

“Well, you know, ‘everything’ happens for a reason.” This statement is a typical concluding remark to stories about various trials and hardships. But is this a statement of faith in God, or faith in something called “fate”? On the surface, this statement is a belief that there is a God-ordained purpose behind everything that happens. One level deeper, however, it implies that God has predetermined “everything” that will occur in ones’ life, and the individual just needs to roll with the punches.

The definition of “fate” is “that which is inevitably predetermined.” In other words, you have no choice about it because “fate” has pre-determined “everything” that is to happen in ones’ life. The problem with “everything” is that it would include the little girl who suffered abuse for years, or the loss of five children in a terrible accident, and the violence perpetrated upon villagers by ISIS-type militias. We would never tell them, “Oh well, you know, everything happens for a reason (i.e., a purpose ordained by God).”

Without realizing it, by using the word “everything,” we are implying that God is responsible for the evils we face, the diseases that take our loved ones, and so on. The truth is that God will work “in all things for the good” (Rom. 8:28 NIV), but that does not mean that He predetermines the “things” that have occurred in ones’ life.

Fate breeds a listless believer who just accepts difficult times as unchangeable realities. Faith (in God), on the other hand, looks at the trial or hardship, and confidently brings God into the picture as the One through whom all things are possible. Fate surrenders to the current conditions hoping that one day it may make sense. Faith stands upon the promises of Christ, who said, “Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 14:12-14; 5:7) and believes for a better reality. Fate prays small prayers and has few testimonies of God’s power and faithfulness. Faith sees an impossibility as the stage upon which God’s greatness is revealed to all. Fate only sees what is around them, but faith in God sees what could be, long before it is a reality (Heb 11:1)

“Life happens,” in ways we have little control. These are the times for which faith in God is designed. Prayers of faith move His hand “for the good” that ultimately transform the person in the trial. How and when God answers is up to Him, but He will answer and bring His child through simply because he or she dared to believe God could. We may not always find the reason something happens, but we can always find God who moves mountains.

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