

By Father David

(The following are excerpts taken from a talk by Dad on why children have to suffer, given 9 October 1978:)

1. I guess maybe I don't have much faith for childhood diseases; maybe you do, but they just seem to come and that's it. Very few people escape them. I know I had chickenpox, measles and mumps, but I don't remember if I had whooping cough.

2. And I got very sick with all my inoculations.

3. (Maria: So if you have to get inoculations you just really have to pray desperately that it doesn't do any harm.) Yes, if they force you to it, yeah, what else can you do? It's jail if you don't do it! (Sara: One of our girls said they used to close down public schools where she taught for weeks at a time whenever whooping cough would come along.)

4. I told you how when I was a kid, any of those childhood diseases, whooping cough, chicken pox, mumps, were quarantined during the period of contagion. The parents had a choice to go or stay. Usually one parent stayed in, like the mother who took care of the kids, and the father had to stay out so he could go to work, and nobody was allowed to go in or out of the house, not at all. The father, or whoever was on the outside, would bring the groceries and set them on the porch and then the mother would come get them. But

no contact was allowed. If the ones outside wanted to talk to the ones inside, they had to stand outdoors at least six feet away. They were afraid that even an adult could be a carrier of the germ! (Maria: Within a Family Home, to isolate one child from the other, is almost impossible.)

5. I was praying and asking the Lord why this whooping cough had to happen. You know, everything the Lord allows is bound to be for something good. There must be some reason for it, it's not all just a curse. You know, even work was a part of the curse. Since man was under the curse as a result of sin, the labour was really intended to keep him busy, so he couldn't sin so much, and keep the women so busy having babies and children so that they couldn't get into too much mischief.

6. Now, Lord, why? Of course, I know diseases and all that are part of the curse and the wages of sin or human frailties, but nevertheless, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord". (Rom. 8:28) "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." (Ps. 34:19) Why then, these childhood diseases?

7. You know the children are not guilty when they have childhood diseases. Some of them have reached the age of accountability, but most childhood diseases I would say occur pretty early, before the age of accountability, so it can hardly be punishment for their sin. Neither is it always a

punishment on the parents for their sins, so what good do they do?

8. We know for one thing, of course, normal children are much stronger than adults when it comes to fighting off diseases. The life forces in the child are so strong for survival that it can withstand almost any kind of disease. So maybe, the Lord knows it's better for you to get them when you are little, than it is when you are grown.

9. This is a known fact, that many of the childhood diseases, if contracted when older, a teenager or full-grown, are usually far more serious, except for whooping cough.

10. Well, that's the thing that came to me anyhow — one thing is that it usually builds up a counter-resistance against something maybe more deadly later, in the future.

11. Also, our children are beginning to learn what suffering is, you know, and of course, we, too, suffer with them. The parents have to suffer the results of sin. (Maria: It tests the parents' faith and patience, as well as the child's.) It certainly does! Sickness was very common throughout the Bible. There is no sure guarantee that you are never going to get sick with anything, as long as you are in human flesh, until you get your resurrected body. It says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

12. If you have never been sick, you could never appreciate health, really. You don't really appreciate your health until you have been sick, and then you are thankful when you are healthy and not sick!

It's like, if you have never been poor, you don't appreciate wealth either. We don't usually appreciate our eyesight until our eyes go bad.

13. I believe this is one reason the Lord has allowed sin to enter the world, and hatred and all these things, the knowledge of both good and evil. Because, despite the fact that it was a sad day on the Fall, before the Fall Adam and Eve really didn't appreciate the good and the health and the love and all the rest from God!

14. But afterwards, they certainly appreciated it, they realised what they missed and what they lost! I doubt if they appreciated the Garden. It's really obvious they weren't satisfied or they wouldn't have tried something new. But when they got kicked out, I dare say, that's when they appreciated the Garden the most, when they lost it, when the Garden was gone! "You'll never miss the blessing, until the blessing's gone..." You don't really appreciate most things until you've lost them or they are gone.

15. I never appreciated what good health I had with my teeth until I was in London and I had the first toothache I ever had in my life and oh, my! I thought I never had anything so painful! But, I tell you, after that toothache, I was never so thankful for good teeth. Even though my teeth have got several cavities now, I never have toothaches, thank the Lord! And I'm really thankful. Whew! And I had an earache. Oh my! I thought I was almost going to die with that earache there in Tenerife! Oh!