

Is There Any Hope For Me?

Ann sat gazing at the stain glass window as she listened to the worship songs being sung. She noticed the varied colored pieces that had been carefully placed to form the intricate design. Her mind wandered to the hopes and dreams she had once carried inside now stomped on and broken by the person who was supposed to love her.

The court system had played havoc on her life adding to the abuse that had weighed her down. Contempt of court was only a laughable phrase that meant nothing to the abuser. Where was the justice?

The church that was supposed to be a safe place for the brokenhearted was ill equipped to handle her situation and others like hers. Just give grace was all she heard. Truth was not acknowledged and no accountability to the perpetrator was given.

Friends disappeared tired from hearing about the mess. Christians judged. The phone sat silent in its holder. No encouraging and supportive messages were left.

Although she had long left the destructive marriage behind, she sat noticing that every movement caused the shattered pieces to move and rewind. Life was a hard struggle financially and loneliness seemed to be her constant companion. Trust still remained an uncertainty.

Her emotional roller coaster kept her encircled in a journey she did not want to repeat. Progress in her personal growth came in baby steps that were sometimes hard to measure. She was free from the relationship but was she really free from what dwelt within, the persistent struggles. Will God transform the shattered pieces of her life into a masterful piece of art?

Like Ann most of us struggle with the effect of hardships life brings that has been buried deep within. We may or may not be aware of the churning inside for our body has become numb to the pain.

Sometimes we cover the struggles with outward addictions to people, food, drugs, alcohol, or things. These self-medicating coping skills keep us from addressing the issues that have permeated our life. The issues associated with the hurt and pain have mounted up like a pile of garbage that is toxic to our souls.

Not only do we hold onto them with every bit of strength we possess, but we remain in situations and relationships that are detrimental to our well-being. We don't realize that the splinter of hurt caused by the initial pain inflicted by others has penetrated deeper over time. The infection of our thoughts and feelings caused by the puss oozing from the wound spreads rapidly throughout our body.

Do we allow the wound to fester until it makes the whole body sick or possibly die? Are we willing to endure the pain to remove the splinter, cleanse the wound with antibiotics, and give up

our coping mechanisms? Or do we just slap a band aid on and pretend it doesn't exist as our God given treasures are eaten away?

An important question arises to the surface. Are we being a good steward of the treasures God has created in each one of us, the treasures that make us unique?

Our treasures:

- Relationship with the Lord
- Soul and spirit
- Feelings
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Opinions
- Thoughts
- Values
- Talents
- Abilities
- Desires
- Dreams
- Personality

How we use and protect these treasures is our responsibility. Setting appropriate boundaries is necessary. Being consistent and giving consequences when they are violated is essential. Allowing others to come in and destroy our treasures is not good stewardship.

Ann's treasures had been shattered. She realized she had been holding onto each little piece trying to figure out how to put them back together. As she looked up, her eyes were drawn to the cross. *"Give Me your broken treasures,"* she distinctly heard.

Ann glanced back at the stained glass window. A rainbow of color shone through. A tear rolled down her cheek. She heard a soft whisper. *"Ann, I have collected the pieces. They are in my hand. Be patient for I am creating a unique masterpiece so My glory will shine through the pieces of your life."*

"I have caught every tear. I keep them close to Me. I know every heartache. Nothing is a waste. Hold on to Me. There is a purpose, My purpose, in all of your suffering. There is coming a time of rejoicing when everything will be revealed."

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Psalm 27:14 NIV

By Paula Silva

*Praise the Lord, O my soul;
all my inmost being,
praise His holy name.
Praise the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all His benefits—who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life
from the pit
and crowns you
with love and compassion,
who satisfies your desires
with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
The Lord works righteousness and justice for all
the oppressed.*

Psalm 103:1-6 NIV

Editors note:

Everyday FOCUS Ministries hears horrific and heart wrenching stories like Ann's. They come from women, families, and friends who are seeking direction from God and wanting to know where He is.

It takes a great deal of courage to begin to share the secret of abuse. It is crucial that the hearers be affirming and supportive making sure the victim is safe. Walking this journey with someone can be frustrating and tiresome.

Be: **C**ompassionate

Comforting

Caring

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