

HANDLING BAD APPLES

... evil runs wild while justice sit behind bars

Psalm 94

WEFC August 2, 2009

We are bothered and embarrassed to read of the God of the Bible as a God who AVENGES ... a God who PAYS BACK.

Did not things change over the centuries in the Bible to where today we say, "Love your enemies...", instead of the Old Testament stuff of "... and eye for an eye' a tooth for a tooth ..."

Most of us shy away from "the God of vengeance".

Maybe we shouldn't.

Psalm 94 is a God Tune ... but one that is a bit different from those that we have looked at up till now.

It may be accurate to say while many of the other psalms are poetry put to music, **Psalm 94** is more like the line of a piece of "rap".

It comes with hard hitting phrases, in your face questions that are answers and leaves us with few fuzzy feelings.

By the end of this song we are not left in any doubt as to how God handles the bad apples.

We might say that while many of the lyrics in the PSALMS are what we might expect, this song is more like a piece of "rap".

The lyrics of this song deal with what bothers us.

We mentioned that most of us have a hard time telling people that the God of whom the Bible speaks is a God of vengeance.

That is just one problem.

On the other side of the spectrum is another problem that we have.

God does nothing with people who do evil and wicked things. If He is God why doesn't He, the God of Justice, act and straighten out the mess that is strangling the world?

The problem is maybe better put in concrete ways:

Is it okay for a Hitler to get away with what he did?

If we hold Hitler responsible for every death in the European Theatre of war he is estimated to be responsible for 20-30 million deaths (well over half who died in WW II).

Many of these were innocent people.

Does Hitler just die and what he did simply become a historical fact ... or are his acts someday judged?

Stalin? ... conservative estimates would say around 20 million people.

Many of these were innocent people.

Does a Stalin simply die? ... or is there justice?

Idi Amin ... dictator of Uganda

According to the CIA World Factbook, during his eight years in power, Amin's "dictatorial regime" was "responsible for the deaths of some 300,000 opponents."

Human rights groups say that figure is much higher, arguing that as many as 500,000 people were killed or simply disappeared under his rule.

Exiles said he kept severed heads in his refrigerator, fed corpses to crocodiles and had one of his wives dismembered. He was also accused of cannibalism.

Many of these were innocent people.

Does an Amin just die? ... or is there justice?

There are gangs, Hell's Angels, probably better called, Hell's Demons, and numerous other gangs that make a killing of drugs and prostitution.

They suck people into evil and treat them like dirt.

Do gang members who openly defy the law and destroy people just die? ... and get away with it and are never brought to a court of justice on earth ... is that fair?

There is the Taliban, Large Company executives that steal their company blind, government corruption from heads of country and state with which even we in Canada are becoming all too familiar.

Living overseas we were in relatively close proximity to the Mafia. Our friend's brother had a used Mercedes that he purchased for \$14,000. It was stolen and so he went to the police. They mentioned that if it had been taken to Russia then it was gone, but that if the "crooked brothers" had taken it, that one could get in contact with them.

Dnepropetrovsk and surrounding area had a population of somewhere's over a million people. The place is not small.

The "Mafia" did "find" the car and if Peter wanted it back, he would have to pay \$7,000 ... which I believe he did.

Who stole the car? ... it would seem to be rather obvious.

Should crime like this pay so profitably?

We may not like a just God of vengeance, but we also do not like wicked people getting away with "murder".

But the problem is when we have both ... if we can have both ... that our problems begin.

This is a big problem, one that involves people who function in circles of influence that we do not touch, but we may be affected by their decisions and behavior.

This is beyond us, yet it touches us.

So we care, but at arms length.

But if God cannot handle this, then what are we to make of Him handling the details of our own lives as a church, our family or us individually?

This God Tune is God's Rap Song that takes on injustice – a problem that we fear to tackle and one that intellectually bothers our minds.

The problem of injustice is a bigger problem for a God-follower than for anyone else.

We might summarize this song in this way ...

Key Thought:

If the delay or lack of justice bothers us, why doesn't it bother God – the God known as “The Just Judge of all the earth” ?

The issue is bothering the composer of this gospel “rap” lyrics ... and he spills it out right off the top.

