

GOD'S DARK SIDE?

God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

—1 John 1:5

INTRODUCTION

Ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden, people have been born with a sinful nature. You can see this in people today, can't you? Sometimes a person is decent and generous and polite, and then at other times he or she is greedy and selfish and rude. It's as if the person has a good side and a bad side.

As you read about some of the things God does in the Bible, or as you see things happen in the world that you feel God shouldn't allow to happen, you might start thinking that maybe God has a bad side too. But it's important to remember that just because people have a bad side doesn't mean that God has one. People were perfect at first, and then they were corrupted by sin. God has never been corrupted that way. Still, why does he sometimes *seem* to have a bad side?

That's what today's devotion is about. It's based on 1 John 1:5, which says, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all." The devotion is called "God's Dark Side?"

DEVOTION

"I'm glad the moon's full, so we can see all of it," said Carlie.

Aiming his telescope, her dad replied, "Actually, we can only see half of it. That's the near side, which always faces earth. Right now that side is also called the bright side, because the sun's shining on it. In two weeks it'll become the dark side. With no sunlight, it'll be completely black and five hundred degrees colder."

He straightened up. "Take a look at the Sea of Serenity. That's the big spot up there."

Carlie peered through the telescope. "I see it!" she said. It was smooth but surrounded by craters and mountains.

"The Apollo 17 astronauts landed near there," her dad said.

Carlie grinned. "I hope they packed warm pajamas!"

God doesn't have a dark side, like the moon. He is holy, which means he's all good. When you sin, God's holiness can seem dark, because it makes you feel guilty and afraid. But when you let Jesus remove your sins, you find that God's holiness is warm and bright. That's the way God wants you to experience it.

PEOPLE IN BIBLE TIMES

When Pharaoh and his army attacked, God protected the Israelites. He was there in a pillar of cloud. The part of the cloud facing the Egyptians looked like a terrible storm. To them, God seemed to have a dark side.

QUESTIONS

1. When you read about how God punished sinful people in the Old Testament, like when he destroyed the world with a flood, does it ever seem that God was being mean and cruel? Is that confusing to you, since other places in the Bible say that God is loving and good?
2. Does it ever seem like God was being cruel when he made his own Son, Jesus, suffer and die on the cross for our sins? How do you know that God really did this because he's good?
3. For a clue, either have children look up John 3:16, which says, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life," or read this verse to them.
4. Have you ever felt afraid of God because you knew you did something sinful and you thought he was angry with you and would punish you? Did God seem good to you then? Did you feel like drawing close to God or running away from him?
5. What should you do when you sin and feel like you're facing God's dark side?

Answer: Confess your sins to God and ask him to forgive you. He can and will forgive you, because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross paid for all of the sins of people who ask to be forgiven in his name.

6. When bad things happen in the world, does it prove that God isn't good?

Answer: No. It may be hard for people, who don't know everything God knows, to understand why he allows bad things to happen, but the Bible makes it very clear that God is holy and good. It's an essential part of who he is!