

Daniel & Susan Fengler Presents:

“From the Mentor’s Notebook:”

**“THE PURPOSE OF PAIN - THE WHYS OF
LIFE’S QUESTIONS”**

So why do we face the struggles, the pains and problems of life? Why does a loving God allow such suffering?

Is He unwilling, unable or unavailable to help us in our traumas?

Is there a Plan behind the Pain or is it just Random happenings?



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"THE PURPOSE OF PAIN - THE WHYS OF LIFE'S QUESTIONS"

So what are we going to Talk About?

Introduction – Another viewpoint in the discussion

Chapter One: Creator God is God of Law and Order

- * In the Beginnings of Beginnings,
- * The Great Rescue Plan,
- * A Basic view of the Spiritual World,
- * How does the enemy get into the Camp?

Chapter Two: We Could Call Pain 'Affliction'

- * Pain can be God's Gift to us,
- * God gets our attention with Life's Pain,
- * What is your 'Milk Tanker'?
- * No one Escapes – the meaning of the word?
- * Afflictions affect our faith in life,
- * Some people turn away from God when pain comes,
- * Testing comes with our Walk of Faith,
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Chapter Three: There are Many Sides to the Picture on the Purpose of Pain

- * Except and endure,
- * Fight it because it is all the demonic,
- * Or maybe a third answer?

Chapter Four: Is all Pain From God?

- * Not all Pain is God's Judgement for our acts against Him.
- * He does allow Pain for this Earth time
- * We do have a Choice on how we use 'Pain',
- * but one day, we will understand all His reasons.

Chapter Five: There are Many Reasons for 'Affliction'.

- * Some Reasons for Afflictions*
- * With all these pressures and pains against us, what is going for us?
- * We must believe He is on our side!
- * Using our weak defences to create a stronger life.
- * The Concept of Legal Rights

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- * Helps to Survive the Journey

"THE PURPOSE OF PAIN - THE WHYS OF LIFE'S QUESTIONS"

Introduction – Another viewpoint in the discussion



Have you ever heard people asking?

"Why would a loving Creator God allow bad things to happen to those who are seeking?" Yes and why does God allow the war and famines all around us? Why allow the pain and suffering of children, of the old and the innocent? Doesn't He care or has He forgotten that we exist; He's onto another galaxy? Isn't He supposed to be a 'good God'?

We can be sure, philosophers and thinkers have debated this topic for at least 7000 years, ever since the story about the Garden of Eden. For our discussion, I have included much of the Biblical perspective as this viewpoint has been woven into most of our reader's lives. This gives us a framework to think differently than the secular, humanist views you can find around you today.

So join us as we explore some of the many sides to "The Purpose of Pain in our Lives".

CHAPTER ONE: CREATOR GOD IS A GOD OF LAW AND ORDER

Father God is not like the Greek mythical gods whose malicious dealings with humans brought suffering and pain, such as in the movie 'Troy'. All of His designs have an order, from the vastness of the universe to the tiniest cell in our body.

THE GREAT RESCUE PLAN - IN THE BEGINNINGS OF BEGINNINGS

1. Take you back **before the beginnings of the beginnings**before there was anything in existence.

Actually there was one Entity already, the entity we call God. This Entity was everywhere, knew everything and filled everything.

Once there was The One who filled everything and was everything. This entity began to think about having a creation and humans - people who would share the vast expanse of reality of a physical and a spiritual world.so God began to plan, to stretch the creative abilities, thus starting the Greatest Story ever told.



This Creator God also had to come to grips with the need to create 'free will' knowing that in doing so, some of this creation of humans would chose to not follow the best paths. Choice was needed so that the people would want to know the Creator and follow the best path for their own good. God wanted people to chose - not because they were programmed like a robots or taught obedience like animals. God

wanted people who wanted to choose God's ways. As unbelievable as it would seem, some humans would chose a self-destructive path!

Creator God had a Plan before Creation: Revelation, 22:3-5. God wanted a people of His own, a family of faith creatures like Himself, beings He could express love and share the whole Universe, both on a spiritual and a physical dimension.

2. In beginning of this whole plan, God knew that this perfect **creation must be subject to testing, to choice**. God realised the results of this - the wars, famines, violence, pain to the helpless women and children and those without protection. God thought through it all, planned measures to help protect the creation and the humansif they would allow God to do so. In the end of God's deliberations, God decided that it was worth it for those who would chose the best way, the only way to live in a self-centred, 'sin'-infected world that would come.

Even before the beginning of Creation, **God knew the horrific pain and misery** that would result from their disobedience - and He had a way through! He planned to use the enemy's tactics for our good, for restoration of relationship and for our ultimate wholeness.

**Somewhere along the thinking process, a decision was made; it was worth the pain to create a people who wanted God.
All the creation's pain and suffering was worth the struggle!**

3. Creation of the Spiritual worlds: First this God, this eternal Being, created realms of spiritual beings - angels, beings of light and awareness, with three archangels to help govern and direct them, Ephesians 6:12. The angels meant to be helpers in God's plan for the human race.



4. Next, God continued by speaking into existence the physical dimension - yes, God was that powerful, all that was needed was to say 'Let there be light....and there was light!' Genesis 1:1-3. Light, darkness, day and night were created; land and seas, plants, fish, animals and all life.

It's interesting to note that the 'Trinity' were present: The Planner and Architect was God, who used the Word, (who became Jesus) and

the Holy Spirit '*brooding over the waters*' to bring God's plans into reality

Finally God's final '*perfect centrepiece*'; God created a male and then a female and pronounced all this as "**Good!**"

5. The seeds of Pride and Rebellion: Just when the seeds of pride and rebellion entered one of these beings of light, these Arch-angels, we are not told, Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:12-17. However, the event certainly did not catch God unaware; Lucifer's actions were not a surprise. God had a rescue plan all along. God is a God of law and order in all areas. God knew this must happen in order to set in motion all the history to follow.

