



PAIN'S GREATER PURPOSE

Pain, cultivated by the Spirit's compassion, invites us to care deeply for one another, grow together, suffering with one another so that none of us is isolated or alone. Pain opens the door to the Spirit's compassion in us.

EIGHT INDISPENSABLE PRINCIPLES OF PAIN

1. PAIN CAN MAKE US APPROACHABLE

Pain reminds us that we need one another. When we are open, honest, and vulnerable, we invite others to share their pain too.

Compassion begins with attention. (Daniel Goleman)

2. PAIN CAN GROW OUR COMPASSION AND KINDNESS

Through pain, we learn to be tender-hearted, listen patiently, offer a hug, or sit with someone in silence.

Presence is the gift we give when we put aside the quick fix or the overused cliché and just ... listen to someone's story. Presence allows our tender silence and calls it holy. (Elizabeth Foss)

3. PAIN CAN MAKE US STRONGER

From the depths of pain, we learn endurance and strength, so that when difficult seasons come again, we can face them, knowing God is with us, no matter what.

God keeps all our tears in a bottle ... It was a precious ointment wherewith the woman in the Pharisee's house anointed the feet of Christ; but her tears, wherewith she washed them, were worth more than her spikenard. (Abraham Wright)

4. PAIN HAS A GREATER PURPOSE

Through pain, God chisels away at the things we cling to, growing our patience, endurance, and trust in Him. Each time we encounter pain, God builds on the work He has already begun.

Your suffering can have purpose. It can lead to a deepening of your faith and bring about a renewal in your relationship with Jesus. But first, we have to choose to let Jesus work through the hardships we face. (Becky Weber)



Chronic Joy

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5. PAIN CAN BE INSPIRING

Great beauty can be found in the crucible of suffering, where we experience the exquisite tenderness of God. Beauty and pain are mirror images. In God's tenderness, He is refining us into the flawless craftsmanship He created us to be before we were born into this broken and hurting world.

Yet the choice is ours. In order to discover the beauty, we must first surrender to the pain.

... there is always room to hold both the beauty and the pain ... But I discovered that unless I was extremely intentional, I could easily go a whole day without relishing in some gift, however large or small. (Bridget McCartney Nohara)

6. PAIN CAN BE A DOORWAY TO JOY

What if it's only *through pain* that we discover joy? In John 15:5, Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches." The grafting of a branch onto a vine is only accomplished through wounding. When we abide in Christ, and bear fruit, the result is joy.

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:11)

The deeper the valley, the greater is our capacity for joy. (Cindee Snider Re)

7. PAIN CAN DEEPEN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

Pain can inspire us to grow deeper in our relationship with Jesus. When we choose to worship in the midst of pain, we don't deny the pain, but we shift our attention from *what we feel* to *who God is*.

Through pain, God has ushered me into the fullest, most intimate, most sacred encounters with him. (Vaneetha Risner)

8. PAIN CAN TELL A STORY

Our scars tell the story of our pain, sorrow, loss, and survival. Our scars don't define us, but they do tell a part of our story. Sometimes things must be undone, unraveled, or even torn down for God's best to be purposed, built up, or birthed in us.

Scars tell stories of pain — and redemption. Our brokenness provides a pedestal for the display of God's beauty. (Elisa Morgan)

Where pain dismantles, the Spirit's tender compassion can flourish.

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