

How God's Kingdom Comes Alive in You

None of us like suffering. But it is only when we embrace the cross that God's kingdom begins to come to life in us.

Do you wonder why God has to make it so hard on you? Why doesn't He make you good without making you miserable in the meantime? Of course He could, but He does not choose to do so.

He wants you to grow a little at a time and not burst into instant maturity. This is what He has decided, and you can only adore His wisdom—even when you don't understand it.

I am awed by what suffering can produce. You and I are nothing without the cross. I agonize and cry when the cross is working within me, but when it is over I look back in admiration for what God has accomplished.

Of course I am then ashamed that I bore it so poorly. I have learned so much from my foolish reactions!

You yourself must endure the painful process of change. There is much more at work here than your instant maturity. God wants to build a relationship with you that is based on faith and trust and not on glamorous miracles.

FATHER KNOWS BEST God uses the disappointments, disillusionments, and failures of your life to take your trust away from yourself and help you put your trust in Him. It is like being burned in a slow fire.

You would rather be burned up in a blaze of glory, wouldn't you? But how would this fast burn detach you from yourself? Thus God prepares events to detach you from yourself and from others.

God is your Father; do you think He would ever hurt you? He

just cuts you off from things you love in the wrong way. You cry like a baby when God removes something or someone from your life, but you would cry a lot more if you saw the eternal harm such wrong attachments cause you.

You do not see with the eyes of eternity. God knows everything. Nothing happens without His consent.

You are upset by small losses but do not see eternal gains! Don't dwell on your suffering. Your oversensitivity makes your trials worse. Abandon yourself to God.

Everything in you that is not already a part of the established kingdom of God needs the cross. When you accept the cross in love, His kingdom begins to come to life within you. You must bear the cross and be satisfied with what pleases God.

You have need of the cross! The faithful Giver of every good gift gives the cross to you with His own hand. I pray you will come to see how blessed it is to be corrected for your own good.

My God, help us to see Jesus as our model in all suffering. You nailed Him to the cross for us. You made Him a man of sorrows to teach us how useful sorrow is. Give us a heart to turn our backs on ourselves and trust only in You.

Read a companion devotional.

Francois de Fenelon, better known simply as “Fenelon,” became the Archbishop of Cambrai, France, in the late 1600s. Because of his support of Jeanne Guyon, whom King Louis XIV had condemned, he was banished to his own diocese. However, his correspondence on the subject of a deeper walk with Christ still influences us today.