However, one-third of the angels chose to follow Lucifer away from the presence of God. In his hatred of the human race, Lucifer drew them into his rebellion and pride, Genesis 3:1-13.

6. So the cosmic battle was set between 'Satan' and his angels and God's eternal destiny plan for the whole human race! When Adam and Eve were tempted and failed the test, this gave a '**legal right**' for Lucifer/Satan to take the Earth for evil rather than good. Mankind was then described as '**fallen**' as they gave their authority away....to Satan to rule the Earth. There was and is only one kingdom, one set of laws with a 'rebellious providence' within this kingdom.

This is the greatest drama ever presented, Ephesians 6:12, Matthew 12:25-30. The battle between the forces of light and good and the demonic forces of evil

7. As the generations continued, this left mankind in more and more 'desperate need of Saving', Isaiah 64:6. Because the human race inherited all the same traits and possibilities as Adam and Eve that meant **the next generation was influenced by rebellion** to God and self-will. As each generation came and went, this 'sin' and iniquity towards God increased - until the perversion and self-centredness was so great, Creator God was sorry that mankind had been created, Genesis 6:5-7.



In fact, the only way Creator God could 'cleanse the Earth' from their self-destructive ways was to bring the Great Flood.

Sad to say, this did not eliminate the self-destructive tendencies of mankind; the **////** repeated itself again and again, until we come to this present age filled with wars, drugs, famine, disease and wasted human lives.

There was only One Answer!

8. The Word Became Flesh, John 1:1-5, 10-14.

God knew no human being could ever be perfect enough or free of the traits of Adam and Eve to save the human race. So that same 'Word' had to come to save the creation; God planned to become flesh Himself, to bring mankind back to Himself - as the babe born known as Jesus of Nazareth.

Creator God used the 'Word' spoken to create the heavens and the Earth to start a new life in a virgin! Jesus lived that perfect, faith-filled obedient life, true to Father God's will. Wait... there is more to the story!

The Four Gospels continues with Jesus' story. The humans around Jesus and the wicked spiritual world wanted Jesus dead! He was crucified - one of the cruellest deaths every devised by mankind.but Satan had no legal rights to kill this perfect 'sacrifice to God', Jesus. Satan had to allow God to raise Him from the dead. Thus, there is 'the first of a new species of mankind' living in the spiritual and physical dimensions at the right hand of the Great Architect, God. Those who chose God and the world offered by the Creator will also join Jesus one day!



Chapter Two: We Could Call Pain 'Affliction'.

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer" Romans 12:12. Afflictions happen to the believer and the 'pre-believer' as well, Psalms 34:19, John 16:2-3, 2 Corinthians 1:8, 2:4, 4:8, 4:17, 7:4, 1 Thessalonians. 3:3, 1 Peter 4:12.

WE ALL FACE AFFLICTIONS

In order to understand the complex questions surrounding human pain, we need to understand why God does not usually remove pain from our lives. We will explore some of the reasons for pain from God's perspective, and how to live in the midst of pain and remain on the path to which we are called.

1. Pain can be God's gift to us.

With the world's way of thinking, it is hard to understand the statement: Pain is a gift of a loving God to Mankind. Think of the times when only the intense misery of pain caused someone to find the Lord Jesus. Pain is an excellent motivator. Without physical pain our bodies would be destroyed. Without pain we would not know we injured ourselves (ex. Leprosy).



2. God gets our attention with pain.

Just like pain in the body is a signal something is wrong physically, 'heart pain' can be a helpful warning. God loves us too much to leave the old stuff in our hearts. Many could share how Father God got our attention with pain.

Some people have to '*hit the brick wall*' before they see things God's way and humble themselves. Then they can start hearing what He has to say.

A country teacher seemed to always get behind a slow milktanker as she traveled to school each morning in a hurry. On sharing her deep anger and frustration, a friend had the impression that God was deliberately putting milk tankers in front of 'Samatha'.

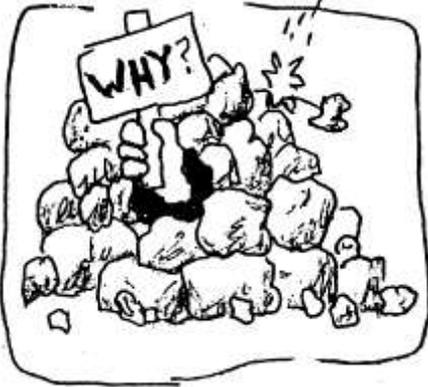
"What would it be like if you started earlier, sat back and enjoyed the music and the view whenever you came across a milktanker? What do you think God is trying to tell you using the tankers?"

Certainly we can see the answer. The milk tankers were God's way of getting her attention, teaching her patience and how to enjoy the moment.

Who or what are your 'milk tankers'?

3. No one escapes affliction!

When Creator God thought through The Greatest Rescue Plan in History, He didn't guarantee absolute pain-free life. In fact, Creator God knew that letting the Plan unfold, pain and suffering were going to be the natural outcome of life on Earth.



The word "**affliction**" comes from an Assyrian word meaning "a form of torture, of slowly putting rocks on a victim until they died".

The New Testament further extended the meaning of affliction to include "the pressures and stresses of unfavourable circumstances which befall a person's life".

