

"I think I would simply have fallen apart at my own diagnosis if God hadn't given me those days with you, learning about God's purpose in pain.

"Now I know for sure that God is in control of my life. He knew what was coming, and He sent me the help I needed before I even knew I needed it. I am resting in His sovereignty now, and trusting Him to use this evil to work out His highest purpose for my life."

What higher ministry could one hope for in writing a book—or living a life?

(pp. ix-xi)

II Corinthians 1:3-7 – "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring to the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort."

11. God uses suffering and trials to strengthen and prove the genuineness of our faith.

I Peter 1:6-7 – "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

James E. Means, associate professor of homiletics at Denver Theological Seminary, in his book A Tearful Celebration, writes:

Most of what was written in the preceding pages was penned in the midst of my worst crisis, during my wife's terminal illness and the months following her death. A few years have now passed and I have gained increased perspective. I do not desire to change anything I have written. My earliest impressions have stood the test of time. Sadness erupts again and again, but God has never failed to provide grace. The wounds never completely heal, but the hurt continually drives me to find my sufficiency in God. . . .

Turning from the grace, there is the encounter of a presence, a new radiance, a new confidence for the remaining portion of life's journey. God has seen me through great crisis, and faith has not failed because His grace does not fail. My faith has been toughened, and for that I am grateful and encouraged. . . .

Reflection upon the trauma of sickness, death, and grief has deepened my conviction that there is an immense need for an aggressive faith for the time of crisis. Whatever hardship is prescribed for our pilgrimage, let God's children respond with: "Nevertheless, I believe God. It shall be even as He has told me."