

Is Self-Pity a Sin?

Yesterday morning I had a good reason to feel sorry for myself. I woke up at 1:30 a.m. in a quiet, comfortable hotel room and could not go back to sleep. I'm used to insomnia as a nightly occurrence, but when 4:00 and then 5:00 rolled around (the alarm set for 6:00) tears of self-pity started to rise. I had a five-hour drive ahead of me, and it seemed unfair that I would have to face that on three hours of sleep.

Unfortunately, I had been listening all day to John Piper's audio book, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals*, and he listed the particular sins he struggles with. Self-pity was one of them.

Is self-pity a sin? I had never considered this, until Piper's words and my lack of sleep collided. After much thought (and I had plenty of time to think about it in the middle of the night –don't you feel sorry for me?), I begrudgingly have to agree.

Seven Reasons Why I Think Self-Pity Is a Sin

- Self-pity is a **refusal to accept a trial as a test of faith**, thus **inhibiting my own growth toward maturity** and completion in Christ. ("Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete..." James 1:2-4 NIV)
- Self-pity **demands that I am entitled** to a certain quality of life that has not been promised to me in Scripture. (Jesus says, "...In this world you will have trouble." John 16:33 NIV)
- Self-pity **dilutes my compassion** for others, as I elevate my own suffering to a place of prominence. ("...be compassionate..." 1 Peter 3:8 NIV)

- Self-pity is married to **grumbling** and complaining. (“Do everything without complaining...” Philippians 2:14 NIV)
- Self-pity **ousts gratitude**. (“Be thankful.” Colossians 3:15 NIV)
- Self-pity **fills my time** with useless whining and moaning instead of prayers for help and rescue from the Almighty God. (“Call upon me in the day of trouble...” Psalm 50:15 NIV)
- Self-pity **will only accept joy that comes from reversal of circumstances** instead of joy that comes from the Lord. (“Rejoice in the Lord always...” Philippians 4:4 NIV)

So, I accepted the sleepless night as a trial from the Lord and decided I would rejoice in the opportunity to trust Him for my day of travel. I made the trip safely and wide awake (minus one 20-minute snooze at a truck stop). I even came home with enough energy to unpack, do two loads of laundry, and write this blog post.

What do you think – life without self-pity?