

Gain from Pain

No one lives a pain free life. True, our experience with suffering differs in duration and intensity, but pain is common to all humans regardless of gender, nationality, economic condition, religion and anything else that affects us.

There is one big difference in our encounters with pain. Most people lose something through their hurtful times, but it doesn't have to be that way. Jesus can help us gain from pain. Should that surprise us? He experienced sorrow and misery more severe than all other humans put together. Remarkably, he volunteered for the torture that violently afflicted him and as a result, gained uncountable blessings and immeasurable benefit. Likewise, immeasurable blessings and uncountable benefits await us as we become willing to gain from the pain that seems so pointless.

Defeat Blame

Blame turns our attention from God and devastates our relationship with him. You can only love God by looking up to God; whereas blame turns our attention downward from God.

Blame searches for the causator of pain. We concentrate on finding the origin of pain and imagine it to be either God, ourselves or other people. Then, disappointment itself, or anger against people, or mistrust of God overwhelms us with a sense of helplessness. As a result, we only think about our pain and never consider the possibility of gaining from tribulations. We can defeat blame and keep our love for God growing and thriving.

Compel Ourselves to Thank God for Gain

God isn't the causator of everything. He didn't create sin and the pain that attends it. Mankind brought sin into existence and sin brought pain. However, God uses everything in favor of those who love him. Our pain is never wasted, but always achieves both temporary and eternal gain for those who stay sweet in their spirits.

The Word of God commands us to, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you..."⁽¹⁾ Not our ordinary thought! We give thanks for the things that feel good and bring pleasure. Thankfulness for times of trouble seems totally illogical. Nevertheless, it is the Lord's will for us to "Give thanks in all circumstances" We must do more than read the command—we must do it.

Remember, now, we are not thanking God for pain; *we thank him for the gain that springs out of pain*. God doesn't expect us to walk around searching for painful, agonizing and distressing times. Those kind of times inevitably come, but

he wants us exercising faith in his ability to bring forth good from gloom and triumph from trials.

A friend of ours came down with cancer. Let me paraphrase her testimony about a trip she made to the M.D. Anderson Cancer Research Hospital in Houston.

“Before reporting to the hospital one morning I stood before a full-length mirror in my motel room. I had lost all my hair including my eyebrows and my body was bloated because of medication. This unpleasant sight filled me with grief and I began weeping. Suddenly the Holy Spirit reminded me to give thanks in all circumstances.”

“I told God I didn’t want to give thanks because I didn’t appreciate what was happening to me. The command to give thanks in all circumstances persisted in my heart. Finally, I yielded and silently mumbled ‘Thank you God’. I forced myself to keep thanking God for my horrible situation. Gradually I began raising my hands from my side until my arms were straight up over my head as I more and more confidently praised God for his control of my life. My tears of sorrow changed to tears of joy.”

Our friend did not survive the cancer. But I promise you that when her body ceased functioning and her spirit stepped into Jesus presence she forgot about her pain. She will forever enjoy unalterable victory and unimaginable intimacy with the Jesus she respected during her days of anguish. As we compel ourselves to thank God for bringing gain out of pain blame will no longer control us. Then, nothing will turn our attention from the precious Jesus who lavishes unbounded love on us.

Surrender our Minds to Bible-Type Expectations

With our minds and emotions freed from blame, we can now surrender our thoughts to Bible-type expectations.

It’s so difficult to expect anything good to come from bad. Nevertheless, empowered by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit we can surrender our thoughts to God’s thoughts. He sees eternal gain for those afflicted with temporary pain. “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” ⁽²⁾ Keep insisting that your mind accept Bible-type expectations of gain from pain! Carry these verses with you either in your memory, electronic device or on a card.

“We went through fire and water, but you brought us out to a place of abundance.” ⁽³⁾

“Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish.” ⁽⁴⁾

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.” ⁽⁵⁾

Footnotes:

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

2. 2 Corinthians 4:17
3. Psalm 66:12
4. Isaiah 38:17
5. Romans 8:28

