

Don't Miss It!

Jim Williams

Editor's Note: We all have thoughts – some good - some bad, but nonetheless they are thoughts. Our thoughts should be reflected upon and dealt with biblically (Rom. 12:1-3; Gal. 6:3; Phil. 3:12-17; Phil. 4:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:1, etc.). 'Just Thinkin Out Loud' (spelling of 'thinkin' is purposeful) is a series of thoughts that are being made public. You may or may not agree with all of the thoughts you read in this series, but it will help all of us to discuss them – out loud. The hope of the author and editors at IIIM is that this will assist all of us to begin personal reflection upon our own thoughts and compare them with God's perspective in Holy Scripture. Readers are encouraged to use small discussion groups and/or our RPM forum for any irenic discussion(s) of these specific thoughts and others they may bring about.

Usually a pleasurable event will be advertised by its promoter, the catch line at the end being "Don't Miss It!"

But so much of life's joy is steered clear from when we act so strongly to avoid its pain.

Happiness is so often misidentified as being a guaranteed part of the Christian experience. This is because of the human desire to avoid pain at all cost. It is a natural reflex, but it sometimes has to be relaxed to allow a deeper experience of hurt, and its reaction. Sometimes we cannot avoid the pain, sometimes we can. But always it has an effect. Our willingness to accept it determines the reaction.

My dear Scottish friend, Kristine Gibbs, has endured two severe cerebral hemorrhages, and written a book about the recovery from the second one. She writes:

Slowly, in (the) hospital, I began to comprehend that our capacity for joy and pain are one. You cannot appreciate one without experiencing the other. Our tragedy is not that we suffer, but that we waste suffering. We waste the opportunity it provides for depth, growth, compassion and understanding.

Following Christ does not mean exclusion from the world's pain, but that one will be given strength to bear whatever comes. Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 4:8 "we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."

When a caterpillar goes into a cocoon, it is protected, strengthened and generally made ready for the rest of its life. His crawling days are over, and he is being made ready to fly and be beheld as a beautiful part of God's Creation.

There is a scene in the Billy Graham movie, "Joni," that seems applicable. She is sitting in a wheelchair conversing with someone else in a wheelchair. She says that she would sooner be in a wheelchair knowing Him, than walking around, not (knowing Him). It took a long time for her to arrive at that conclusion, but it was a knee jerk response to a negative statement about God that she had just heard.

Its His Joy God is steering us toward- Don't Miss It!

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