

Do You Want to Be Pitiful or Powerful?

Do you want to be happy—I mean, *really* happy? I believe that deep down we all want to be happy and enjoy our lives. We can spend a lot of time and energy trying to do things that will make us happy, but our own efforts will never truly satisfy us.

That's because God doesn't want our minds to be on ourselves all the time. He wants us to look past the things that are happening in our own lives and reach out to others and bless them. Because when our focus is on ourselves, we can end up feeling sorry for ourselves and face the danger of self-pity.

I used to have a real problem with self-pity. I felt sorry for myself because I'd been abused by my dad, and sometimes I felt sorry for myself when my husband, Dave, got to go out and play golf while I stayed home with our kids. I wasted so many days having pity parties for all types of reasons.

In the first few years of our marriage, Dave tried to keep me happy, while I carried on with a bad attitude. But one day he finally told me, "You know what? I'm not spending my life trying to make you happy. You can get happy or not get happy, but I'm going to be happy. I'm not going to feel sorry for you because it won't help you." And you know, even though it was really hard to hear at the time, it was the best thing he could have said to me. Because when you struggle with self-pity, if other people feel sorry for you it just feeds the problem.

Now that doesn't mean we can never be sad. But we need to understand that if we hang on to our pain for too long, it can become self-pity, and we can become addicted to it. The good news is God gives us the tools to work through our feelings in

a healthy way and not let them control us.

Years ago, when God was dealing with me about this subject, He brought me to Galatians 5:19-21 (AMP), which gives a list of things the Bible calls sin. It says, "Now the doings (practices) of the flesh are clear (obvious): they are immorality, impurity, indecency, Idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies), envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like"

As I was studying those Scriptures, I thought, "Well, self-pity is not on the list." Then I got an eye-opening revelation: It *is* on the list because self-pity is actually idolatry. When we feel sorry for ourselves, we turn inward and idolize ourselves ... essentially everything becomes about "me." People who are focused on themselves never see what they can and should be doing for other people.

We should have compassion for other people who are hurting. In the Bible, we see times when Jesus was moved with compassion, and then He would go and help people. If we can be moved with sympathy toward others and keep our mind off of ourselves, we will be much happier. We will also trust God to meet our needs and bring justice in our lives when we are hurting or mistreated, rather than getting into self-pity.

The Bible says in Hebrews 11:6 (AMP), "For whoever would come near to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him [out]." That means God rewards those who are faithful and who wait on Him. If you've been hurt in your life and you have put your trust and confidence in God and you're waiting on Him, you have a reward coming!

I want to encourage you to keep a notebook of your blessings, the special little things that God does for you, prayers that

He answers. And when you're tempted to have a pity party, go get that book out and have a talk with yourself.

King David talked to himself when he started to feel depressed. He said, "Why are you cast down, O my inner self? And why should you moan over me and be disquieted within me? Hope in God and wait expectantly for Him, for I shall yet praise Him, my Help and my God" (Ps. 42:5 AMP).

I am so thankful that God is allowing me to take what has happened to me and use it to help other people. The best treatment in the world for sadness and self-pity is to help somebody else. That's when we get our minds off of our own problems and trust God to help us and do what's best for us.

No matter what happens, be determined—with God's help—to keep a good attitude, remain thankful and avoid self-pity. Then God will bring restoration, peace, joy and real happiness to your life.

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