

Ouch! That Hurts!

by Larry Lloyd

Did you ever notice that God doesn't waste a thing? I've found that He will use anyone, any situation, any and all circumstances (be they good or bad) to burn off the impurities in our character. This process is known as refining or purification (See Malachi 3:3). Let me assure you that it isn't always a pleasant experience. It rarely is and I do have a few impurities. Let me give you a for instance.

I am not known for my patience. Now I know that is hard for people who know me to believe (a little sarcasm there). Anywho.....here goes. I served as worship leader at a particular church for several years and God in his infinite wisdom chose to place a certain individual on the worship team who lived in their own little world. It is a world that I'm quite sure very few others have ever explored. Kind of like long, long ago in a galaxy far, far away you know.

This person tried my patience to no end on a regular basis. Nearly every time that I was trying to work one on one with someone on a vocal or instrumental part, this individual would be playing their instrument, wandering around or participating in any number of other little "patience trying" activities that exist. Am I alone in this, or does anyone else out there know what I'm talking about here?

Now understand this. I love this individual. This is a likable, lovable person. However, Job would have lost it with all of this commotion going on. Let me assure you that Larry did. Let me say one thing in defense of this person. I'm relatively sure that these "patience trying" activities were not a blatant attempt to upset me, but boy did they ever.

It took some time, as it usually does in my case, for God to show me that he was using this person to teach me the grand old virtue of patience. It wasn't God's fault that it took so long either by the way. I can honestly say that my patience has grown as a result of this relationship. I still have a long way to go however. Again, that is not God's fault.

At the very beginning of our relationship I would get highly irritated and lash out in anger at this individual. Needless to say this was not the proper response and only made a bad situation worse. It wasn't the Christian response for sure. God began to remind me through scripture and in the spirit of how patient he had always been with me. Believe me I gave Him lots of opportunities; still do for that matter.

As time went by I began to try to make the situation humorous. My response to the interruptions began to lose that angry tone, and I would try to say something funny to this person in the process of asking for quiet. The entire worship team began to join in the humor and we would usually all get a good laugh out of the situation. Some of us still get a good laugh when we talk about these instances.

My point in all of this is that God uses any and all things to improve us. So the next time you are walking through the "valley of the shadow" remember that God has a purpose and plan in it all. His plans for you are always good (Jeremiah 29:11) no matter how much it hurts. God bless and good luck in the purification process.

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