

Paul's Bible Notes

Prospering in the Process

Outline

One of the main tools that God uses to teach us and help us grow is process. He uses the natural everyday things that we go through to bring us into spiritual maturity.

Key Points & Scriptures

James 1: 2-4

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,^[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3** because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. **4** Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Just like top athletes have to embrace process, we need to go through process in order to become complete and mature, lacking nothing. The thing is, process isn't always pleasant. So how do we identify what is God's process and what isn't and also how do we approach these times in our lives so that we get the most out of them and learn the lessons that God is wanting to teach us.

We all like the end result but very few of us like the process that goes into achieving it. If we want to get where God is leading us we can't quit because we don't like the process. In fact I truly believe that it's possible to prosper during the process and not just when we achieve the end result.

4 'Ps' that will help us understand how process works and why it's necessary.

1. There is Purpose in the Process

- Isaiah 55: 8-11

- God never does anything without purpose. That includes creating you.
- Even when we don't understand it, can't see it or feel it, there is purpose in the process
- What's God's purpose?
 - To bring us back into relationship with him through the work of Jesus
 - To make us mature, complete and lacking nothing
 - To make us more and more like Jesus
 - To use us for his glory and to equip us to make disciples - we've all got a part to play in his purposes!!

2. There is Power in the process

- Process is powerful - Just look at what water can do to rock, or what pressure can do to lumps of coal
- The problem we have with it is, it takes time and it's results aren't always immediately visible.
- He knows how each one of us is wired and He knows how to get us from A to B.
- He's not being vindictive or punishing us, process is the most powerful and efficient agent for change - if we co-operate with Him

3. There is Promise in the Process

- Philippians 1: 6

- God always finishes what he starts
- He never abandons something half way through!!
- If you're in the midst of process be glad because it means God's not done with you!

- The fulfilment of God's promises often involves process.
- If you haven't seen the fulfilment of your promises yet, be glad because God is preparing you to take possession of them.
- When they finally are fulfilled you'll be ready and in a much better position to receive them.
- Never forget that whatever promises God has given us, they're totally outweighed by his eternal promises.

- 2 Cor 1: 20-22

- Even if we never see another promise fulfilled while we're alive, it's all good because we're his and he's guaranteed our future
- We can agree with God about his plans and purposes for us. Paul says that through Jesus the 'Amen' is spoken by us.
- It brings God glory when we agree with him and his promises

4. There is Presence in the process

- God is never any further away in the tough stuff than he is in the good times
- Even when it feels all we're doing is gritting our teeth and trying not to lose ground, he's there.

How do we approach these times of process?

1. Discern if the situation is part of God's process or not.
2. What do you sense the Holy Spirit saying about the situation.
3. Understand that we may not realise we're in a season of process until we're out the other side.
4. Break it down

Matt 6:33

- If we look at the whole situation all at once, we can get overwhelmed.
- Don't worry about tomorrow

- Keep the kingdom as your priority and focus on today

5. Always Respond never React

- The devil wants us to react not respond.
- Jesus in the desert, responded didn't react
- Respond with faith don't react in fear
- Respond with thankfulness - It's one of the most powerful weapons we have.
- Thankfulness stops us losing our passion in the process

Conclusion

Process is essential to our spiritual growth and how we approach it determines whether we can prosper through it.

Life application questions

1. Looking back over the recent past, can you identify any areas of process in your life?
2. How did you respond?
3. What aspects of your approach would you change?
4. What aspects of your approach would you repeat?