

Trusting God in a Twisted World: And Other Reflections on Asking God Why by Elisabeth Elliot Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, NJ, 1989
(10 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. My Years Are His Years

I'm not the least bit bashful about telling my age. I'm glad for every birthday that comes, because it is the Lord, my faithful Guide, who "summoned the generations from the beginning." I look in the mirror and see the increasingly (and creasingly) visible proofs of the number of years, but I'm reconciled. Christ reconciles me to God and to God's wonderful plan. My life is his life. My years are his years. To me life is Christ, and death is nothing but gain. When I remember that, I really can't think of a thing I ought to be afraid of. I can't be sorry I'm a year older and nearer to absolute bliss." [Page 41]

2. Bible's Answers Are Simple, But NOT Easy

Not all who practice under the label "Christian" counselors are in the biblical sense godly. There is sometimes uncertainty as to the authority and relevance of "the law of the Lord," that is, of what the Bible says about human situations. "This is the end of the twentieth century," we are reminded. "There are no simple answers." I believe there are indeed some simple ones, but they are not easy. By that I mean that I can understand them-I cannot easily obey them. The road spoken of in that first psalm, the one sinners tread, is a wide one, smoothed by millions of feet. The road we must tread is narrow and rough, but we are not alone-the Holy Spirit has been "called alongside" to comfort, help, and teach us-and millions have walked the road of obedience before us." [Page 99]

3. God's Answers Do Not Give Earthly Success

God does not promise solutions to all our problems. The Gospel is not a guarantee of the healing of all diseases, the dissolving of all debts, the mending of all marriages, and the fulfilling of all desires on this side of the Jordan. The Gospel, as the good news of freedom from sin and self, is, in fact, also a guarantee of what Jesus called tribulation. You can't live as a Christian in a sinful world without tribulation. Jesus came to bring not peace but a sword. He described himself as a stone, rejected by the builders. "Any man who falls on that stone will be dashed to pieces; and if it falls on a man he will be crushed by it" (Luke 20:18 NEB). Too often we forget those stem words, or the prophecy of old Simeon when Jesus was a baby: "Many in Israel will stand or fall because of Him"(Luke 2:35 NEB).What I have to say is infinitely more important than solutions.

It is a matter of obedience. In other words, if you are the one deeply longing for help, there are answers-answers which will please God and enable you to do his will. Will

they "work"? you ask. The answer is yes-in terms of the Kingdom. But be careful.

The disciple cannot test the answers in terms of earthly success or satisfaction or solutions. [Page 100-101]

4. His Will or Self-preservation

...sometimes there must be the choice between obedience and a solution- between his will and, for example, self-preservation. They are not always the same thing. As a matter of fact, in the Kingdom they often turn out to be quite opposite. Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, that man is safe"

(Luke 9:24 NEB). It's either/or. It's self-death and eternal life, or it's self-life and eternal death. [Page 101]

5. Obedience Now or Solutions Now Poem

My concern: obedience	solutions
The price: tribulation now;	tribulation later,
peace now;	peace later;
death to self;	self-preservation;
life forever	death forever

[Page 103]

6. Unforgiveness

Since unforgiveness roots itself down in hate, Satan has room for both feet in such a heart, with all the leeway action of such purchase. That word unforgiving! 'What a group of relatives it has near and far! Jealousy, envy, bitterness, the cutting word, the polished shaft of sarcasm with the poisoned tip, the green eye, the acid saliva-what kinsfolk these! [s. D. Gordon: Quiet Talks on Prayer p. 79, Revell]

7. Stripes That Freed Us

Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee
From death's dread sting
Thy servants free
That we may live and sing to Thee, Alleluia! [Page 120]

8. The Spirit of This Age Vs. The Spirit of Christ

In Tree of Life magazine Peter Reinhart writes:
The spirit of this age is one of personal power; the spirit of Christ is one of humility.

The spirit of this age is one of ambitious accomplishment; the spirit of Christ is one of poverty. The spirit of this age is one of self-determination; the spirit of Christ is one of abandonment to Divine Providence. [Page 122]

9. God Has Spoken, We Believe, We Choose to Obey in the Face of Opposition

In Jesus' last intimate discourse with his disciples before going to the cross, he seems to have drawn back a corner of the curtain for a moment to give them a glimpse of a profound truth that was still very far beyond them yet had tremendous implications for them, as well as for us. These were his words: "The prince of this world approaches. He has no rights over me; but the world must be shown that I love the Father and do exactly as he commands" (John 14:30, 31). It is not an explanation of the mystery. It is a simple statement of fact and of duty: This is what will happen; therefore this is what I must do. Evil will come, but I must obey. The world must be shown. The world's prince has power. That power does not nullify the will of the Father (it is still in effect), or defeat the obedience of the Son (he will go straight into the jaws of death). Nevertheless, the will of the Father, plus the obedience of the Son, plus the power of evil equaled the Crucifixion. The world must be shown. Through that hideous punishment the world would be shown two things: the Son's love and his absolute obedience. The lesson is thus set for Christ's followers; we believe that God is God, our faith is not a deduction from the facts around us. It is not an instinct. It is not inferred from the happy way things work. Faith is a gift from God, and we must respond to him with a decision: The God of the universe has spoken, we believe what he says, and we will obey. We must make a decision that we will hold in the face of all opposition and apparent contradiction. [Page 142]

10. Ezekiel's Prayer and Obedience

The combination of prayer and faithful carrying out of duty has been balm to many, when all hope has seemed to dissolve. The Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel: "I am taking from you at one blow the dearest thing you have, but you must not wail or weep or give way to tears. Keep in heart; be quiet, and make no mourning for the dead" (Ezekiel 24:15-17 NEB). God denied Ezekiel the usual expressions of mourning and told him he was not to "eat the bread of despair." Ezekiel's response was, in effect, Yes, Lord. "I spoke to the people in the morning," Ezekiel said, "and that very evening my wife died. Next morning I did as I was told." Obedience was his consolation. [Page 157]