



December 3, 2014.

Why Can't I See God's Purpose In This?

Passage: Isaiah 40:31

Key Verse: "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. Isa. 40:28"

A father loses his job. Again. An airplane falls, killing a loved one. A young mother loses her baby. A fire assails a home where a couple and their three young children sleep. The children escape, but their mother dies.

"I don't understand the purpose in this. Do you?"

A dear friend asked me this very question recently. This sweet and godly woman has gone through unimaginable pain and suffering for the past several years. Her honest question echoes in the hearts of all of us when life doesn't make sense. When it feels like God has forgotten us. When we can't find the purpose behind the pain.

Whether we voice it or not, the question remains: "What's your purpose in this, Father?"

"No, I don't understand it. I don't. But I have to trust that God has a purpose. We just can't see it yet."

Her question caught me off guard, but I answered her with strong conviction. I have walked with Jesus for long enough to know that He does have a purpose for every suffering He allows in His children's lives. Indeed, I have experienced His purposeful design through pain and loss; and I can affirm that He does make all things work together for our good and for His glory. I've proven this truth. I believe it.

But that does not ease the pain when we're going through the valley. When life doesn't make sense and seems to be getting worse instead of better.

As I continued talking to my friend, Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:8-9 came to mind:

"Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

Among all New Testament characters, the dear apostle knew pain like no other follower of Jesus at that time. He was blind, beaten, scorned, persecuted, shipwrecked, imprisoned and tempted. Even so, he responded with steadfast faith throughout each trial: "we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed;



perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.” 2
Corinthians 4:8-9

Therefore it seems only fair that God would remove this one issue that plagued Paul. He seemed to have had enough when he pleaded with the Father to remove the thorn on his flesh, whatever that was. And yet, even though we never see this giant of faith ask for relieve before, God told him he should just accept it.

That would have been a tough pill to swallow, had God not explained why the “thorn” had to remain: so that God’s power (and purpose) would be perfected in Paul’s weakness.

We have a tendency to see things in a one-dimensional level.

It’s hard to look past our pain. Indeed, it’s humanly impossible to understand how a disease or a death in the family can work together for our good. Only when we look back in our lives can we understand the higher purpose beyond each valley we crossed:

Like the people who are impacted by the way we respond; silent witnesses that draw strength from our testimony. We may not see them, but believe me: They’re watching.

Like the unnecessary things that we end up leaving behind in the valley: Materials possessions that we used to value become unimportant; little things that we used to sweat over gain new perspective. Shackles of pride crumble.

Like the Fruit of the Spirit, which grows in us as we allow God to shape us in each valley, where we find ourselves growing in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22).

Like the pockets of rest that we find in the most unusual, unexpected places... things we used to take for granted: The smile of a loved one. The encouraging words of a friend. The pleasure of laughter. The importance of a loving touch.

Like God’s divine provision for our material needs, or for just enough strength to keep on keeping on.

All these things are a reflection of His love and supernatural power, being perfected in us as we walk through our desolate places.

But there’s one more thing. One of the most important gifts in the valley:

Fireproofing our faith.



You see, it's easy to trust God at His Word when we don't have to prove it. When life is all roses and no thorns.

Yes, singing His praises is a piece of cake when life is easy. Reciting His Word is natural when the sun is shining outside.

But when the storms assail us... when our loved ones leave us, when our health fails us or our financial stability disappears...

When there is no hope... and yet, we find hope against all odds and we can still find the strength to thank Him and praise Him...

Then and only then, can we say that our faith is true - tested and proven.

It's when our everything runs out that we can prove Him enough.

It's through the trials and valleys that His power is perfected in our weakness... that His love is reinstated and our faith, refurbished.

You may not see it today, my friend. But you can trust that there's purpose in your valley. One day you'll look back and you'll see the faces of the people you've impacted...

... And the birth of new purpose because you chose to trust and walk, one foot after the other, even though your flesh begged you to give up.

Stay in it... with Him. He's transforming you and others around you. He's preparing you and the circumstances needed to accomplish His plan for you. Moreover, He's ahead of you, on the other side of this valley, where you'll see the result of your trust and patience.

Because we never leave a valley the same way we entered it. Neither does God intend for anything we learn in the valley to be wasted.

Verses to Meditate Upon:

Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel,

“My way is hidden from the Lord,

And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God”?



Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth

Does not become weary or tired.

His understanding is inscrutable.

He gives strength to the weary,

And to him who lacks might He increases power.

Though youths grow weary and tired,

And vigorous young men stumble badly,

Yet those who wait for the Lord

Will gain new strength;

They will mount up with wings like eagles,

They will run and not get tired,

They will walk and not become weary.

Isaiah 40:27-31

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