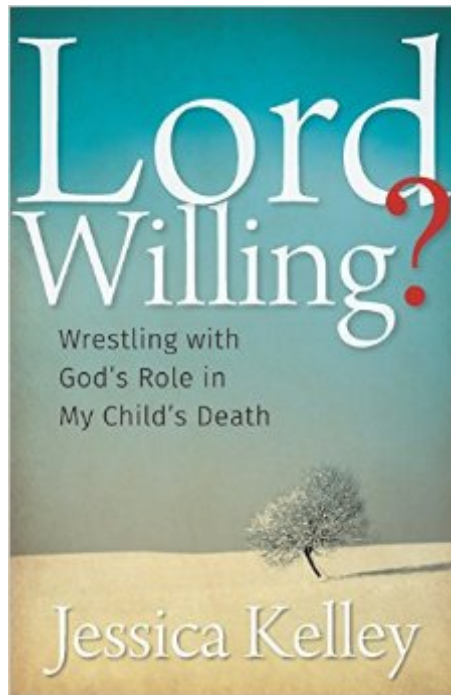


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# Lord Willing?: Wrestling With God's Role In My Child's Death



## Synopsis

Does God's perfect plan really include this? When her young son was diagnosed with brain cancer, Jessica Kelley couldn't stomach Christian clichés. God's will? Divine design? The Lord's perfect plan? In *Lord Willing?*, Kelley boldly tackles one of the most difficult questions of the Christian life: if God is all-powerful and all-loving, why do we suffer? For Kelley, this question takes an even more painful and personal turn: did God lack the power or the desire to spare her four-year-old son? For those dissatisfied with easy answers to why evil and tragedy occur, *Lord Willing?* offers a refreshing, hopeful journey straight to the heart of God. Be prepared for something more beautiful, more pure, and more healing than you can dare to imagine.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A little less than four years ago, my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. Almost 9 years ago now, my mother fell ill around mother's day with sudden onset acute pancreatitis and died 6 weeks later. Both of those situations were bathed in prayer, where we sought God's plan and purpose, and where we hoped for a miracle. However, my wife still had to face chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery... and my mother still died. And, for me, "It's all God's plan" just didn't feel like the right answer. God didn't cause my mother to be ill nor did he cause my wife's cancer. And I just never felt comfortable with him standing aside, withholding help, while my mother faded into a coma and my wife faced pain, discomfort, and a radical change in her life, all for some mysterious good purpose. Why would the God I worship, revealed perfectly in Jesus who gave up his life rather than see a world suffer, in these two circumstances decide, "This time, I'll allow the suffering." I don't claim to

know the answer. God is too big for me to figure out. But Jessica Kelly, in her book "Lord Willing?" presents a different model, a different worldview than one that demands that my God somehow, even though we are told there is no darkness in him, allows bad stuff to happen. And Jessica is qualified to tell this story. She faced her own trauma in the tragic death of her four-year-old son who died from a massive and untreatable brain tumor. Her question was, "God allowed my son to endure horrendous torment and torture to teach me a lesson?" and the answer of "It's all in his plan" fell flat for her, too. Before I get to her answer, I want to point out something.

I've never been more anxious to review a book. Or more tellingly, I've never actually left a review on a book. And I'm an avid reader! I knew before finishing the first chapter that this book would be one that I would want to proclaim from the rooftops and reference for years to come. Until a couple of years ago, I, as most Christians do, believed that there were only two ways to view God's role in suffering. Jessica refers to them as the "strong form of the blueprint worldview" (God meticulously plans and controls ALL things; nothing happens that he did not desire) and the "weak form of the blueprint worldview" (God does not desire or plan for evil to happen, but he intentionally does not intervene, for some mysterious higher purpose.) For years and years, I struggled with deciding which one I believed, always arriving to the inevitable question: does it even matter? Don't both point to a cruel and calculating God who delights in our suffering? I hadn't yet discovered this alternate way of viewing God's role in our suffering when I entered into my own worst nightmare in 2014. I was pregnant with a baby girl with a chromosomal abnormality, and I was told she would die in my womb and be born still. I wanted to run to God for comfort and guidance and healing, but I couldn't. I was paralyzed for the duration of my pregnancy and for many months after. As Jessica puts it so poignantly, "I cannot safely enter into God's presence until I establish that God is not the one causing or specifically allowing my pain. I cannot enter into solidarity with a Divine Abuser." Yes. This is the problem. I so wish that I had known then what I know now, and what Jessica so clearly explains and testifies to in her book: there IS another way.

I was a pediatric oncology nurse for 11 years, I also did hospice for a couple years. I watched children suffer on so many levels, I watched parents suffer, I watched families being torn apart. I call cancer, the gift that keeps on giving. I call it that because cancer likes to be sneaky, it likes to hide, it surfaces time and time again, it causes divorce, PTSD, anger, insanity, gives long lasting effects to children. It robs children of a childhood and parents of their "happy ever after", and of the dreams for

their children. As a Presbyterian, by baptism I always believed that God was in control...controlling these situations..allowing this suffering...but I would comfort myself knowing all this was "his will". I recently questioned my faith as I watched leukemia destroy the life of a little girl named Hailey. She was my patient, I left the hospital and remained friends with the family. I watched her parents grieve the loss of who Hailey should of become and then the physical loss of her on a cold blustery December night. The whole time I was deepening my faith and I too learned that God is good, God is love, God is Agape and sacrificial love! God was weeping with Haileys parents from diagnosis to death. This was not His will. I believe, as Jessica mentions, there are supernatural and evil forces at work in our world. Satan wants to weave into the fabric of our lives and he seeks to destroy. NOT God! God is love and my passion for God was renewed and refreshed once again after reading this book! Jessica speaks eloquently and with heartfelt conviction. This book is very hard to read for so many reasons but so easy to tuck into your heart as you read it...you will be transformed! God gives us gifts and Jessica has a gift for you in this book.

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