**¹ O LORD, the God who avenges,
O God who avenges, shine forth.**

**² Rise up, O Judge of the earth;
pay back to the proud what they deserve.**

**³ How long will the wicked, O LORD,
how long will the wicked be jubilant?**

Good people have a hard time of making it all fit:

**1. God, You have a reputation to protect:
If You care ... do something ... now! 94:1 - 3**

- God is just ... “just” inactive 1

God's people knew that for which God stood. He was a no-nonsense God who did things right.

He was just and justice was one of the platforms on which He based His actions.

If there ever was a god of justice, the Lord God was that god.

But as far as this songwriter could see, God was not actively out there straightening out the wrongs that were being committed.

... and so he encourages God get things rolling by putting in an impressive appearance – to “**shine forth**” ... to appear in the midst of the chaos and injustice of the hour like a SuperGod hero.

That would be very impressive.

A brilliant flash of light and there stands God ... and boom ... injustice is stop dead in its tracks!

The words are literally, “**O God of vengeance** ... “ the plural, highlighting the fact that it is FULL or ULTIMATE VEGEANCE.

Let's get it all straightened out.

The God of Christianity stands for truth and justice, but then why is the world in such a mess? Why doesn't this all-powerful God do something about it?

... and that's just his point.

God, things are bad, really bad. Be Yourself. Avenge. Get things back in order. The wrong people are running the show.

This is not personal vengeance, but the rightful correcting of wrongs that have been committed.

It is a prayer that the Hitlers, the Stalins and all in those who walk in similar shoes, would not get off by just fading off the scene.

If there is no divine vengeance, then we do run into chaos and the person with the biggest stick, the strongest person runs the show.

- As Judge, convene court and sentencing 2

Lord, you say you are a Judge, then take these arrogant people a give them what they deserve.

Surely, if WE can see the wrong they are doing, You as the true Supreme Court Justice, the Judge of all Judges, is able to sentence these people to what they most clearly deserve for their arrogant actions.

- Time is “not” on our side 3

Matters have gotten out of hand.

This is not merely a one time occurrence. This is now “normal”.

These people, these wicked people, are doing as they please, getting away with it, and happy in their behavior.

How long can you afford to let this go on?

... and the songwriter hopes that it is not very long at all.

Transition:

It can't go on long because of what these wicked people are doing.

It was getting the wrong message out in society.

Bad people come to the wrong conclusion:

The message being given ...

2. We are in charge around here. 94:4 – 7

When it came to who was either in office, or who was running matters, it was the “wrong” people.

The often legitimate offices were held by illegitimate people.

Their message of being in charge came out in these ways ... here are the sub-points of their message
:

- Their words: self-centered and inflated

**⁴ They pour out arrogant words;
all the evildoers are full of boasting.**

The way they talk gives them away. They are filled with themselves.

- We can do with you as we please

**⁵ They crush your people, O LORD;
they oppress your inheritance.**

The lyrics are specific in identifying the people being oppressed as THE LORD'S PEOPLE, HIS INHERITANCE.

These ruthless, wicked people begin to assume ownership of God's people ... and ownership that mistreats, rather than sees them as equals.

They do things that are unbearable. They bring pressure to bear that is uncalled for.

... they begin to think that the people under them are their property.

- Life is cheap and expendable

⁶ **They slay the widow and the alien; they murder the fatherless.**

When human life, those like us, become our property and they can be killed because we want them dead ... our arrogance has hit a devilish low.

It is one thing to fight people of strength, but to prey on widows, strangers and orphans shows just how low these would go.

It would seem that these people are not always raving idiots who are just enamored with themselves, but also reaches into categories of the highly trained and highly intelligent.

I would think that applying this to our present day ... it would include the following:

Yes, taking the life of unborn babies fits into this category.

... so does infanticide, the killing of infants.

... so does euthanasia.

... terrorism

UK medical ethicist: Infanticide 'justifiable'

Government adviser suggests acceptable to kill babies with 'defects' soon after birth

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It's OK to kill babies after they are born if they turn out to have

"defects," says one of the British government's leading advisers on genetics.

Provoking an uproar, Professor John Harris, a member of the British Medical Association's ethics committee and author of 15 books on the ethics of genetics, made the statement endorsing de facto infanticide during a recent debate over sex-selection, reports the London Telegraph.

