



Don't Waste Your Pain

Over the years, I've spoken with a lot of people who have gotten stuck in their place of pain. Whether they were abused as a child or suffered from other disappointments in life, they allowed it to keep them from moving forward.

Painful experiences can leave us bitter, offended and focused on the people who have harmed us. However, just because someone treated us wrong, it doesn't give us the license to treat *them* wrong.

In fact, when we decide to "pay people back" in this way, we're doing the exact opposite of what God's Word says to do. Making progress means giving up all offense, hatred, pain and unforgiveness.

The Lord has used Psalm 37:1-3 (AMP) to literally change my life. It says, "Do not worry because of evildoers, nor be envious toward wrongdoers; for they will wither quickly like the grass, and fade like the green herb. Trust [rely on and have confidence] in the Lord and do good...."

When someone harms or treats us unfairly in some way, our first inclination is to want to get revenge. But if we continue to focus on the injustice and the person who wronged us, it will eat us up on the inside.

I often say that holding a grudge and staying bitter is like taking poison and hoping your enemy will die. It is useless!

I really want you to remember this: Life is not fair, and everything that happens to you is not fair, *but God is fair*. And if you place your trust in Him and do things His way, He will make it up to you (many times over!) and use what happened for your good.

So, what is "God's way"? Psalm 37:3 holds the key: *trust God and do good....*

First, we must trust God with our situation. In the midst of the pain, in the midst of betrayal, rejection or disappointment, we need to say:

"God, I don't understand everything that's happened, but I know *You are good*. Your Word says You are my Vindicator and that You will make wrong things right. I give my situation to You, asking You to fight on my behalf as I continue to seek You and go about helping other people."

Now, the second part is just as important: *do good*.

I really believe this is our secret weapon. Romans 12:21 says that we "overcome evil with good." In fact, we will never move beyond our pain if we repay evil for evil.

The enemy's goal is for us to feel sorry for ourselves and get consumed with our own problems. But during these times, the greatest thing we can do is turn our focus outward and help others with their needs.

I believe when we *continue* to trust God and remain determined to be good to others even while we're hurting, there's nothing the enemy can do to stop us.

The truth is, life isn't always going to turn out the way we want. Jesus Himself said that we will have tribulation. However, even when bad things happen—even when we suffer disappointments and setbacks we didn't see coming—God wants to use it for our good.

In fact, the Lord wants us to let Him use our challenges and difficulties as opportunities to help us grow strong in Him. Look what it says in Habakkuk 3:19 (AMPC): "The Lord God is my strength [my source of courage, my invincible army]; He has made my feet [steady and sure] like hinds' feet and makes me walk [forward with spiritual confidence] on my high places [of challenge

and responsibility]."

I believe God is saying, "Don't waste your pain!" If you allow Him, He will use your challenging times to "make your feet steady and sure" and trust Him like never before.

Each thing we go through helps equip us for our next challenge. Having experience and going through things also help us live courageously. We learn that we can endure difficulties, and that knowledge helps us not to fear the future.

Maybe you've been hanging on to some deep emotional wounds that occurred years ago, and it's preventing you from taking that next step forward. Or maybe some recent disappointments have caused you to want to throw in the towel and give up on the process.

I'm not sure where you are today, but I do know this: If you will put your trust in God and do things His way, He can take even the worst things that have happened and work them out for your good.

The Lord wants us to let Him use our challenges and difficulties as opportunities to help us grow strong in Him.