

What's In It For You When Things Go Bad



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What's in it For You When Things Go Wrong?

Ever tried to find the silver lining behind a cloud? It's not easy, is it? Especially those really dark clouds that seem to hover over you everywhere you go. Sometimes it seems you just can't get out from under them. Every stinking step you take is shrouded with bad times.

When circumstances go upside down on you and you're disappointed with life, it would help if you could SEE the good in the bad stuff. Take a few minutes with me here, and I'll show you how to uncover the good behind the bad.

Good Behind the Bad, REALLY?!

First, let me tell you how I know there is good behind everything that's bad. There's a verse in the Bible that goes like this:

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. Romans 8:28 (NLT)

Ok, so if this verse guarantees that there is good behind the bad, how come you and I can't see it? Let's figure this out. There's a question you need to ask.

What's In It For You?

When someone wants to make a deal with you, you might say, "Well, what's in it for me?" You loan me your car because mine has a flat tire. You might be thinking in the back of your mind... "What's in it for me?" Answer: Maybe someday I'll let you borrow a few bucks when you need it!

We are usually always wondering "What's in it for me?" And I want you to know, it's ok to ask God that question when bad stuff happens. Because if ALL things work together for the good...then there must be something in it for you!

One time I took a yummy whole grain choc chip cookie out of a box, popped it in my mouth, started chewing...until I looked down at the rest of the cookie and saw tiny little bugs crawling all over it! They were crawling out of the little holes, nooks and crannies - it was nasty! I ran over to the sink and spit the cookie out. Not only did I see cookie bits hurled into the sink, but I also saw bugs that were spewed into the sink. You'd better believe, the next thing I did was wash my mouth out. Disgusting! The cookie box was full of bugs called pantry pests that sometimes come home from the store with you!

So I'm standing there in the kitchen thinking... "Alright now, if all things work together for the good of those who love God, then what's in this bug infested cookie experience for me?"

This is the first thing you need to do too. Ask God, "What's in this for me?"

Not too long ago Buffalo Bills receiver Steve Johnson dropped the winning touch down in a game. He caught it, had it in his hands in the end zone. Then dropped it. That was definitely a bad day for Steve!

Johnson couldn't get over it. He said he was devastated for his teammates. Sadly, he also wallowed in self-pity. Not a good move Stevie boy!

It got more pathetic later, when Johnson wrote this to the people who follow him on Twitter. His tweet said: (He was really talking to God) "I praise you 24/7!!!! And this how you do me!!! You expect me to learn from this??? How??? I'll never forget this!!! Ever!!! Thx tho ... "

Wow! He was talking to God saying...there can't possibly be anything good in this! Sad. I wish he was here reading this so we could show him how to look at his disappointment!

When we are hit square in the face with something difficult, what we need to do is say: **"What's in this for me?"** In other words,

- What can I learn from this?
- What can this produce in me?
- How will this benefit me or others?

Maybe Steve Johnson's failed touch down can be worked for good because WE can learn how NOT to handle a let down!

My husband was born without ears! Well, he did have outside ears, just not any thing on the inside of his ears. No ear drums, no ear canals. Which means of course that He is hearing impaired. After multiple surgeries and reconstruction, he can hear but not like normal.

He has a super sonic hearing aid now, but there were times when it was hard to communicate with him. Honestly, it would have been easier to give up. I've had to repeat myself three, and four times until he got what I was saying. Imagine saying, "Can you pass the butter?" over and over again. That's tiring and takes a lot of work! But we never complain.

You might be asking: "What good can come out of that?" I'll tell you. We have learned to communicate in very subtle ways. A look, a glance. A blink, a slight motion. No one else would ever pick up on it. Not even our kids. We've got our own language, our own thing going on. There's good that has come out of it. Yeah, it stinks that he can't hear that well, but know what? It's ALL good because there's something in it for us!