Asked what moral status he accorded an embryo, Harris responded by endorsing infanticide in cases where a child has a genetic disorder that remained undetected during pregnancy and suggested there's no moral difference between aborting an unborn baby and killing an infant once it's born, said the report.

"It's not plausible to think that there is any moral change that occurs during the journey down the birth canal," he told the Telegraph.

Harris declined to say up until what age he believed infanticide should be permissible and later stood by his remarks, which he claimed had been elicited "in response to goading" from pro-life campaigners.

"People who think there is a difference between infanticide and late abortion have to ask the question: What has happened to the fetus in the time it takes to pass down the birth canal and into the world which changes its moral status? I don't think anything has happened in that time," he said, according to the paper.

"It is well-known that where a serious abnormality is not picked up – when you get a very seriously handicapped or indeed a very premature newborn which suffers brain damage – that what effectively happens is that steps are taken not to sustain it on life-support.

"There is a very widespread and accepted practice of infanticide in most countries. We ought to be much more upfront about the ethics of all of this and ask ourselves the serious question: What do we really think is different between newborns and late fetuses?

"There is no obvious reason why one should think differently, from an ethical point of view, about a fetus when it's outside the womb rather than when it's inside the womb."

According to the Telegraph, Julia Millington, political director of the ProLife Party, called the admission "absolutely horrifying," and added: "Infanticide is murder and is against the law. It is frightening to think that university students are being educated by somebody who endorses the killing of newborn babies and equally worrying to discover that such a person is also a member of the ethics committee of the British Medical Association."

Quebec Physicians Propose Legalized Euthanasia

By Patrick B. Craine

July 16, 2009 (LifeSiteNews.com) - In what one prominent euthanasia opponent has called "a straw man argument," the Quebec College of Physicians is proposing that euthanasia be legalized "as part of the appropriate care in certain particular circumstances." The Globe and Mail broke the story today, and at the same time launched an online [poll](#) asking its readership, "Do you support the legalization of assisted suicide?"

After having examined the issue for three years, the College's task force on ethics concluded that Quebec society has grown to the point where it can now tolerate euthanasia. "The question here is to decide whether a drop in dosage or an increase in dosage constitutes a criminal act," said College secretary, Dr. Yves Robert to the Globe and Mail.

Dr. Robert is referring to circumstances that occur occasionally, where gravely ill patients may be in such pain that the amount of medication they require to relieve their pain could result in their death. "We are being very cautious in our approach," said Dr. Robert. "Avoiding the debate contributes to the general hypocrisy around this issue. To say that it doesn't happen because it is illegal is completely stupid. ... We have to stop hiding our head in the sand."

The College is contending that a patient's death in this case would constitute euthanasia. "We may go as far as to recommend that in certain cases," says Dr. Robert, "where the pain is unbearable, the

amount of analgesic required could correspond to a form of euthanasia."

Euthanasia Prevention Coalition Executive Director Alex Schadenberg told LifeSiteNews.com, however, that the circumstances to which Dr. Robert refers would not be euthanasia at all, and in fact, if properly conducted, is within the law. "To use large doses of analgesics to kill pain is not euthanasia, it's actually, in certain circumstances, proper care," he said.

"So why are they bringing this up?" he asked. "I think what they're doing is they're trying to give, it appears, unless there's some information that's missing, it appears they're trying to give us euthanasia through the back door."

In an e-mail sent out today commenting on the Globe and Mail article, Schadenberg wrote, "The interesting thing about this article is that [Dr. Robert] only refers to the use of analgesics that may result in the death of the patient."

"This is not euthanasia if the physician intends to control the pain and not kill the patient," he said. "There are approved guidelines that a physician follows to determine the increases in analgesics. If the physician follows the guidelines (within reason) then the physician has nothing to worry about."

"It is euthanasia," he said, "if the physician just gives the patient a lethal dose of analgesic with the intention of causing the patients death. ... If the Quebec College of Physicians allows for physicians to lethally inject their patients with overdoses they will be erasing the distinction between caring for people and killing people. People will lose faith in the ethics of their physicians and they will fear entering palliative care because the lines between caring and killing will be blurred."

In his interview today with LSN, Schadenberg emphasized the need for clarity in speaking about euthanasia. "The [Globe and Mail] article actually confuses what [euthanasia] is," he said. "What euthanasia actually is, is giving the right of one person to directly and intentionally kill another person. That's what it is. It's not about unintentional death. It's not about denying medical treatment, or extraordinary medical treatment."

