that I can by Him enabling me to do so.