



CEO Devotional – February 17, 2014
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Don't Waste the Pain (Part II)

In Part 1 of this devotion, I shared that we all find ourselves struggling and in pain at various points in our journey with Jesus and wanting to escape the pain. Maybe it is a health problem—maybe something we caused ourselves. Maybe it is something with the kids; maybe there was a recession, maybe, maybe, maybe . . . Our temptation is we want out, we want to quit, and we want to escape.

George Muller was a man from Bristol, England, who, in the 1800s, built a number of orphanages and fed thousands of children without asking anybody except God for money. Like many of us, George had a hard time concentrating when he prayed. His mind would wander, and he felt his prayers were not effective. He had this to say about how he dealt with trials, and I think it applies to us today: *"The most important thing I had to do was to read the Word of God and to meditate on it. Meditation on God's Word has given help and strength to pass peacefully through deep trials. What is the food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God—not the simple reading of the Word of God. O we must consider what we read, ponder over it, and apply it to our hearts. The weaker we are, the more meditation we need to strengthen our inner man. Without spiritual preparation, the service, the trials, and the temptations can be overwhelming."*

God understands our pain. We have to understand that nothing happens to us that first doesn't go through the hand of God. He does have a plan. We are His children; He carries our picture in His wallet just like you carry your children's pictures. He has a dream for us and wants only the best for us, and He is never going to give up on us. Because we are His, He is our protector. We are not a victim to anything. He assumes total responsibility for our needs.

Sometimes when nothing seems to be working, we become overwhelmed with fear and the intensity of the pain gets so bad that it is hard for us to believe and keep moving forward. This is the point we need to dig deep and exercise courage—not to do more or try harder, but to trust and rest in Him, letting Him carry our load, focusing on Him for our hope (Matthew 11:28-30).

We feed our faith daily by meditating on His Word and making it a part of our inward person. This is the connection needed for our faith to grow and a chance for us to show God who and what we believe. Our pain is a stepping stone to more dependence on Him, building a partnership that is everlasting and giving us the assurance that we are operating within His will and doing His work not our own.

I cling to the truth that Paul expresses in Romans 5:3-6: "to rejoice in our suffering knowing that it produces endurance, character, and hope." God intends for us to profit from all of our trials and disappointments in life. I am learning that through faith we need to believe that He is up to something good and through our response there will be a feeling of encouragement and a new attitude.