1 Corinthians 4:17, 18 NLT

¹⁷ We have small troubles for a while now, but they are helping us gain an eternal glory that is much greater than the troubles. ¹⁸ We set our eyes not on what we see but on what we cannot see. What we see will last only a short time, but what we cannot see will last forever.

Here's the same passage paraphrased in the Message: ¹⁶⁻¹⁸ So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.

Deciding that IT'S ALL GOOD, comes back to your perspective on life. Do you really trust God? Do you really believe that God is good even when bad things happen to you?

If you have eyes to see the good, then yes, you really can believe this even if there's no good to come out of this right now. There will be good that comes out of this in your future. And it all comes down to how you explain the things to yourself.

Ready to have a little training on how to talk to yourself?

You have a way of explaining things to yourself when something occurs. It's the little convo that takes place on a subconscious level. And the way you explain things depends on your perspective. Let's look at some examples of what could be going on inside your head.

You're at the movies waiting for your date. You were supposed to meet at 6:30 sharp, but 45 minutes later your date is a no-show. At some point you need to explain to yourself why. You might say to yourself,

- He stood me up! - causing you to be ticked.
- Or you might jump to conclusions; she doesn't care about me anymore – causing you to hurt.
- You could think, He was in an accident, - causing you to feel anxious.
- You might think, She's working overtime so that she can pay for our movie - causing you to be grateful. (Naïve, but grateful!)
- He's stopping at the florist on the way so he can bring me flowers – causing you to think sweet things.
- You might think, She's with another guy, - causing you to feel jealous.
- Or you might think, this gives me a perfect excuse to break up with her, - causing you to feel relieved!

Same situation. Very different explanations. How you explain things to yourself when something goes wrong will determine whether or not you can see the good in every situation.

I could say, "My husband being born w/o ears makes life extremely difficult for him and his family." Or I could explain it like this, my husband was born w/o ears and as a benefit - his wife and kids have learned great patience & know how to communicate beyond words.

How are you going to explain you're next BIG PROBLEMO?

Joseph, in the Bible, was treated so wrongly. He was falsely accused of rape and sold as a slave. He could have come up with all kinds of explanations for why things weren't going his way.

God has forsaken me.

God is angry with me.

God has forgotten me.

God has given up on me.

But Joseph looks in the rearview mirror and reflects on all the crap, the unfair treatment, the betrayal, and all the pain. And he says to his brothers, (the same brothers who faked his death and sold him into slavery):

Gen. 50:20

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Joseph EXPLAINED IT by saying: **“It’s ALL Good!”**.

What I’ve Discovered Through Some Tough Times

I have learned a lot of things from tough times that prepared me for my future:

I had a boyfriend in college that cheated on me. Not only did he cheat on me – he cheated on me with one of my friends. Ouch! Yes, I was heartbroken. Though it burned, I was determined to find the silver lining in that dark cloud. So I asked...

What was in it for me? Here’s what I got...I learned how to deal with betrayal the right way. I also experienced God being there for me as I hurt deeply. I learned how to forgive someone who didn’t deserve to be forgiven and I walked through the painful process of letting go. Good stuff came out of a bad situation.

Good That Came From a Dying Loved One

When my grandmother was dying from cancer, we moved her into our house and took care of her until she died. We endured the process of watching her shrivel up and wither away. I had to get up two and three times a night to take her to the bathroom. I was sleep deprived. Not good timing as I was going to postgraduate school working on my doctoral degree. I desperately needed sleep. I worked all day, took post grad classes at night, studied every spare minute I had – all this while helping to care for her – it was a tough year.

What was in it for me? I learned how to push through exhaustion and keep going, it toughened me up, I spent some incredibly precious moments with her during her last days, and I learned how to give of myself unselfishly. It was no longer all about me, my schedule, my needs. It was about her and what she needed. I learned how to give more. Good stuff came out of bad stuff.

If you love God and live for him, when you have something bad happen to you...you can trust that God is going to make it work together for your good. Everything that happens to you will benefit you in some way. You just have to be willing to see it. And ask the big question, “What’s in it for me?”