Commenting in 2002 on the same circumstances that the Quebec physicians are now pointing to, Schadenberg [stated](#), "A physician may accidentally overdose a patient with analgesics while seeking to control pain, but this is clearly different than intentionally killing someone."

"This 'double effect' happens in many medical circumstances," he said. "Physicians intend to improve the health of patients and yet sometimes patients die unintentionally. The physician has not committed homicide when a patient dies from the unintended effects of properly applied treatments."

According to the Globe and Mail, the task force's recommendation will likely be included in a "reflection" document that the College will be releasing next fall. Out of this document, they hope to spark a public debate on the issue that will put pressure on the federal government to amend the Criminal Code. The College's final proposal is expected to be tabled in November.

The College claims adamantly that their position does not include support for assisted suicide, but Schadenberg is not convinced. "We should not be surprised," he said in his e-mail, "that the timing of the Quebec College of Physicians decision will take place at approximately the same time as Bill C-384 [to legalize assisted suicide] goes to a Second Reading vote."

In his e-mail, Schadenberg has called on pro-lifers to vote 'No' in the Globe and Mail [poll](#) regarding assisted suicide. At time of writing, 73% had voted 'Yes', with a total of 8359 votes.

- Suggestions of facing divine justice are ridiculous

**⁷ They say, "The LORD does not see;
the God of Jacob pays no heed."**

These people become practical atheists.

They neither worry about God and if they acknowledge Him, they imagine Him to be someone in character other than the God explained in the Bible.

God – if He exists – isn't interested in the affairs of humanity.

He neither sees or cares about what happens with us.

So, facing "the wrath of God" does not fit into the picture for them.

Should people like this just be allowed to run their agendas without opposition?

Shouldn't God do something with people who get into high positions and then ransack the lives of others as they please?

A God of vengeance – not personal vengeance – but a God who deals with evil, wicked and wrongs justly – and appealing to Him, is good.

... and this God Tune begins to show that what may be initially abrasive to us, is in fact, good.

... and that God avenging is what keeps our planet semi sane.

Transition:

But just because we say there is no God of the Bible, doesn't mean that we can now argue and live as if there is no God.

The assertion that God either does not exist or doesn't care about us ... can be made, but can it be made intelligently?

Is it wise to talk this way?

Do people who ignore or get rid of God ... is there premise worth following?

The lyrics of this God Rap Work are decidedly against such shallow thinking.

Bad people come to wrong conclusion because they incorrectly interpret the evidence:

3. We've done what we wanted to do and nobody has done anything about it, not even God 94:8 - 11

**⁸ Take heed, you senseless ones among the people;
you fools, when will you become wise?**

**⁹ Does he who implanted the ear not hear?
Does he who formed the eye not see?**

**¹⁰ Does he who disciplines nations not punish?
Does he who teaches man lack knowledge?**

**¹¹ The LORD knows the thoughts of man;
he knows that they are futile.**

Think things through a bit.

For a moment put your brain through a bit of an exercise while listening to a God Rap Tune.

God doesn't hear? ... doesn't see?

Strange ... would you not think that the God who created us and gave us ears and eyes ... Himself hear and see?

Verse 10 could be translated:

**He that disciplines the nations, does he not correct?
And he that teaches man knowledge ...**

If God causes nations to rise and fall in the course of history, handling and keeping large groups of people in line, do you really think that this God will not correct arrogant individuals?

And if God teaches people ... and the lyrics of the song leave us to draw our own conclusions.

It might be something like: Since God teaches people what we need to know, DO YOU REALLY THINK HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING?

God isn't playing our game.

He is not worried that some have dismissed Him as non-existent.

God knows the thoughts of the kind of folks ... and their thoughts lead to nowhere except a dead end.

... and the point is something like –

Just because God has not immediately jumped up and avenged the matters, does not mean that there are no consequences.

No immediate consequences does not mean there are no consequences.

Personal conclusions that satisfy a person's mind no matter how sincerely held, if they lack substance, are worthless, leaving a person to live in a bubble soon to be burst.

Transition:

We are caught by the wicked behavior of people and the God who has chosen to not yet deal with the situation.