4. When afflictions come, some turn from faith.

One of the main reasons why some people turn away from following Jesus is when afflictions happen to them. Jesus talked about this in the parable of the seed lost among the thorns in Mark 4:17. We need to be taught how to handle the pain, stress and afflictions of life.

5. Testing comes with our covenant with Jesus.

When we were '*born again*', we signed a '*contract*' with Jesus, to allow Him to make us more like Him, Philippians 1:6, 3:10. This process of sanctification refines '*the stuff*' out of us and helps get '*the stuff*' out of others. He builds up faith; faith is a muscle that needs to be exercised, Hebrews 11:12.

Pain helps us to exercise spiritual endurance and patience, Romans 5:3, James 1:3. Our trials can be a comfort for others, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. The Holy Spirit is building Christ's character within, the same way gold is refined, through heat or diamonds are created under great heat and pressure.

The Lord gave Sarah a picture of a beautiful marble block being chiselled into His image. There were still flaws and imperfections in the stone - but it was being sculptured into something precious.

"Do you want to see the workmen I am using in this process?" Jesus asked her. As she replied, "Yes", three people stepped out from behind the statue: her husband, her mother-in-law and her teenage daughter - the three most abrasive, gut-wrenching people in her life.

What is the Moral of the story?



6. God is dealing with our wrong attitudes.

One of the ways God reveals our ‘hardness of heart’ is to let us see glimpses of our heart’s attitudes by revelation, through circumstances.

7. Pain is part of life.

With or without Him, we will have pain. Having pain is not an option. There is nowhere to hide from pain. Some pain can be avoided, if we learn to walk with the Great Teacher. However, some pain is unavoidable. He wants to walk the (sometimes painful) journey with us, to build up our faith and trust in Him.

CHAPTER THREE: THERE ARE MANY SIDE TO THE PICTURE ON THE PURPOSE OF PAIN

People have debated this question, probably since the time in the Garden of Eden. Various teachings and philosophies surround the topic. Here are a few:

1. Accept all pain as part of life, endure with hope and patience all that comes.

Many people, Christians and the rest of the world included, believe that there is not purpose behind the things they go through. “Life stinks and then you die” attitudes are all around us. You accept the pain as your lot in life, just endure to the end.



2. All pain and suffering is from the Evil One, demonic and to be challenged at every point.

For others, their worldview is that all pain is from a demonic source and therefore, you must fight it. In fact some believe that you can live a totally pain-free life while here on Earth.

3. But what if there are other reasons for our pain?

So where are you in your view on the Purpose of Pain in your life?

Accept all pain < ----- > Pain is usable < ----- > all pain is Demonic

CHAPTER FOUR: THEN IS ALL PAIN FROM GOD?

A. NOT ALL PAIN IS GOD'S JUDGEMENT ON SIN.

Has God judged the saintly Christian dying of cancer, or the child who is crippled from birth? Great harm has been done in the name of Jesus by the claim of misguided people that all pain is God's judgement on sin. In one example, Jesus denied that sin had made a man blind from birth (John 9:1-3). There are other things at work here.

1. Satan is the one who causes pain.

We must examine the issue of 'legal rights' to answer the deeper question of who is responsible for pain. Pain that just hurts and destroys is not God's way, but it is Satan's. Our Enemy is the author of death and destruction (John 10:10, Revelation 20:14).

2. God does allow pain for now.

Some believers have been sold the line "Come to Jesus and all your problems will disappear!" However, pain in this life is not an option - everyone experiences pain. God's priority is NOT about keeping us from pain! Reflect on Matthew 18:8 and James 1:2-3. Our loving Father knew pain and misery would enter through man's sin and their fall from God's best.

3. God does give us a choice on how we face and deal with our pain.

Will we be burnt bitter or refined like refined like gold?
Example on how gold is refined.

4. One day, we will fully understand God's plan for our Pain.

Choose to believe that Father God is a God of justice and love, of logical cause and effect. When at the end of time we are standing with Him and know the why of things, we will agree with His methods and His reasons for what we - and all others - have experienced in life.

CHAPTER FIVE: THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR 'AFFLICTIONS'.

There are at least seven kinds of pain or 'afflictions' in life around us:

Pain that results from **our lifestyle**: wrong diet, late nights, too much TV, etc. Some pain comes from car, sports, work accidents. Having to stand up for what we believe and being "persecuted for the faith's sake" is to be expected. Pain happens when our **immune system** gets overloaded and we 'get' a cold or the flu, **inherited illnesses**, weakness, deformities and body malfunctions cause others pain, **inner heart attitudes** of bitterness, anger,



guilt, grief, depression and other strong emotions cause chemical and hormonal changes that bring **psychosomatic illnesses**, sickness and pain.

1. Some Reasons for Affliction:

- a) **Persecution** for the faith's sake, John 7:7, 2 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 2:20-23, Collisions 2:1, 3:13.
- b) The **'curse'** we inherit from Adam of living in a sin-sick world. There is death and decay in the Earth because of the iniquity of our ancestors. We can activate these 'tendencies' by our own actions (Proverbs 26:2).
- c) **Breaking God's natural laws:** wrong diet, risk taking, etc.
- d) **Breaking God's spiritual laws:** wrong thinking patterns create inner turmoil, physical disease. Often comes from our own idolatry.
- e) Carrying other's pain in a **false burden-bearing** role.
- f) The **enemy's plans and attacks** against us, 2 Corinthians 10:4, Ephesians 6:12, Matthew 5:25-28, 18:21-38. (Discover the legal rights he has.)
- g) Not discerning the Lord's body, **judgement and criticism** against others, especially our parents, 1 Corinthians 1:29, Ephesians 6:2.
- h) The testings and **chastisements** of the Father - Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 11:32, Hebrews 12:6, James 1:3, 1:12. Learn the difference between the enemy's attacks and God's testing.
- i) God is dealing with **our idols**, Ezekiel 4:4.

