

## **Overcoming Tragedies in our Lives**

When a tragedy occurs in our lives, many things can happen. We are often confused as to why this happened to us. Our faith can be tested, strengthened or destroyed. We can feel depressed and devastated. We sometimes feel angry. We grieve for our loss, whatever it may be, whether through death or loss of another kind such as divorce, a once close friendship, our health, etc. Those are natural emotions that we as humans feel.

This past month we witnessed tragedy on a worldwide scale. The devastating earthquake in Haiti obviously affected those in Haiti the most directly. Even if we were not directly affected, many of us felt the impact of the tragedy and the individual losses in that country. The faith of many was tested. If they believed in God, they may have questioned "How could God have allowed this to happen?"

Some people have actually wondered whether the earthquake in Haiti was a punishment from God. Even Jesus' disciples during his day were confused about why things happen. When they encountered a man who was blind from birth, they asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" to which Jesus responded "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." I'm no expert, but what I believe Jesus was saying is that God does not bring "bad things" into people's lives to punish them but that good can often be revealed in the aftermath of tragedy in individual lives.

The harsh reality is that good and bad things happen in all of our lives. We live, and at some point we all die. Byron Katie recently said, "Until you experience death as a gift, your Work's not done. So if you're afraid of it, that shows you what to question next." We will lose loved ones in our lives, and we will die at our appointed time. I realize the knowledge of that doesn't make it any easier. When we see what happened in Haiti, we hopefully feel empathy with those who are suffering. When tragedy strikes us personally, we don't want to hear it. We need to go through the stages of grief. If we don't, we can never truly move on and heal from our loss.

Even though it is important to go through the stages of grief, I believe that there can be good in the aftermath of tragedy. My husband Eric is an example. Eric was happily married to his late wife for 22 years when he lost her to cancer at the age of 44. Why did God allow that to happen? I can only speculate on the answer based on the outcomes of that "tragedy." For one, Eric's loss actually strengthened his faith. He leaned on God for support, and he found it. He is also now a very empathetic person to others who are going through a loss. Others were greatly touched by his wife's death and realized that we should treasure every moment with our loved ones. Last, but not least, I was given the gift of a very loving husband who cherishes me. These were good outcomes of a loss that seemed like a tragedy.

Even the tragedy in Haiti has resulted in some good. People who had previously been selfish with their money and time made an effort to help the people of Haiti. Groups of people pulled together who would not have previously done so. The faith of many was strengthened by seeing how God was blessing the people of Haiti in the aftermath of tragedy.

I believe God is a loving and compassionate God who truly feels for those who have suffered, including those in Haiti. He will be there for you too if you will only reach out to Him in faith to lift you up. No matter what "tragedy" you are going through in your life right now or will go through, I believe you can overcome it. Let's be there for each other when tragedy strikes. We can overcome through the grace of God and others who care.