

A Heart Open to God's Discipline



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) November 6, 2020

Most people find it hard to accept that a loving God allows human suffering, but King David said his afflictions came from God's hand: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word ... It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes" (Psalm 119:67, 71).

In so many words, David says, "I now know the Lord allowed my pain in order to heal me of all the dross and flesh in me. If he had not put his fear in my heart, I wouldn't be here today. God knew what was in my heart, and he knew exactly how to get my attention." What David says here is life-giving truth. He's telling us, in essence, "If we don't see the Lord working in our circumstances — if we don't believe the steps of the righteous are ordered by his hand, including our dire situations — our faith will end up crashing and we'll be shipwrecked."

Picture a surgeon and his medical team as they prepare to operate on a patient with cancer. The surgeon knows that if the tumor is not removed, the patient will die. For that reason, he will use every measure to get the cancer out of the patient's body, no matter the pain it causes. He knows his surgical work will bring deep hurt but it is necessary to preserve life.

The right response for God's people in many afflictions is an inquiring heart. This is the heart that asks, "Lord, are you saying something to me in this? Have I been blinded to your voice?"

The Holy Spirit never fails to answer us. He may say, "This is a snare of Satan. Beware!" Or, without condemnation, he will reveal an area of compromise, saying, "Obey, and all will become clear."

When God shows us what is in our hearts — the impatience, the besetting sin, the "small" but deadening compromises — these things become grievous to us in our time of affliction. It is why David prayed, "Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to Your servant. Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; for Your law is my delight" (Psalm 119:76-77).

No matter what you're going through, God's mercy is there for you. He isn't out to condemn or punish you, but like any devoted father, he tells his children, "Let me help you through this and show you the depths of my love."

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