**He loves us too much to leave us with the falseness,
so He helps us see our strongholds.**



So pain and affliction are guaranteed us in this human existence? - Psalm. 34:19, 107:17, John 7:7, 16:33, James 1; Mark 4:17, 1 Peter 1:7, 4:12, Acts 4:12, 1 Thessalonians. 3:3, James 1:12-15. We need to allow this Truth to sink into our heart. Then, when the afflictions come, we can see them in the light of God's reality and not be destroyed by the lie: "God doesn't love me". **Remember, He is growing our FAITH.**

We live with the consequences of **Adam and Eve's rebellion** to God's love. We have inherited Adam and Eve's rebellious tendencies because they first broke God's law. We need to be careful to distinguish between Satan's legal rights to attack us, and when Satan is being used by God to chastise us. Like the Great Teacher He is, Father God **puts us through testings** to see if we are ready to continue onto the next level of growth and faith - or if we have really learned the last lesson He taught us - but He will never, never abandon us, James 1:2-3, Romans 8:28, Hebrews 12:5-11, 1 Corinthians 11:32.

God knew we would never be capable of overcoming all these afflictions by ourselves. That is why "He became flesh", took on our human form and paid the price for all of us to find Him and His peace. We have that choice; we can make that decision to say **"YES"**.

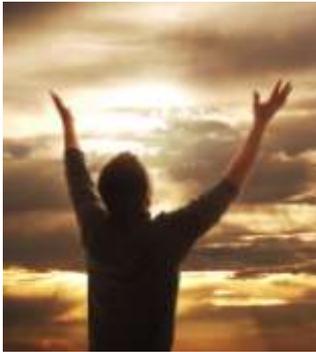
C. WITH ALL THAT AGAINST US, WHAT IS GOING FOR US?

1. First of all, we must believe that **Father God is on our side**. God has promised to never put too much on us that we cannot stand against the enemy of our soul. He will provide a way out but sometimes we need to look for it, push on a few doors and seek Him for answers.

2. **Enemy looking for weak points in our defences.**

Satan has become very good at seeing the weaknesses in the human race. He has had almost 7,000 years to observe, practice and deceive us. When a weakness in our life appears, the attack is on. Our job is to read the Word, spend time with God and seek answers to repair and make that part of our 'wall' stronger so we can learn the tactics that keep out the enemy.

However, when another weak point appears, the attack is on in that area. By looking at these 'attacks' as opportunities to make our walk stronger, each weak area is turned into a strength area. That will be one of the biggest 'jokes' on Satan at the end of time
- God used his attacks to make His people stronger.



3. **The Concept of Legal rights** - rats and compost piles.

Satan has been limited to using only the tactics 'that are common to man', 1 Corinthians 10:13. He cannot invent a new tactic, a new way of defeating humans. Whenever we break any of God's lovingly constructed laws that give a 'legal right' for the enemy to take hold of my life. Part of the 'Sanctification' process is to remove these legal rights so that we can stand free of enemy attacks.

It is much like leaving a secure, protective fortress to go, exposed and unprotected, into the open field where the enemy awaits.

We need to know Satan's tactics in order to enter into that protected place, Psalm 91. Satan is full of deceptive tricks. His whole aim and obsession is to delude mankind, to keep them in blindness and ignorance.

Remember though that Satan's tactics have not changed since the days of Adam and Eve; he is still using the same methods! These methods even follow his own downfall from God's glorious presence. Never doubt it, these methods still work on mankind.

When you see Creator God's side of the picture, nothing can touch us except God allows it. The enemy cannot interfere unless he has a **LEGAL RIGHT** to do so. Remember Job 1:6-12?

D. THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL WORLD

1. There are different views of spiritual world.

Just as in the physical world, it is dangerous to enter a spiritual battle without knowing the enemy, his tactics, his battle plans or his ultimate goals.

Following are various views of Satan's power:

- a) The most dangerous and deceptive view: *"Demons don't exist!"*
- b) Fanatical obsession with the whole area of deliverance,
- c) Morbid fear, superstition and dread: *"Demons are everywhere and cause all this catastrophe I'm experiencing."*
- d) Some people are aware and easily lead (apathy and ignorance) - perhaps the largest group within the church.
- e) When you become a Christian, the enemy cannot touch you.



Many may not know Satan and his forces; but he certainly knows us, his tactics and rights.

"LEARNING TO SURVIVE IN THE WILDERNESS"

CHAPTER SIX: THE VALLEY OF BACA: "WHO'S IN CONTROL AROUND HERE?"

About three thousand years ago, a young man named David lived in the land of Israel. Trouble seemed to haunt David, especially after he was predicted to become the next king. David had already won the hearts of the people with the amazing victory of the giant Goliath. He was given the most coveted prize in the kingdom - the king's daughter in marriage. He was honoured in many other ways too. Life was going well for him.

However, David soon found himself a hunted man. He had lost his wife, his home and friends. David learned to survive in caves, the rocks and deserts of Israel. He was in a wilderness place, the preverbal between a rock and a hard place. Often he cried out to God *"Why? Why?"* Anyone not been in places where it felt like a wilderness?

