**"Why Me?"|** Ginger Kolbaba

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"Why me?"

We've all heard people say this in response to a real or perceived tragedy. "Why did this happen to me? Why did God allow this?"

I've been prone to ask these questions on occasion. When my father was diagnosed with cancer, I questioned God, "Why him? He's such a good man." When a good friend was laid off, I wondered, "Why her?" And when I've attended countless baby showers without a hoped-for pregnancy of my own, I've asked, "Why me?"

But the older I get, the more I realize that's the wrong question to ask.

**The Grand Plan**

The "why" question has, at its heart, a self-centered, self-protective, tight-fisted focus. We're shocked when troubles burst into our lives. Even though Jesus told us, "Don't take these things personally. You're going to have trouble. Expect it" (John 16:33, my translation), we still cling to the idea that we should have a smooth, uncomplicated life.

Have you read the Bible lately? Can you name one character who had an easy life? So it stands to reason that if everyone has troubles, God must have something planned for us through that. One plan may be so we can learn the power and importance of gratitude.

**What's the "Right" Question?**

A poster boy for practicing the spiritual discipline of gratitude is Job. Just about every trouble possible happened to Job. And how did he respond? With authentic gratitude. He struggled, he ached, he grieved, and yet in the midst, he praised God.

The military has a motto: "Do the harder right." It's easy to be grateful when life is good and things are going along nicely. But the harder right means we practice thanking God when everything within us screams out, "Why me?"

I've started to realize the right question isn't, "Why me?" but rather, "Why *not* me?" Why should *I* be exempt?

The interesting thing about asking that question is that it changes my perspective. My eyes move from myself and my current circumstance to the bigger, broader picture of eternity and how God wants to shape me into the image of Jesus.

When I embrace that question, not only do I mature, but I'm able to empathize with, love, and care for those with similar troubles.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not walking around looking for trouble so that I can express my gratitude! But hopefully as I practice doing the "harder right" every day and being thankful for what God has blessed me with, when the troubles *do* come, my natural inclination will become, "Why *not* me? Thank you, God, for this circumstance too. In the midst of it help me to honor you and bless others."