

EMBRACING GOD'S INNER WORK

October 1, 2017 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 8-11 by Bob Branch
Building A Deeper Life In A Shallow World, Part 4

BIG IDEA: In the midst of your difficulties and troubles, God is using it to shape you into the very best version of you—the one with the qualities of Jesus.

“The apostle Paul said, “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.” Which means God is at work every moment to help you become his best version of you.” —**John Ortberg**, *The Me I Want to Be*

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

God is there, in the midst of our pain.

God comforts us in our pain.

Your pain has meaning.

1. God is PRESENT in our pain, comforting us and preparing us to effectively love others.

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.

“God will never give us more than we can handle?” 1 Cor. 10:13

2. We will encounter circumstances that are overwhelming and difficult to deal with, with NO VISIBLE EXIT RAMP.

“My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body. I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.” **Psalm 38:7-8**

“But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.”

3. Trials have a way of REVEALING THINGS within us, and God will use them to continue to sculpt us into the best version of us.

“I have refined you, but not as silver is refined. Rather, I have refined you in the furnace of suffering.” **Isaiah 48:10** NLT (see Isaiah 64:8)

“When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, don’t resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become people of mature character with the right sort of independence” **James 1:2-4** JBP

What should be our response?

- Lay down your expectations of a trouble-free life.
- Remain present with him, participating in relationship with him.
- Embrace his program of shaping you—his bigger picture.
- Trust his shaping fingers and not seek to squirm free.