There is a book in the Bible that records many of David's songs. Open to the middle of your Bible and you'll find a book called **"Psalms"**. Find chapter 84, verses 5 to 7. Here, David gives us some keys in handling our time *"... in the wilderness..."*

1. This is David's song about a real valley in Israel called **the Valley of Baca**. In our journey in life, we may also go through wilderness places. It was a dry, arid valley outside Jerusalem, lined with Mulberry trees. When the wind blew, it sounded like

weeping or moaning. This can also be an emotional, spiritual picture of what's happening in our own life. **Each of us has our own valley of weeping places.**

2. *"They have set their hearts on pilgrimage ..."* Our life is also a process and it takes time. If we have the Lord Jesus in our life *"... we are headed toward Zion ..."*, toward the final goal. When the journey begins, the heart is hard and deceitful. As we progress **with Jesus**, He wants to turn our heart into a beautiful, precious place - if our heart will let Him. God searches the heart and one day, He will talk to us about what He finds in our heart, (Psalms. 94:11, 15:26, Proverbs 6:18, Matthew 9:4, 15:19, 1 Chronicles 28:9, Jeremiah 17:10, 23:24, Romans 8:27) It is our heart attitude about our struggles that He wants to change and heal.
3. We will be **"Blessed ..."** **IF we learn how** to make the Valley of Baca a place of springs and pools on our journey. Why did they need to dig wells in the natural? So we need to dig wells in the spiritual.



We can't stop the pain and afflictions coming; Creator God knew this too. So He must have planned ways to face and survive the trials and tribulations of this life.

Can we use the pain or do we just suffer in the middle of the pain? It's how we handle the pain when it comes that counts: burnt bitter or refined as gold? Are we the artist who uses the pains as 'the paints of life' to create new meaning from our experience here on Earth or ????

B. SO HOW DO WE 'DIG POOLS AND SPRINGS' IN THE VALLEY OF BACA?

1. **The First step is to allow Jesus into Your Life.** Accept His friendship and Lordship over your life and **determine in your heart that Father God is on your side.** Build a proper attitude about afflictions using what the Bible shows us.
2. **Learn to deal with Root Issues** that are in the heart. Most of us only see the Fruits, which are mainly **the results of habits we form from our heart level.**
3. **Aim to repair the holes in the Walls of Your Defences.** Choose to look for the hand of Father God in your circumstances, rather than just hunt for the enemy. What ever is the weak area, spend time with Jesus to build it up. When Jesus strengthens this area, the enemy will be reluctant to attack you there again.

4. Learn to turn Weaknesses into 'Pools and Springs'. With Father God's help, we can rise above the circumstances of life - not under them, (2 Thes. 1:3-4, Isaiah 48:10, Romans 5:3, 2 Cor. 7:4). He loves us too much to allow the "disease of sin" to still be in our heart. He has all the Answers we need to find our peace.



5. Learn to give Thanks in the situation. Do it whether you feel like it or not, (1 Thes. 5:18). Keep a positive attitude. *"Two men looked through prison bars. One saw mud, the other saw stars."* A grateful heart keeps out bitterness and grumbling, Colossians 1:12-13, James 1:2, 1 Corinthians 10:9-10. Often sharing one another's burdens can break the enemy's hold, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

6. Above all else, know the Father's Promises, especially in times of physical illness! When those times of affliction come, learn and practice your faith with the Promises of God, Psalms. 34:19, Isaiah 49:13, Hebrews. 13:5, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 Peter 2:9.

We all face the pressures and trials of life. These afflictions can be a furnace for Purifying gold, if we allow Him to help us to "dig pools" along the way. **The journey starts with meeting this Jesus**, allowing your heart to make friends with Him. He really, really wants to make this journey in your Valley of Baca with You! If you have never allowed this Jesus to help you find God's peace, **let Him help you today**. We have people here who will gladly share their journey with you and led you to find Jesus.

Remember, the greatest lie ever promoted is that Creator God is not a God of love. We all go through things - and see others go through experiences - and we don't know why.

However, at least 60 to 80% of what happens to us is **'Cause and Effect'**. *We must learn to see these events from God's perspective.*



CHAPTER SEVEN: OUR VIEW OF LIFE IS SHAPED BY OUR HEART ATTITUDES

One of the ways God reaches our hardness of heart is to let us see glimpses of our heart's real attitudes about life. He does this by working with us through our circumstances. Since everything comes out of our heart, Matthew 15:17-20, a loving Father loves us too much to leave our heart with wrong attitudes.

1. **Let's illustrate this: Your car is stolen.** There are two perspectives:

Your Perspective?	Why did it happen?
Anger that it happened, Guilt for leaving it there, Blame the guilty person, Sorrow over the loss, Regret for carelessness, Worry over lack of car, Worry over cost of repair, Frustration in transport, Annoyance at others, Deep doubt and unbelief, Denial of God’s existence, Thoughts of revenge, sin.	To see the frailty of earthy possessions, To learn to set our focus on things above, To learn to be more alert, conscientious, To be thankful for God’s presence, To be a testimony to others involved, A way for God to reach the thief, To remind us that we are His stewards. To cry out to God in our day of trouble, To catch our own heart’s idolatry, Chance to deal with pride, arrogance, etc. Preparation for leadership, To learn compassion for others.

The best way to negotiate through this issue is to ask God why the car was stolen in the first place. What legal right did the enemy have to do this? Other possible reasons?

2. In the Bible, why did a loving God let Joseph be enslaved?

God is in the process of training us for eternity. He is developing our character through life’s events. Let’s look at Joseph:

If Joseph asked God why He let him be falsely accused and go to prison - twice, what do you think God might say?

