

Trusting God When the Pain Is Just Too Much

Last Sunday, along with much of the rest of America, my husband and I watched Super Bowl LI. Timmy watched occasionally, not because he cares about football, but because he wanted to be where Daddy and I were. So while Phil and I enjoyed the game, Timmy's favorite part was the Skittles commercial, where he learned that you could make a rainbow out of the candies ("Taste the Rainbow").

Timmy asked me to buy him a rainbow, so the next time I made a grocery list, I put "1 pkg. of Skittles-Timmy" on the list. As soon as my husband got home with the groceries and handed the package to Timmy, Timmy asked me to open it for him.

Usually, I just tear a corner off the bag. But since Timmy tends to spill candy, I thought it might work better if I pulled the two halves of the bag apart at the top. I carefully began pulling on each side of the wrapper slowly, so that it wouldn't come apart suddenly and fling a rainbow all over my living room.

Timmy, seeing only that it was taking me far too long to open his rainbow, said sweetly, "Hmm. It looks like you forgot to bring your muscles."

I'm sure it did look to him like I wasn't strong enough to do the job. In his mind, that was the only explanation that made sense. After all, if I were capable of doing so, I'd rip that bag wide open and give him what he wanted right now. Wouldn't I?

Well, no. Because my ways were higher than his ways.

Sound familiar?

Scripture tells us God's ways are higher than our ways (see Isaiah 55:9). You and I affirm that. "Of course God knows much more than we do," we say. In the calm, peaceful times, it's easy to affirm that God's ways are different from ours and that there are some things He does that we'll never understand. But when life happens and we suffer pain because God isn't doing what we want Him to do right now, we forget who we are and who He is, and we question His ways. We question His abilities. We question His love.

Desperate for relief from our pain, we conclude He must be doing something wrong. Because He wouldn't really want us to suffer like this, would He?

Would He?

Yes and no. It's not that God delights in suffering; far from it. God never delights in any of the horrible, damaging effects that sin has brought into the world. But God does know that sometimes, our suffering is somehow necessary to His plan.

Well yay, we're tempted to think. God's plan is accomplished, and that's great. But what about me? Do I matter so little to Him that He will willingly sacrifice me to achieve His greater plan?

Again, yes and no.

Yes, God sometimes allows us to experience pain because somehow, the results of all of that are going to further His great and glorious plan.

But no, He doesn't let us suffer because He cares so little about us. It's not that at all. You see, what's best for us is the furtherance of His plan for the world.

This statement sounds harsh and cruel if we believe what's best for us involves eliminating as much of our pain as

possible. But if we believe the fulfillment of God's purposes is what's best, we must acknowledge that sometimes, experiencing pain will somehow be necessary.

I don't pretend to know why people have to experience the moments of pain and suffering that cross their lives. I only know that somehow, it's necessary. Because a God who loves us so much that He was willing to sacrifice Himself for us won't allow us to suffer one second longer than He has to.

He may be acting more slowly than we'd like. But He's never too slow. He always acts at just the right time.

And He's as eager for that moment—the moment when He can relieve your suffering—as you are.

He longs for that day, too.

"The Lord is not slow concerning His promise, as some count slowness" (2 Pet. 3:9a). {eoa}

*Adapted from **Megan Breedlove's** blog, "Manna for Moms." Megan is the author of Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy and Manna for Moms: God's Provision for Your Hair-Raising, Miracle-Filled Mothering Adventure (Regal Books.) She is also a blogger and a stay-at-home mom with five children.*