Being stuck in this “no man’s land” is difficult.

These next lines help us walk in the “in between” times – before God acts and the people still are carrying on in their own ways.

Good people look at the same evidence and correctly conclude ...

4. Justice may be delayed, but it is never defeated 94:12 - 15

Here is how we can know that God has not lost the war; that justice is still coming.

- **we find evidence of God’s goodness in the middle of humanity’s badness**

**¹² Blessed is the man you discipline, O LORD,
the man you teach from your law;**

God doesn’t waste even the traumatic events of history that stink to high heaven.

God shapes us and get us into shape to be more like Jesus.

He educates us in His ways.

He makes us conversant in His plans and purposes.

- **God does extra for us when we receive extra trouble**

**¹³ you grant him relief from days of trouble,
till a pit is dug for the wicked.**

God is setting things up ... to deal with the wicked.

And until that time comes, God does extra for us for the extra that we are being put through.

There is justice ... God is getting is all set up.

Wait ... you can because God is taking care of you.

- **God never abandons us**

**¹⁴ For the LORD will not reject his people;
he will never forsake his inheritance.**

God never discards His own.

We, as God’s inheritance, are of value to Him.

He will not leave us.

Never forget these words:

God does not reject us – as His inheritance we will never be discarded – He holds to us because He values us.

- **The upside-down world will get turn right side up**

**¹⁵ Judgment will again be founded on righteousness,
and all the upright in heart will follow it.**

There is coming a day when justice will be normal and it will be followed.

Don't pack up too early.

Transition:

Waiting is tough.

Living under injustice wears on us and sucks out our life.

Staying alive, physically and mentally, is not easy.

We get tired of fighting the formidable foe.

We want to go away and just get a break from it all, but we can't just vanish.

There are responsibilities from which we cannot escape.

Good people can get worn down over time; so they need to remember

5. God alone brings sanity onto the scene 9:16 - 19

**¹⁶ Who will rise up for me against the wicked?
Who will take a stand for me against evildoers?**

**¹⁷ Unless the LORD had given me help,
I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death.**

**¹⁸ When I said, "My foot is slipping,"
your love, O LORD, supported me.**

**¹⁹ When anxiety was great within me,
your consolation brought joy to my soul.**

One of the more difficult parts of injustice is that often we find that we have to fend for ourselves.

We get separated from others and the nature of situations leaves us isolated ... without others to whom we can talk.

We even find ourselves starting to think like those who are running the show.

We wonder if it's worth it ... all this stuff of standing up for justice and truth and God.

There is slippage.

But God does His extra.

He steps in with that extra grace, that extra care, that extra support, and even extra joy.

God compensates His people while they are under unjust people ... not by removal, but by resilience that comes from His personal attention.

In *The Law Of Rewards*, Randy Alcorn writes:

In 1990 I was a pastor on the board of a pregnancy resource center. After searching the Scriptures and praying, I began participating in nonviolent rescues at abortion clinics. I was arrested several times and went to jail for a couple of days. An abortion clinic subsequently won a court judgment against me and others. I told the judge that normally I would pay anything I owed, but I couldn't hand over money to people who would use it to kill babies.

Soon after, I discovered that my church was about to receive a writ of garnishment, demanding that they surrender one-fourth of my wages each month to the abortion clinic. The church would either

have to pay the abortion clinic or defy a court order. To avoid this, I had to resign. The only way I could prevent garnishment in the future was to make no more than minimum wage.

Another court judgment followed, involving another abortion clinic. We were assessed the largest judgment ever against a group of peaceful protesters: \$8.4 million. By all appearances, our lives had taken a devastating turn—but it was one of the best things that ever happened to us.

What others intended for evil, God intended for good (Genesis 50:20). We began Eternal Perspective Ministries, which owns all the books I write. Nanci worked at a secretary's salary, supplementing my minimum wage. Then something interesting happened: suddenly my books were on the bestseller lists. Royalties increased. Our ministry has been able to give away 100 percent of those royalties to missions, famine relief, and pro-life work. In the past three years, by God's grace, the ministry has given away \$500,000. Sometimes I think God sells the books just to raise funds for ministries close to his heart! I don't go to bed at night feeling that I've "sacrificed" that money, wishing somehow I could get my hands on it. I go to bed feeling joy, because there's nothing like giving.