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. TO TRAIN HIM TO BE FAITHFUL. | |
| <i>“If you are faithful in little, God will give you much.”</i> | Matthew 25:11 |
| 2. TO HELP BRING HIS BROTHERS TO REPENTANCE. | |
| <i>“Justice must be established before giving mercy.”</i> | Proverbs 16:6 |
| 3. TO OVERCOME ANY ATTITUDES OF PRIDE. | |
| <i>“Before God honours a person, He humbles him.”</i> | Proverbs 15:33 |
| 4. TO TEACH HIM HOW TO SERVE. | |
| <i>“The secret of greatness is learning to serve.”</i> | Matthew 25:11 |
| 5. TO TEST HIS MORAL PURITY. | |
| <i>“Enduring temptation brings a crown of life.”</i> | James 1:12 |
| 6. TO ALLOW HIM TO EXPERIENCE FALSE ACCUSATION. | |
| <i>“Responding correctly to false accusations brings rewards.”</i> | Matthew 5:12 |
| 7. TO BE GOD’S LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS. | |
| <i>“Bearing others’ burdens will open doors of service to others.”</i> | Galatians 6:2 |
| 8. TO PURIFY HIS HEART OF ANY DOUBT AND UNBELIEF, OF CRITICISM | |

AND JUDGEMENT OF OTHERS.

"Judge not so that you are not judged."

Luke 6:37

9. TO LEARN PATIENCE TOWARDS GOD'S TIMING.

"After you have suffered for a while, God will establish you."

1 Peter 5:10

10. TO PREPARE HIM FOR LEADERSHIP.

"A wise leader knows the needs of those who serve him."

Matthew 25:21

11. TO HELP HIM SEE THAT PHARAOH AND HIS WORLD ARE ONLY TEMPORAL AND NOT PERFECT; TO KEEP HIS EYES ON GOD.

"All that is in the world Shall pass away."

1 John 2:16

12. TO RESPECT GOD'S WISDOM, FORESIGHT FOR FUTURE NEEDS

"I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper and not to harm"

Jeremiah 29:11

3. Think about this:

A news reporter interviews some OT saints who seem to have a complaint against God. Can you imagine the headlines for these stories?

The Reporter might write a story about:

- 1. Samson**, chosen of God yet betrayed by his first wife, later entrapped by Delilah and sent to prison. Blinded, he stands before his enemies.
- 2. Esther**: stolen away from family and friends, lost her identity to be trained for one year to be harem member of Persian king.
- 3. Ruth**: lost her identity, family and friends as she travelled to a far land. Then, she was widowed early and left with a bitter, ungrateful mother-in-law, a coming famine and living among an unknown people.
- 4. Joseph**: unjustly accused of attempted rape of Pharaoh's wife, sentenced to jail for years, yet given promises to be a Deliverer.



.... But what would be the real issues behind the stories ??

The following are some of the character traits that were formed by going through their experiences.

1. It motivated me to respond in a Christ-like way when others upset me.
2. It has uncovered self-centred, fleshly expectations, which I have not yet yielded to God.
3. It has forced me to learn more about loving my neighbour as myself.
4. It has given me the opportunity to give deserved praise to others for their Godly actions.
5. It has helped me to learn how to relate to others with different viewpoints.
6. It has taught me to cooperate with others in difficult situations.
7. It has motivated me to talk with God and to seek Him more.
8. It has made me turn to the real God as a Friend.
9. It has drawn me closer to my family, friends and other believers.
10. It makes me appreciate the people in my life who are easy to get along with.
11. It has shown me ways not to irritate others.
12. It has caused a deeper spiritual insight and growth in me.
13. It has given me a different perspective on God's long-range plans.
14. It has taught me to be more caring, compassionate and gentle with those who are going through their own struggles.
15. It has motivated me to think about the needs of others above my own.
16. I have learned to lean on God's unconditional love.
17. It has taught me a true humility through seeing my own weaknesses.
18. I have learned that I might "unjustly" receive punishment from others, but it will always be less punishment than I deserve for my own sins, by God.
19. I have learned to forgive others and to try to love those who have rejected me - without becoming bitter.
20. I have learned to continue investing my life into those things which bring an eternal reward.
21. It has prepared me for leadership in God's plan rather than mine.
22. To test my motives and attitudes towards those in authority, including God.
23. It has brought me new insights into God's emotional nature, to understand His feelings about what I went through.
24. It brought me an opportunity to practice returning good for the evil others intended for me.
25. It has helped me be more appreciative of a healthy body.
26. I have learned to more deeply appreciate my heritage, my belief system and the traditions I have come from.
27. It has reminded me of the consequences of breaking God's word.
28. I have learned to function in emergencies by following God's hand.
29. It has revealed my deep pride and self-centredness.
30. I have a new understanding of the nature of evil and the consequences of yielding to its demands.
31. It has helped me determine never to fall away from God again.
32. I have learned to patiently wait for God to fulfil His promises.
33. I can now understand how those who feel "without God" must feel.



34. I have learned not to compare my situation with other's situations.
35. To experience the importance of relying on God for my daily needs.
36. To learn to be more frugal and resourceful in tight spots and to enjoy what God has given me.
37. To understand the importance of allowing others to grow in their relationship with God and not take undue responsibility for others.
38. To detect the character weaknesses in my own life before pointing the finger at others.
39. To receive gifts from others with humility and graciousness.
40. To re-evaluate the possibilities and benefits of living in another culture.
41. To be able to teach others about God's faithfulness.
42. To be able to let go of the status symbols other's think are important.
43. I have seen the damage that anger and bitterness can cause.
44. It has helped me to not conform to the world's standards and goals.
45. It has forced me to learn to defer to others.
46. It has developed more of my own God-given gifts and discernment.
47. It has reminded that there is one final Judge who sees my heart.
48. I have been able to give my reputation into God's hand.
49. I have seen the emptiness of riches to make me happy.
50. I have learned to be contented where ever I find myself.
51. It has helped me learn the principles of handling money and wealth wisely.
52. It has caused me to have a new appreciation of my ancestor's struggles.
53. It has motivated me to concentrate on the here and now and not worry about the future.
54. I have learned to be more pure in heart and to trust God for the future.
55. I can see how my priorities were not the same as God's.
56. I have learned to meet deadlines in plenty of time.
57. I have more wisdom in my responses to other's complaints.
58. Obedience to God's law has been my greatest gain.
59. I have become more attentive to the requests and demands of others.
60. I can do what others ask of me now without grumbling, complaining or questioning their motives.
61. I have learned how to put my energies into tasks without being half-hearted.
62. I can base my obedience on God's requests rather than on blind obedience or the (unhealthy) surrender to other's demands.
63. I can leave other's sins and iniquities in God's hands.



