

Joyce Meyer: You Don't Have to Settle for a Second-Rate Life Because of Your Pain

God loves you and He has an amazing plan for your life! You may have heard this before, but I want to ask you: Do you really believe it?

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) says, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" And Ephesians 2:10 tells us, "We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

These verses clearly state that God wants to bless us with good plans, and He will prepare us to do the good works He's destined us to do. So why are so many people settling for less than what God promises us as His children?

I know what it's like to live this way. My father sexually abused me for years and I believed I could only have a second-rate life because of it. But when I got serious about my relationship with God and began studying His Word, I realized I could have abundant life in Christ (John 10:10), and I didn't have to settle for less.

The truth is your entire life doesn't have to be ruined because someone hurt you years ago, or last week or even yesterday. Even if you've done terrible things, you can move forward in God's good plans for you. Regret is useless! We need to be truly sorry for the things we've done, but we need to receive God's love and forgiveness and go on.

If your life is not what God has declared it can be in His Word, I have good news for you today. You can make a decision to seek God, trust Him and His Word more than your past

experiences, your present circumstances, your feelings or what anyone has said about you.

You can begin to move forward as you let God heal your soul and restore what the enemy has stolen from you. You don't have to stay parked at the point of your pain anymore.

Jeremiah 30:17 (AMP) says, "'For I will restore health to you And I will heal your wounds' says the Lord..." And Psalm 147:3 tells us Jesus "heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds [healing their pain and comforting their sorrow]."

It's so important for us to get this, to understand that God wants to heal the wounds in our soul. Because when you're not living up to your true potential, you're not happy or satisfied. God created us for so much more than this!

In 2 Samuel 9, we read about King David and Mephibosheth, who was the son of Jonathan. David and Jonathan were best friends; they loved each other like brothers. They had a covenant relationship, which meant they committed to be loyal to each other throughout their lives. The understanding was, "Anything that's mine is yours; anything that's yours is mine. If you need anything, I'll help you get it or give it to you ...anything!"

After Jonathan died, David wanted to honor his covenant with him, and he said in 2 Sam. 9:1 (NIV), "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Ziba, a servant of Saul's household, told David about Mephibosheth, saying he was lame in both feet, living in Lo Debar.

David summoned Mephibosheth and said, "I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table (2 Sam. 9:7b).

Mephibosheth's response was, "What is your servant, that you

should notice a dead dog like me?" (2 Sam. 9:8). Now Mephibosheth understood covenants, and his attitude should have been, "Yes! I came to get what's mine!" But instead, he let his imperfections and circumstances define him; he was no better than a dead dog in his own mind.

But because of David's faithfulness to his covenant with Jonathan, Mephibosheth lived the rest of his life in the land of his father and grandfather, and he always ate at the king's table—even though he was lame in both feet.

As born-again believers in Christ, we have a covenant with God. Jesus died to give us everything God wants us to have: new life, righteousness, peace, joy, hope—a good future and hope! (See 2 Cor. 5:17, 21; Rom. 14:17; Jer. 29:11.)

Just as I didn't have to settle for a second-rate life because of my past, you don't have to settle for less than God's best. You just have to decide not to park at the point of your pain and ruin the rest of your life.

If you want to make a fresh start, pray something like this: "Thank You, God, that all things are made new, and I don't have to stay parked at the point of my pain anymore. In Christ, I will live the very best life He died to give me. I will be what You created me to be and do what You have planned for my life. I will fulfill Your purpose for me!"