Randy Alcorn, The Law of Rewards (Tyndale, 2003), pp. 8-9

Transition:

As the song closes, the lyrics do not get soft and fade away.

Instead the beat gets heavier and more pronounced.

The words come out confidently and are in no way minced or mumbled.

Good people come back to the old, maybe delayed truth that ...

6. Since God is in the picture at the “end”, this is what the “end” will look like

94:20-23

**²⁰ Can a corrupt throne be allied with you—
one that brings on misery by its decrees?**

**²¹ They band together against the righteous
and condemn the innocent to death.**

**²² But the LORD has become my fortress,
and my God the rock in whom I take refuge.**

**²³ He will repay them for their sins
and destroy them for their wickedness;
the LORD our God will destroy them.**

- Justice will never partner with injustice 20

God will never allow His justice to be watered down, diluted or corrupted.

There are no compromises, no deals with injustice, no pardon for the unrepentant, no negotiation with evil.

There is absolutely no tie between God and people who are committed to injustice. None.

People who partner with others to make life miserable for people who are better than them, will never have God as their partner.

**- Numbers may indicate strength and power, but God is
singularly the most impressive show of power and strength**

22

Difficult as it may be in our experience, but God does personally become for us our castle, our solid rock, our hideout.

**- The avenging God will “end” the very lives of these people
of injustice** 23

The Hitlers, Stalins, Idi Amins, terrorists, government officials, company executives who persist in fighting God and ignoring Him ... they have one end – destruction by God Himself.

Life will get turned right side up.

Wickedness will be trounced.

There will be justice.

Conclusion:

Psalm 94, in dealing with **how God handles bad apples**, tackles one of those things that leave us a bit confused with our God.

Key Thought:

If the delay or lack of justice bothers us, why doesn't it bother God – the God known as “The Just Judge of all the earth” ?

He is just, but He permits injustice to exist, with some tragic mega-results. Why?

We begin to wonder if being involved in injustice does pay ... and pay well.

This is a hot social issue button that people often address, but few really tackle because it is so powerful, big and complex.

We do need to know what God is doing, because we follow Him. ... and if He can't handle things, then He is not the kind of God we should be following.

But **Psalm 94** tells us that He handles things somewhat in a different manner than do we. We don't have the entire script ... and therefore the picture is a bit confusing.

As we wrestle with injustice and God's seeming un-involvement with it ... it is helpful to keep things straight in our minds by recognizing and acting upon the following ... that come from this God Tune –

1. It is not at all wrong to pray for God to avenge. It is right and proper.

This is not personal vengeance, but divine vengeance - God's issues primarily and we are caught in the backwash.

This is a serious matter, to pray against people. But God's reputation and justice is also a serious matter ... and is not be dragged in the mud.

God vengeance is what we want. Otherwise, life doesn't make sense – if the bad people get away with evil and never pay.

God's vengeance is not God flying off the handle, but God restoring the moral chaos created by people where right has become wrong and black has become white.

That's why the cry for “vengeance”, what today we would call “justice” is warranted by God's people.

2. Anonymous people can topple the big, evil people running things.

When unjust corporations and Influential governments run things unjustly, we all know, as well as they, that things are being done unjustly.

We find that taking them head on is difficult and at times impossible. But the covert operation of prayer and pleading with God for right is our opportunity to see change.

God listens.

The anonymous person still has a hearing before the Judge of all the earth.

Therefore, we may not deal with them face to face, but we can deal with them before the face of God ... and know He is listening and has the same concern as do we.

3. Time and routine dull our convictions. They must be kept “sharp” though timely, God-taught “Divine Justice and Human Injustice” seminars.

When justice is not quickly executed, the wicked get bolder.

When justice is not quickly executed, the righteous get cornered and tired ... and pushing for justice wears them down.

We need to be taught and reminded of God's law; His plan ... and His methods.

This does not answer all our questions, but it gets us to see His side and it does develop in us His patience.

Though it is often hard to adjust to in our perspective, but we need to be reminded that ...

4. Delayed justice is not the same as justice denied or defeated.

Next time you experience corruption or get swamped by injustice ... don't just sit back and complain that there are no good people thwarting the work of evil.

Ask God to avenge.

Keep you head and heart clean in the process ... and pray ... and wait for God to work.