

17. When Everything Goes Wrong

When everything goes wrong. That's when we tend to pray for help the most. But dare I suggest that sometimes it is God himself purposely making everything go wrong. Sometimes God works hard in ways that doesn't feel good. But it's for the purpose of getting us to a certain time and place, so we can do something for him. And even though we go through a level of suffering, we should be able to be thankful when we get used by God in that way.

I have just recently had a perfect example:

I was going on a cruise. I don't travel a lot and this was a big event for me. I was sharing a cabin with a friend and we had purchased excursions ahead of time. We got on the boat just fine. But once we got in our cabin, everything went wrong. My friend's back suddenly went out and she was in horrific pain. My bed was way too soft and I was afraid my back would go out also. And then our toilet broke down. So, we had to walk quite a ways to use the nasty public restrooms.

A storm suddenly came in and the boat was very wobbly, swaying back and forth. The weather forecast showed that it was going to be raining at all our excursions we had already paid for.

Gosh, seemed like everything was going wrong. It wasn't looking good. So I needed to pray about all this. Sitting on the broken toilet, I (much to my surprise) simply asked God "Is this you?". I usually don't get immediate answers to my questions when I pray. But this time I heard the Lord say "Yes, and you will find out why soon". I got excited that I heard God's voice and could hardly wait to see what happens next.

My friend made an acupuncture appointment the next morning. I told her I would go with her (so I could help her get there) and I planned on walking on the treadmills during her session. And then I'd help her walk back to our cabin.

But when I got to the treadmills, they were vacuuming. I'm very allergic to dust, so had to leave that area. I decided to sit in the Salon's waiting area, but all the seats were full. I then found a chair with no one around it and sat there. On my phone working on a new article for this website, a woman approached me. She explained this is where you sit if you want a free massage. While she was massaging my shoulders, she saw what I was writing on my phone and she commented. She told me she's been reading the Bible. Then another woman came over and said she's been reading the Bible too and started telling me her story.

The massage was over quick and the first woman walked away. But the second woman stayed and was telling me all about her life and her relationship with Jesus. I knew my job was to just listen. She talked for an hour (literally). She didn't understand why God wasn't answering her prayers. She was reading her Bible, going to church, and praying. But still God wasn't helping her.

So, I finally spoke just for a minute and suggested to her to try something. Instead of praying “God, please, please! Look I’m reading the Bible and going to church. Please, please help me.” I told her try praying like this “Lord, you know I do not like this and I need your help and I do ask for your help. But while I’m here, what would you like me to do for you? How can you use me in this situation?”

It was like seeing a lightbulb turn on in her head. Her eyes got big and she kind of gasped. And nodded her head yes. Her response was like she had never heard anything like that before.

Right then my friend came out from her appointment. The young woman and I hugged and she was crying and thanking me. She told me how much she needed someone to just listen to her.

So guess what I’m going to tell you next. My friend’s back pain went away that day. She was able to do all the things she wanted to do pain free. Our toilet got fixed. The storm died down and we enjoyed our excursions. Once I talked to that young woman, everything miraculously was good.

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.

I believe the Lord cares more about our relationship with Him than about our comfort in this short life. This young woman really needed help in her relationship with God. She desperately needed to learn how to listen and serve.

God was willing to go through all that trouble - 1) make my friend’s back go out, 2) break our toilet, 3) bring in a storm, 4) have vacuuming going on at the treadmills, and 5) make sure all the seats were filled at the salon - all at just the right times. He did all that just so someone could speak to a young woman who needed God’s help.

I’m certainly not saying that is always the case. However, when it seems like everything is going wrong, maybe we should ponder if it’s God doing something. And no matter what, we should be ready and willing to serve.