Adapted from the manual from the seminar: [Advanced Training Institute International](#)

Creator God has different goals for us that we see right now. He sees us in the light of eternity to come and the plans He has for us then. If we learn to cooperate with His plans, greater will be our delight when we see Him.

CHAPTER EIGHT: IS IT POSSIBLE THE GREATEST STORY GOES LIKE THIS?



1. **God knew** that starting “The Greatest Story Ever Told” would cause pain, affliction and hurt. He wasn’t taken by surprise when Satan did what he did. He knew pain and agony would happen to His creation.

2. God’s plan was to use the pressures and experiences of life to “purify” and transform us into the image of His Son, Jesus. When we come to Him, our **heart is stony**. Father God uses circumstances to reach and heal our heart - if we let Him.

3. In coming to Jesus, we start a new agenda: working with God to develop a **soft, yielding heart**.
4. When we re-adjust our heart’s attitude toward the pain and afflictions of life, we can see that Father God is on our side. We can’t stop affliction, **BUT how will we handle the pain when it does come?** Some people deny pressure and pain exists, others use blame, withdraw, go into addictions, transference, and so on to handle the pain. Other’s faith is destroyed when pain comes their way.
5. He is using the enemy to perfect us, to change and improve our ways of coping with the traumas of life - if we let Him. This is part of being conformed to the image of Jesus. God treats us like we have the authority to choose and to change. **Remember He is growing our FAITH.** We must enter into the protection He offers us.
6. He is dealing with our idols, Ezekiel 4:1-4 and treats us according to the **multitude** of our heart’s treasures!

Our heart attitudes influence what kind of ‘filters’ or ‘glasses’ we wear. When our faith is activated, the circumstance we fear may not change, but how we perceive the event does. The trauma of the event loses its hold on us. God is so committed to helping us, that He broke through time and space, into our physical dimension, to walk the Earth with us and for us. He even embraced the kind of death He experienced, just for our benefit!

Matthew 16:24-28 ([The Message](#)) suggest a peculiar journey: ***“Anyone who intends to come with Me, has to let Me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering, embrace it. Follow Me and I’ll show you the how.”***



"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him", 1 Cor. 2:9. We may not always understand why things happen, but we need to process things from the nature and character of God. Some things we will never know ... but that is why trust and faith are essential when we try to fit together the puzzle pieces of life.



Chapter Nine: Other Inspirational yet important viewpoints

THE SUSANLAND TESTIMONY

In the year 1943, Susan, daughter of Fay and Granddaughter of Frances, was born. Her early life was marked by moves and several major changes in family life. She knew no stable, permanent relationship with a father, other than that of Father God.

In the year 1959, Susan accepted her calling as King and High Priest of the Lord. To begin with, her service to the Lord of Lords, King Jesus, was marked more by worldly peer group activities than love for His service. Her awareness of the Most High God's love grew, but she was not dealing with her heart's inner and secret life. She was not taught to:

“ tear down the high places ...”.

One extraordinary day in His service, she was introduced to the Spirit of the Living God - and her life was never the same again. He touched her heart and her family with zeal and rebirth that carried her through the great changes she faced. Susan, daughter of the living God, began to take on her responsibility as the ruler over 'Susanland'.



She even entered His service for two years further training, in building the kingdom of God. However, even there they did not teach her to deal with the past issues in Susanland. Neither did they teach her to " ... pull down the high places ... ", the secret places within her heart where worship of other things and people took place; the secret desires of her heart were not exposed.

In the year 1967, Susan, daughter of Fay, granddaughter of Frances, furthered her training in the secular courts of her local university. It was here that she encountered new customs, new thinking and new gods; it was here that her downward slide began. She became intrigued by the parties, the friends and the new lifestyles around her. The secret desires of her heart began to surface and she entered a new world.

She began to visit the temples - the party places - and began to take on the lifestyle of her new friends, until one day, she realised that her previous life with the King of Kings felt foreign and strange. However, this 'exciting' path soon led to bondage, servitude and slavery to the new gods and their way of life. The enemy of her soul lay waiting, to trap her in the generational patterns of her ancestors and of Adam' race.

Some twelve years later, sometime in 1982, Susan, queen of Susanland, grew tired of the desert. She began to remember her days in the kingdom of the God of Love, which she had known so long ago. At the beginning of her journey back to Him, she started with a slow crawl, then walked and after many months, ran back to His kingdom. She began to deal with her secret, inner heart life. She began to tear down the high places!

Now, as she follows her Lord and Friend, she is exploring the greatest of all journeys - being remoulded and reshaped into the image of Jesus. Susanland is the happiest and healthiest it has ever been. However, this is just the beginning of her adventure with Jesus!



The Divine Weaver



My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me;
I cannot choose the colours
That He works so steadily.



Often times He weaves sorrow
And I in foolish pride,
Forget that He sees the upper,
And I the underside.



Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reasons why.



The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver's skilful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.



Author unknown



THE POTTER'S WHEEL

"Clay? What's clay? Oh, I am clay - if you say so that is. I see only a mere grey lump, taken from some yucky, sticky pit of grey stuff What good am I?"

But here I am, now waiting - for what I have no idea - scooped up from some boggy place ... but wrapped, wet and just waiting Nevertheless, I am excited about what's coming what ever that is.

"I hear great things come from this room - beautiful vases and plates fit for the King's table! Maybe I'll be one of those colourful watering jugs touched by His hand.

"Ahhhh ... so we begin. The Master's hand ... so firm yet gentle. I begin to be shaped; round and round He takes me. What's this? He finds "an impurity" in my structure. Ouch! That was part of my beginnings ... and I valued that bit. I must

admit I resist, I struggle but I am better off without that bit or dirt. Still the wheel turns ... round and round I go. Gentle water is poured over my wounds, my pain. He finds another, and yet another bit of dirt, or bark or what ever I took in from that boggy place I began.

"Sometimes, I admit I still I resist His loving touch only to find that He digs deeper, uses another tool, uses another splash of water and there ... that part of me has gone, died and been thrown into His bin. Will I really ever learn His touch is only for my benefit?"

"Did I mention His tools? Well, let me tell you, I would have done that differently too. He has used all kinds of situations, people and events to work those "impurities", those bits of wood, hay and stubble out of me. Guess I'm getting pretty good, ha? Pride, who me? ok that goes too.

"Now I can see my design better - a long, colourless, hollow cylinder, with two holes on each side ... what are You doing Master Potter? Where is the beautiful shape I was suppose to have ... the Vase fit for the great tables? Then, guess what ... now comes the fires! Hot? Yes, and I think I'll explode, or come crashing down. But His strength and peace is there so I can hang on.

"So now, I'm finished ... given to a farmer hung on a pole ... beside a huge dam of water in the hot sun ... Oh, the despair my heart feels. I thought I'd be something fit for the Master's table ... but

"Days and months pass, the farmer comes and looks at the small marks on my side. He sighs and returns to his fields. "The drought will continue", he remarks.

"Then one day, the rains do come. Downpours of water and my hollow insides fill up and up. The farmer returns, looks stunned and turns to his son. 'Get the people ready. The dam is about to overflow. Hurry!'

"So I'm a rain gauge, an essential tool to alert the people when floods are about to happen, so they can build more barriers to stop the floods! I guess the Lord knew what He was doing after all! I guess I can really trust the process He put me through!"

**PAIN
in life is
Inevitable
It's how we
HANDLE the pain
that creates or
destroys us.**

Conclusions & References Used for this Study

Creator God is the Master Gardener. He uses all the circumstances that come our way to prune, chasten, guide and teach. He is after the best possible ‘rose’ in you. fertilizer, pruning, insect control and so on, are all needed for this process.

Matthew 16:24-28 (The Message) suggests a peculiar journey:

“Anyone who intends to come with Me, has to let Me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering, embrace it. Follow Me and I’ll show you the how.”

1 Corinthians 2:9 No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.

We may not always understand why things happen, but we need to process things from knowing the nature and character of God. Some things we will never know ... but that is why trust and faith are essential when we try to fit together the puzzle pieces of life.



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ENDNOTES

1. C.S. Lewis. *The Problem of Pain*, page 21.
2. Herbert Lockyer. *Dark Threads the Weaver Needs*, page 37.
3. Appendix adapted from the manual from the seminar: pages 50-54, *Advanced Training Institute International*.

HOW WELL DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOURSELF?

One of the best ways to assess your emotional and spiritual health is to be aware of your own reaction and thinking patterns. Go through this sheet and see if there are any problems areas you need to address.

1 = I have problems with this.....5 = I do really well with this.

#	How would you rate your inner ability to:	1 to 5
1.	Get on top of stressful situations?	
2.	Go with the flow of change with others in control versus wanting to take control of the situation?	
3.	Recognise your own ‘trip wires’ that lead to destructive behaviour?	
4.	Manage your fears and uncertainties of the future?	
5.	Understand your inner reactions to events and be able to bring some resolution to these inner reactions?	
6.	Allow your emotions to be valuable allies in facing your life’s issues. To be friends with your own emotions and allow others to be emotional when needed?	
7.	Manage your irritations, annoyances and anger?	
8.	See the major themes of God’s work in your life?	
9.	Control your fantasy life?	
10.	Be at peace whether in solitude or in crowds?	
11.	Be assertive when necessary?	
12.	Respect and work with those in authority?	
13.	Be aware of other’s needs, feelings and struggles?	
14.	Take responsibility for your own physical needs?	
15.	Take responsibility for your own emotional needs?	
16.	Take responsibility for your own spiritual needs?	
17.	Balance between the need to live to work or work to live?	
18.	Laugh and have fun?	
19.	Establish a satisfactory intimacy with the main people in your life?	
20.	Find wisdom and see the meaning in life?	
21.	See new solutions to old problems?	
22.	Learn from your past mistakes with self-forgiveness?	
23.	Have a circle of social networks, from close to distant friends?	

24.	Have a capacity to adjust and accept change?	
25.	Create and maintain healthy change?	
26.	Be in charge of your change process and yet allow yourself to grieve for the loss of past situations?	

Your Score? _____. The higher the score, the more mature and healthy your coping and emotional health. If this is an areas of concern, please see a competent counsellor to deal with issues. This assessment sheet is meant to be a guide of issues rather than a definitive diagnostic tool.

Comments and areas that might need some more work?