

CHOOSING TO USE MY PAIN INSTEAD OF WASTING IT

Ecclesiastes 2:22-23 – [22] *“What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun? [23] Their days of labor as filled with pain and grief; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.”* (NIV & New Living)

Hebrews 12:2b [Jesus] – *“Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross.”* (New Living)

Romans 8:28 – *“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”* (NIV)

Galatians 3:4 –

“Have you gone through all of this for nothing? Is it all really for nothing?” (Contemporary English Version)

FIVE WAYS I CAN BENEFIT FROM PERSONAL PAIN

1. USE MY PAIN TO DRAW ME CLOSER TO GOD THROUGH WORSHIP

Psalms of Lament: 3,4,5,6,7,9,10,12,13,14,17, 22,25,26,27,28,31,35,36,38,39,41, 42,43,44,51,52,53,54,55,56,57,58,59,60,61,64,70,71,74,77,79,80,82,83,85,86,88,90,94, 102,109,137,139,140,141,142,-143, 145.

2 Corinthians 7:9a – *“I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you but because the pain turned you to God.”* (Living)

2. USE MY PAIN TO DRAW ME CLOSER TO OTHER PEOPLE

Galatians 6:2 – *“Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ.”* (New Living)

3. USE MY PAIN TO HELP ME GROW DEEPER IN MY COMMITMENT TO CHRIST

Hebrews 5:8 – *“Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.”* (New Living)

2 Corinthians 7:11 – *“Isn't it wonderful all the ways in which this distress has goaded you closer to God? You're [1] more alive, [2] more concerned, [3] more sensitive, [4] more reverent, [5] more human, [6] more*

passionate,[7] more responsible. Looked at from any angle, you've come out of this with purity of heart.” (Message)

Paul is a testimony on how we can become resilient believers:

Paul: *“I was in prison often...whipped times without number...faced death again and again...beaten with rods...stoned...shipwrecked three times...hungry, thirsty, without food...I have shivered in the cold without enough clothing to keep me warm. . . .I was under great pressure, far beyond my ability to endure, I despaired life itself. I felt I had received the sentence of death.” (2 Corinthians 11:23-27; 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, New Living & NIV)*

And after all of that he wrote:

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 – [8] *“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; [9] persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” (NIV)*

How can we have that kind of resilient faith?

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 – [17] *“This small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble. [18] **FOR WE FIX OUR ATTENTION**, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever.” (GN)*

4. USE MY PAIN SO I CAN BE MORE SENSITIVE IN HELPING OTHER PEOPLE

2 Corinthians 1:4 – *“He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.” (New Living)*

5. USE MY PAIN AS AN EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

2 Corinthians 6:4 – *“In everything we do we try to show that we are true servants of God. We patiently endure suffering and hardship and trouble of every kind.” (Living & NIV)*

Homework: Write down your four or five of your most painful experiences and then ask yourself, “How can I use these to benefit other people.”

Prayer:

Father, You know every painful experience I'm going through. Comfort me as much as possible and help me to use my suffering to become more Christlike. Use my pain to help me draw closer to You through public worship; to draw closer to other people; to grow deeper in my commitment to You; and to be sensitive toward other people. Build resilience in my life as You did with the apostle Paul. Use my deepest pain as my personal life message that can benefit other people. In Jesus' name. Amen.