

Relationships, Stress, and Resiliency

Class 1

When Life Seems Bad

“Now, when anything ‘bad’ happens, I remember that everything that ever happens to me has within it the seeds of something better. I look for the upside rather than the downside. I ask myself, ‘Where’s the greater benefit in this event?’” — Jack Canfield

Bad: Unmet expectation = Something we thought should happen but didn’t

1. Is the cause sin? Your sin or someone else’s? Bad things sometimes happen because of evil in this world, the problem of sin, or the consequences of a poor choice.

We might ask, is that fair? It might not seem fair; we want what we want because we have our expectations. We must remember that God is always fair.

2. What must I do to survive these trials?

a. First, you must remember that **God is who He says He is:**

- 1) God has five attributes of His Being (or Spirit): All-Knowing; All-Powerful; Sovereign; cannot change; and eternal.
- 2) God has three basic attributes of His Person (or personality): loving-kindness; justice; and righteousness.
- 3) The three basic attributes of His Personality are found in Jeremiah 9:24 “...but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

b. Second, you must remember that **God keeps His promises:**

- 1) 1 Cor. 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”
- 2) Romans 8:28 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

3. What’s the purpose of trials and hardships?

a. James 1:2-4 “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

b. Ask yourself this: Do you want to be a piece of coal or a fine diamond? A piece of ore or fine gold? A weak or strong individual?

- 1) A piece of coal becomes a piece of diamond after millions of year of pressure on it.
- 2) A piece of ore becomes fine gold by going through the fire. All the impurities rise to the top and the gold sinks to the bottom. The hotter the fire, the better chance for the impurities to float to the top.
- 3) You don’t become the world’s strongest man by lifting light weights.

- c. What can we do with these trials? You have a choice; you can allow these trials to be stumbling blocks or make them into stepping stones.

What's the purpose of these stumbling blocks (or trials)?

To build character: What's your attitude? You can take the stumbling stones and make a path.

Remember that God never puts stumbling blocks in front of His children. They are always meant to be stepping stones.

To strengthen you: Will you give up? In the military, there's the Stairway to Heaven. It's designed to show you your strength or lack of strength.

1 Cor. 13:7-8: (Love) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

Notes were adapted from one of the authors of "The Original Chicken Soup for the Soul," Jack Canfield

Video # 1: Queen of Marbles: We are not all born with the same opportunities and resources in life. We can spend our life feeling sorry for ourselves, envying others, or we can change some of our "bad marbles" or bad opportunities and resources into good ones by gaining the knowledge and skills we lacked.

Video #2: Amy and Flo: Our brain has two areas the Amygdala (pronounced uh-mig-duh-la, Amy) and the Frontal Lobe (Flo). The Amygdala is the one that pumps adrenaline through you and causes you excitement when danger is around. Amy doesn't know the difference between physical danger and emotional danger. The Frontal Lobe (Flo) is the processing part of our brain where we create plans. When physical danger occurs we want Amy to take control. However, when it's emotional danger, we want Flo to take control because you are not going to die!

In relationships, we may be in a situation we've never been in before, we tend to let Amy take control and we say and do that are not appropriate. Instead, we should stop (take a deep breath) and let Flo help us work through the problem.

Video #3-4: The Four Danger Signs for Communication:

1. Invalidation: Putting down the thoughts, opinions, or character of the other.
2. Escalation: Responding back and forth negatively with each other.
3. Withdrawal: Unwillingness to get into, or stay with, important discussion.
4. Negative Interpretation: Making a negative and unfair assumption about what someone is thinking.

Note: Videos from Prevention and Relationship Education Program.