

Acceptance is Peace

Our daughter Caroline loves to play with plastic bead necklaces. She puts them on and off over and over. While she is allowed to play with them freely, we must watch her carefully as they sometimes get tangled. When they are tangled we soon know it because she becomes very frustrated and the more she tries to untangle them, the more tangled they become. She needs only to ask us for help and we come and “rescue her” from her calamity.

Like many things in parenthood, this scenario reminds me of my own life as a child in God’s family. When adversity or troubles come my way, I am easily frustrated when I cannot ‘untangle’ the situation in my way and on my terms. I want the trouble gone immediately! I feel I know the best way to resolve it as well. However, the more I think and worry about the situation, the more messy and tangled it becomes, and the more restless and anxious I become.

It is this business of restlessness as a child of God that I want to ponder for a moment. I hope to offer tools and help from God’s word and his people to aid you, and myself, in times when life gets tangled; when peace and contentment are elusive.

In the first 5 books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch) we see the story of the people of Israel. We see them as slaves in Exodus and crying out to God for help and deliverance (Exodus 2:23). God is faithful to deliver them in a mighty and powerful way all the time declaring that the signs and miracles are to be tools for them to ‘know that I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt’ (Exodus 6:6-7).

Throughout Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy we see the Israelites wandering in the wilderness discontently, wanting in fact to return to slavery in Egypt. They think they know best and that they can change their circumstances and troubles for the better, thus dishonoring God and forgetting his total love and faithfulness up to that point. In Exodus 16 they begin complaining for food they had in Egypt. The same occurs in Numbers 11. One might argue that they indeed weren’t given much variety in how they were being provided for, but they never ask God...they complain to Moses. By complaining they again dishonor the God who has been nothing but gracious to them since leaving Egypt. Why did they doubt his goodness and provision?

Why do we in our daily lives doubt God’s goodness and provision *in our troubles and adversity*—or worse, complain about the way in which he has provided?

It should be noted that God most certainly is big enough that he can handle our complaints and even cries of pain and anger at times as he proves in the Psalms, for example. However, it is vital to question, complain and cry out *in faith*, recognizing that God is the I AM and is very capable to pick up our messes and turn them into our good and His glory.

We must be careful to always assert in difficult times that our ‘times are in His hands’ (Psalm 31:15), placing our trust in Him regardless of our understanding about a situation. Whatever we are going through, we can trust that his love, mercy, and presence are with us in those times. He has assigned to us our portion and our “cup.” Just as Jesus asked him to take his cup away, as well as Paul asking God to remove the thorn in his flesh, we are allowed and able, in faith and humility, to ask the same in troubling situations. However, if our adversity remains, we can trust that it is the best for us at the time and that God will provide grace, strength and peace in the situation since he will never leave or forsake us.

In adversity, don’t wait until you’re in a huge tangle to go to God and ask his help. Go immediately in prayer to him.

If the adversity remains, we must accept it as His will and trust his presence and strength will be with us. When we accept and do not resist these times, peace will follow.

The Israelites who complained in the wilderness never entered the rest of the promised land because they lost sight of the amazing God who was leading them. Hebrews 12:2 says that we must ‘fix our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith’.

In the film *A Beautiful Mind*, the main character has a mental illness where he sees people who aren’t real. It is a great moment at the end of the film when we realize he is healthy and able to live a normal life, enough to win a Nobel Peace Prize. The assumption of the viewer is that his hallucinations must be gone due to medicine or counseling. It is a poignant moment however when we see him leaving the awards show and his hallucinations appear standing to one side. He glances at them and then turns away. You see, the hallucinations were still very much present in his life. He accepted them knowing that they do not have to control his life though they may never go away.

This side of heaven, we must deal with temptations, trials, and frustrating moments of our own. When they are not removed after prayer and petition, we must accept them under submission to God—and find that in acceptance there is peace.

Bonnie B. Mason

Day One Reading

Psalm 31:5,7,14,15 “Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth...I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my afflictions and knew the anguish of my soul....I trust in you, O Lord, I say “You are my God.” My times are in your hands...”

Prayer

Thank you, Father, that my times are indeed in your hands. I pray you will help me to trust you today and each day. I pray you will fill me with your Holy Spirit and remind me of your faithfulness and help in difficult times today. You are my God and I praise you and trust you now. In and through Jesus, I come to you, Amen.

Day Two Reading

Hebrews 12:2-3 “Let us fix our eyes of Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Prayer

Dear Father, thank you for Jesus. Thank you Jesus for being the author and perfecter of my faith. Thank you that by your grace I am being made more perfect because you lived, died and were resurrected. Help me by your Holy Spirit to consider you and your life and to persevere in the faith. It is in your name I pray. Amen.

Day Three Reading

Hebrews 13:9-10 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace...”

Prayer

Dearest Jesus, I praise you for your constant love and that you never change. Lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil today and every day. Strengthen me by your grace and fill me with your Spirit. Amen.

Day Four Reading

Phillipians 4:6-7 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make your requests known to God, and the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

Prayer

Dearest Father, thank you for the peace you give when we trust in you. Help me, by your Spirit, to come to you in anxious and troubled times. Hear my cries, Lord, as you have so faithfully done before. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day Five Reading

Exodus 6:5-9 “Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Say therefore, to the sons of Israel, I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the Lord.”

Prayer

Thank you, God, for being my Lord. Thank you for being the great I AM, for all eternity. I pray you will turn my heart always to you when I am prone to wander. Thank you for delivering me from calamity at times, and for helping me through it at other times. Thank you for your word and your people who help me as well. Thank you for hearing my cries. In Jesus' name, Amen.