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A Letter from Pastor Marr

Newsletter - August 2008

Dear One in Christ Jesus:

"God has one great wish for us. It's to draw us to Himself in love." I first wrote this potent truth many years ago in the enclosed message, Why, Lord, Why?!? :

But I had little idea of the import of the words that follow: "And He permits every circumstance of our lives to come to us with that one purpose in mind."

That is why God permitted me and my wife to endure 38 combined years of Parkinson's Disease. "Why?"

No matter what else He may have in mind, He has wanted to use it to draw us to Himself in love.

Of course, He can't draw us to Himself in love if we reject His right to do as He will with our lives, even what seems the most difficult.

Only God knows how much of Him and His love I have missed for time and eternity by rejecting His good hand of love when it seems so heavy.

Let us, now, by His gracious enabling, recognize and receive it for what it is, God's hand of love reaching out to us with His best benefit ... Himself and His love.

And so we die to our short-sighted selves to live in Him and His love now and evermore.

Won't you be sure to return the enclosed reply form requesting just as many of this, Why, Lord, Why?!?, and other such messages as you can possibly get into the hands of God's people?

I want to remind you that the Board can only carry this ministry forward by God's enabling and your help. What I can do is limited. Won't you be sure to help them in every way you can? We're counting on you.

Lovingly in Christ Jesus,
our soon-coming King,
Pastor Marr

Proclaiming Christ Jesus All Sufficient Always in All Things to All Men Everywhere

Will You Be Drawn?

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32)

Dear Friend of ChristLife,

In this month's letter and message from Pastor Marr, he addresses the question that we all have asked or will ask of God ... "Why Lord?"

If you are young, you may not yet have had reason to ask this question. Perhaps for some of you, it was this very question that led you to know Jesus Christ as your Savior! Maybe for others, it was this question that brought you into a deeper knowledge of God as your Comforter.

Whatever the situation that has caused you to face this question, rest assured that God's desired result is for you to have a deeper walk with Him! Please read the verse at the top of this page again. What did Jesus have to do to "draw" us to Himself? He had to DIE on the Cross!

If God loved us so much that He would not spare His own Son in order to save us, is it impossible for us to think that He might use our sufferings in this sin-filled world to draw us closer to Him? No, our suffering CANNOT add to our own salvation! However, our suffering CAN help us to APPRECIATE our salvation that much more.

The hardships in this life are one way that God draws us closer to Himself. When you face them, you have two choices...

- Will you run TO GOD, your source of comfort and strength?
- Or, will you run AWAY FROM GOD?

Where will you run to for help? May I encourage you to run to God! You will be MUCH BETTER OFF running in that direction! God will make you a more powerful and mature man or woman of God. He will equip you to minister to others, who have yet to face what you are going through.

He will touch and heal your heart. If you run to God, you will touch His heart! My friend, He LOVES YOU so much. Please let Him love you. You will NOT be disappointed.

Love in Christ Jesus,
Robert (Bob) Dallmann

To God be All the Glory! He Alone is Worthy!

Why, Lord, Why?!?

"When I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10)

The phone rang. The person at the other end was clearly distraught, so distraught I have to change the details of the story so I don't cause unnecessary offense.

She was a Bible-reading, soul-winning Christian. But God hadn't met several needs for an unbelievably long period of time. They were needs that, according to her understanding of scripture, God had promised to meet. And, instead of getting answers to her prayers, it seemed she found her troubles just mounting up.

She didn't think she was angry with God. She hadn't lost her faith. But she was hopelessly frustrated. Try to avoid admitting it as she might, the fact was she was thoroughly disillusioned.

Doctrinaire Christianity has no answer for such a hurting heart.

Neither does experientialist Christianity.

Why?

Because both expect God to change our circumstances to suit us, while God wants to use our circumstances to change us and force us to Himself.

God's Great Desire for Us

God has one great wish for us. It's to draw us to Himself in love. And He permits every circumstance of our lives to come to us with that one purpose in mind. Every other reality of the Christian life must be viewed as secondary to this overriding reality. Failure to recognize and live by this reality is failure indeed.

The basic premise of the Christian life is this: "Not my will, but thine be done." But the person whose concept of prayer is simply to ask and get from God will neither really accept this in his heart of hearts nor want to. Instead, he will end up constantly trying to manipulate God to get what he wants from Him.

It seems that God lets some people away with this. Their success is the envy of other Christians all around.

But in reality it may not be they who should be envied but the poor hurting ones who face overwhelming difficulties. God may permit some to succeed only because He knows they would never respond to great difficulties by seeking Him. On the other hand, His poor hurting children may be those who he knows will, sooner or later, be driven to Him by their difficulties, and only by them.

Great Gain from Great Pain

Few indeed are those who don't need to face great difficulty, pain or deprivation before they will respond wholeheartedly to God's love call. In fact, it's doubtful whether there are any who will even hear it with any clarity or urgency except through the pressure of pain.

Let's look a moment at the Apostle Paul's personal testimony in this regard:

"Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

This Is Real Pastoral Leadership

I got another phone call. It was from a dear, sweet, wonderful pastor brother. He wanted me to know my book, *A Christianity That Really Works*, had impacted his life and revolutionized his ministry. Now, he said, his ministry had a power he'd never known before.

You can imagine how it encouraged my spirit, yes, and fed my ego, too. But my next response was, "Oh, my God, if he knew me as I do, he'd wonder how you could use me at all."

Then a deep concern for him stole into my heart, "Oh, Lord, let this change not be anything less than casting this dear brother on You. May he not feel he's got something. May he know it's just You he needs today and every day of all the rest of his life."

And my loving heart's desire for Him now is that he glory not in new power or new assurance, or new success, but in a new, more demanding relationship with his God.

Paul's Example

Paul's thorn in the flesh was "a messenger of Satan to buffet him," given to him of God. Satan may have intended it for his hurt. God intended it for his eternal benefit. God gave it to him, and God wouldn't take it away, not even in answer to what Paul may have felt was the prayer of faith. Its purpose was to keep Paul dependent on the Lord. And Paul valued that enough that he stopped asking to have it removed.

Who knows? Maybe God would have removed it had Paul kept asking. And who knows? Maybe Paul's usefulness to God may have dissipated along with His closeness to God.

Instead, Paul said, "I'll go a step further. I'll glory not in my strength and ability, but in my infirmities. I'll take pleasure, not in my successes and my strengths. I'll take pleasure in infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses."

No, Paul hadn't taken leave of His senses. He'd got them straightened out. And it's this my heart covets for my dear pastor brother.

I want him rather to glory in the infirmities, distresses, and persecutions that drive him back again and again to His God than in all the glorious experiences and wonderful successes he may ever know.

How about you?

Are you willing to tell God it's o.k. to start straightening you out? Or are you too afraid of the pain that may be entailed?

If you're already enduring infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, or distresses, are you willing to tell God it's o.k. just so He accomplishes His own love-purposes in you?

Are you willing to start spending the quiet time with Him, worshiping Him, and learning to accept whatever He sends you to draw you to Himself in love, and to make of you something of eternal usefulness to Him?

Jesus Christ - the King of kings and Lord of lords!