

Joyce Meyer: Trade Your Pain for God's Promise

Everyone deals with emotional pain to some degree. Whether it's a difficult relationship, an addiction, abuse or depression, it can cripple us and prevent us from moving forward. But regardless of what's happened in our past, God still wants us to have a great future.

For years, I thought I had to settle for a second-rate life because I had been sexually abused by my father. I thought my future would never be as good as it could have been.

That's what our enemy, Satan, wants us to believe. He wants us to believe that our past pain has permanently damaged what God can do with our future.

Maybe that's where you are today. You look at everything you've been through and think, *My situation's just a hopeless mess. Maybe it would be different if God had done something sooner, but now it's beyond repair.*

If so, I want you to know that God can fix the unfixable and bring dead things back to life! (See Matt. 19:26.)

If you are brokenhearted—if you've been hurt, abused, disappointed or unfairly treated in any way—it doesn't limit what God can do in your life. In fact, God can give you a future that's better than it would have been if you had never gone through painful experiences.

Isaiah 61:7-8a (AMP) has meant so much to me over the years. It says, "Instead of your [former] shame you will have a double portion; and instead of humiliation your people will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore, in their land they will possess double [what they had forfeited]; everlasting joy will be theirs. For I, the Lord, love

justice.”

This Scripture helped me understand that no person could pay me back for what I’d gone through—but God could! And He’d even give me double for all the pain I’d been through.

I’ve witnessed this firsthand in my own life. God has used His Word to transform me from the inside out. Instead of anger and bitterness, I now have peace and joy. Instead of being a victim of past abuse, He is using my experiences to help many find healing and total restoration from emotional pain.

Leave It All Behind

Isaiah 61:1-3a says Jesus came “to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound ... to give to them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

Jesus has already opened the prison doors! We no longer have to stay in the “prisons” of emotional pain, rejection, disappointment, worry, depression, anger, addictions or bad habits.

If you’ve ever dealt with any of these things, you know they can have long-lasting consequences. Pain from the past has a way of lingering and even affecting your future.

But you don’t have to live stuck in the pain of your past. You can make an exchange—you can trade your pain for God’s promise and have beauty instead of ashes.

God offers each one of us healing and restoration, but we also have a part to play in the process. We can’t expect to keep our “ashes” and still receive God’s beauty. We have to choose to move forward and leave things like bitterness, resentment and self-pity behind.

Self-pity was a hard thing for me to give up. I used it for

years to comfort myself when I was hurting; however, the Lord showed me that it's actually idolatry—it's turning inward and pitying ourselves when we should have compassion flowing out of us to other people.

Self-pity is a major trap that will keep us stuck in our pain. It's the same with bitterness and resentment. It took me a long time to get past the point of thinking, *Someone owes me*. I was bitter and angry about my past, and I ended up taking it out on the people around me, trying to "collect" from those who had no way of paying me back.

I had to decide to let go of my anger and resentment and trust God to restore what I had lost. He alone could make wrong things right ... in His way and in His timing.

Whatever you've gone through or wherever you are today, your pain doesn't have the final say in your life. God can take any situation and turn it around for His good.

If your life is a fragmented mess, let Jesus gather up the pieces. Be determined to maintain a positive, grateful attitude, focusing on God's blessings and the great things He is doing in your life.

As you do, your pain will become someone else's gain; your mess will become your message; and what you've walked through will become someone else's miracle. You'll have a life of beauty, joy and praise!

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