

One More Night With the Frogs...

Every moment of misery is a call for discovery and deliverance. We do not always find discovery, much less deliverance. Why? Look at Pharaoh.

Years ago, Moses demanded that the enslaved Israelites be released from Egyptian bondage. Horrible plagues as judgments of God rampaged throughout Egypt. During one such plague, slimy croaking frogs infested every inch of the land. Frogs were everywhere: in the beds, in the bread, in the homes, and in the hair. In every nook and cranny, and under every foot, frogs fouled the land. Finally, Pharaoh could stand it no longer. He begged for deliverance. One question from Moses exposed a sad fact common to man. *“When do you want the frogs to go?”* Pharaoh said, *“Tomorrow!”* That’s right. He chose ONE MORE NIGHT WITH THE FROGS! It is a sad fact that we often put off what God is ready to do today!

Don’t make the same mistake. Don’t postpone your hope which is in Christ. Don’t say, *“I’ll wait through one more night with the frogs.”* Reach out today to the one who shared this message of hope with you or the author listed at the bottom of this column. Let us share with you how you can find hope in your hurt.

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Hope For The Hurting

“Life can be counted on to provide all the pain that any of us might need.” (Sheldon Kopp)

Pain is the single greatest common denominator of life. It visits every home. It touches every life. Pain comes wearing many different horrifying masks...
broken hearts, homes, and health...
dashed dreams, and
ruined relationships.

The Psalmist understood this. He cried out, “How long, O Lord, how long?” (Psalm 6:3). We know it’s true as we struggle to suffer in silence or strike back in rage. Underlying our everyday experience is the haunting, even shadowy question, “Is there any hope for the hurting?” The answer is **YES!**

Embrace the Enemy.

Pain, suffering, and struggle of any kind are often seen as enemies that threaten and attack every aspect of our lives. We are led to believe that life’s greatest goal is to eliminate pain. We are swirling in a sea of messages that promise pain-free living. However, it is pain that demands change. It is pain that sets us on the journey to seek the cure. It is pain that produces the flinching and firm reaction that says, “I can’t go on like THIS!” Pain is not our enemy. Pain is our protector from the damage that comes and grows as we spend each additional minute continuing to inflict the same old injury. Our addiction to comfort, convenience, and ease has led us to the deadly tendency to resist and even refuse change until we have to. Pain is the first signal that says, “This must change!”

The Answer Is in the Mirror.

Pain often leads us to look only on the surface, to over-simplify, to fail to recognize or receive the deeper message. We breath a desperate silent prayer, “Lord, just make him stop... make it go away...make this change.”

Unbeknownst to us, this kind of thinking kills all hope. Why? Because we allow our hope to be built on “HIM... IT... THIS.” As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:7, “You are looking at things only on the surface.” Go deeper, much deeper. The answer is in the mirror. The answer is in you.

Mary Craig said, “***The only cure for suffering is to face it head on, grasp it around the neck, and use it.***” You are either a victim or a valiant fighter. But you say, “I didn’t do it. It’s not my fault. Make HIM... IT... THIS... stop.” By leaving your hope in the hands of another person or the prospect of a changed circumstance, you have given away your hope. Your hope is in your opportunity to respond to the Lord Jesus Christ in the arena of agony.

Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are not grapes on the vines,
Though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
Though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.
The Sovereign Lord is my strength;
He makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
He enables me to go on the heights.
(Habakkuk 3:17-19)

Do you see hope for the hurting in these scriptures? Your hope is in the LORD and in your opportunity to respond to, to receive, and to rely on His grace, mercy, love, and strength. **Then** you will know joy. **Then** you will rise up out of misery. **Then** you will scale heights of new discovery.

Your Disadvantage Becomes Your Advantage!

Paul Tournier said that **the most powerful and most unused gift from God is choice.** A huge step toward hope and healing is letting go of the fantasy that some magical cure or mystical moment will transform your life. However, your life can be transformed as you understand the choice is up to you. The right choice transforms disadvantages into advantages.

Victor and Mildred Goertzel published ***Cradles of Eminence*** in 1962. Their study of 413 “famous and exceptionally gifted people” revealed a startling discovery. Eighty percent of these later famous and gifted people hated school and seventy percent came from homes that were riddled with trouble, trauma, and difficulty. Virtually all of these great achievers were born in the arena of great agony. Somehow they learned to transform the very struggle of their disadvantage into the substance of their advantage. Could it be that the press of pain leads us to discover God and ourselves? Life’s difficulties allow us, even force us, to be broken of our superficiality. We become real. We become really open to God. We become what He intended us to be as we learn to walk with Him through days of pain.

***Satisfy us in the morning with your
unfailing love, that we may sing for joy
and be glad all our days.***
***Make us glad for as many days as you
have afflicted us, for as many years as
we have seen trouble.***

(Psalm 90:14-16)