Let me clarify a few things about this idea that all things work together for good:

1. The Bible doesn’t say that EVERYTHING that happens is good. (It says God can work it into something good.)
2. The Bible doesn’t promise that we will ALWAYS see the good right away (I’m still wondering what good will come out of eating cookies full of bugs!).
3. God can bring a good that we don’t recognize.
4. God doesn’t say he will bring good out of bad FOR EVERYBODY – only for those “who love God and are called according to his purpose” (For Christians who are genuinely walking with God.)

God had tough things happen to him too. God's son died. In fact, God's son was murdered. Jesus had tough things happen to him – Jesus was tortured. And then he was killed. But I know that all that bad stuff happened for YOUR GOOD! There was something in it for you!

Situation - Jesus was killed

What was in it for you? It gave you the way to be forgiven and saved from hell.

(Message) Hebrews 4: ¹⁴⁻¹⁶ Now that we know what we have—Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God—let's not let it slip through our fingers. We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all—all but the sin. So let's walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help.

See, God knows about tough stuff, and he can help you.

So, the next time something BAD happens to you, ask: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? Because, if you look, you will see the good in bad things.

Prayer That You Can Pray

God, help me today to have a new way of explaining the bad things that happen. Help me to ask you: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? To trust you with my life, knowing in the end, IT'S ALL GOOD!

If you enjoyed this book, you'll be interested in my book, ["Finding Your Smile in Hard Times: Flipping into Peace Mode When Life is Difficult"](#). Consider it part two of this book.

Filled with inspirational and real life stories that will make you laugh, and sometimes go misty eyed, this book will help you find:

- Proven techniques to finding your smile in the hard times
- Proof that you are not alone, even though you feel like it
- Validation for your pain or difficulty - yes, your pain is real!
- Everything that happens really is "all good"
- The cure for disappointment
- How to bear the pain that has been tossed at you with grace
- How to get your own little mini-vacation from your difficult situation
- How you can know if God is really good to you and what to do about it when you think He's not
- Resources and clickable links to articles that will help you deal with the tough stuff of life
- Where you can go to find answers to some of your biggest questions
- Why and how to meditate on the good stuff of God's Word
- Discover a relaxing way to memorize scripture
- Why hope really makes a difference and how to get it in your heart and head
- Why helping others speeds up pain removal
- How Jesus used the very same technique to handle His pain at his lowest point in life
- Includes a worksheet that can be printed or copied into a journal to get you started using these methods so you can find your smile and gain peace immediately.

Here's what others have said about this book:

"This book was right on time for me, as I had been finding it hard to smile lately with all the happenings of life. It's great that it is so down to earth, and so easy to read. While reading it, I could actually hear Dr. Travelute speaking those words, in only the way she could. I loved the scripture quotes, and will use them often. Never thought of distraction as a way to ease the pain. Great book by an awesome woman of GOD! Everyone can benefit by the encouragement and hope written on the pages of this book. Thanks!" – Rob

"I loved this book! It was very easy to read because I felt like Dr. Linda was talking with me, not to me. I am encouraged too by her sharing a bit about her own personal struggle with depression and how she was able to find her smile again. I have already recommended this to family and friends and will continue to do so! Thank you Dr. Linda for giving us something we can use to get our smile back and learn to have peace regardless of our situation!! So very grateful!" – Deone

"I never thought about using a distraction to help get through problems. This book has really helped to put things into perspective for me. It has given me hope to get through the rough patches life has thrown at me. There have been many but God is there to help ease us through. This book doesn't just help in dealing with our problems, but it also lets you see the humor in life.

I liked the workbook at the end of the book, it really helped to make your problems concrete and to work through them.

Great book, Pastor Linda" – Nancy

Get "[Finding Your Smile in Difficult Times: Flipping Into Peace Mode When Life is Difficult](#)" on Amazon.com by clicking [here](#).

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