Randy Alcorn – Trusting God when the pain seems pointless –

I’ve written nine novels. Suppose you could interview characters from my books. If you asked them, “Would you like to suffer less?” I’m sure they’d answer, “Yes!”

I empathize with my characters. But as the author, I know that in the end all their suffering will be worth it, since it’s critical to their growth, and to the redemptive story.

God has written each of us into his story. We are part of something far greater than ourselves. God calls upon us to trust him to weave that story together, so that, in the end that will never end, we will worship him, slack-jawed at the sheer genius of his interwoven plotlines.

But like my fictional characters, who are clueless to my strategies, we lack the perspective to see how parts of our lives fit into God’s overall plan. Cancer, disabilities, accidents, and other losses and sorrows appear devastatingly pointless. However, just because we don’t see any point in suffering doesn’t prove there is no point.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18
16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.
17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,
18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

God will let you down but He is still good.

Jacqui Griggs said https://newspring.cc/articles/what-to-do-when-god-lets-you-down this

We finally had the date chosen, venue booked, and musicians rehearsing. My plans for a wedding and marriage were coming together rapidly, and I looked forward to this new stage of life.

Then my world turned upside down. A health crisis kept me in and out of the hospital for three days, after which my husband-to-be silently abandoned me. Everything about my life up to that point — my future, my job, my living situation — changed overnight, without explanation. I was hurt by my fiancé, but I was mad at God.
Sometimes our plans change abruptly or our circumstances are less than ideal. It might be for any number of reasons, but what happens when it seems like God has let us down? When God doesn’t meet our expectations and we start to doubt God, His goodness, or His love?

At times, I try to define God by my circumstances. When my life doesn’t seem to be going right, it can feel like God doesn’t love me or hear my prayers, but that doesn’t line up with what the Bible says. Instead, I need to change my perspective:

https://joleneunderwood.com/god-let-me-down/

Jolene Underwood I’ve felt let down by God plenty of times. Like when I did all the things I knew to do as a believer and still ended up falling apart in depression, anxiety, or letting angry words and actions spew forth. Or when it seemed my marriage was going to end despite all the things I thought I did right. Despite all the prayers I prayed. Or when God didn’t send what I needed the way I thought He should provide it. If I believed God would never let me down, and then He did, I think I might give up on God. Plenty of people have.
Daniel 3:16–18
16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.
17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.

18 But if not,
Isaiah 26:3
3 You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

Acts 24
1 Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor.
2 When Paul was called in, Tertullus (Lawyer for the Jewish high Priest) presented his case before Felix: “We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation.
3 Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude.
4 But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.
5 “We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect
6 and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him.

7 But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took him out of our hands, 
8 commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.”
9 The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.
10 When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: “I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense.
11 You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.
12 My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city.
13 And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me.
14 However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect.
I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets,
15 and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.
16 So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.
17 "After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings.
18 I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance.
19 But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me.
20 Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin—
21 unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.' "
22 Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case."
23 He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

But God was doing something different.

FootstepsofInspiration.com
Welcome to Footprints of Inspiration!
I'm Tammy and I started my blogging journey by way of a chronic illness. You see, I've spent over 8 years living with chronic migraines. Most days it took everything I had to just "put one foot in front of the other."
In the midst of this struggle, my relationship with Jesus grew stronger, and I've learned more in this short period of time in my life than I've learned in all my years combined.
Such as:

I'm ecstatic to say that after years of suffering from this debilitating illness, I found a doctor who listened and was willing to "think outside the box." After a hysterectomy, I'm living my life again! The migraines aren't gone, but I have definitely gotten my life back and am so very grateful.

You don't need to have a chronic illness to hang out with me. We all live in this difficult world and have to make a choice each and every day to focus on what we have to be thankful for rather than all the challenges we face.

Oh don't get me wrong . . . it's not easy. I'm a work in progress, but I know that together we can help each other through the difficult times, come out stronger for it, and even learn to thank God for every teaching moment we've been through.

Because of my journey and the many struggles I've encountered, I'm living my life more intentionally, and my passion is to help you do the same thing by living a Christ-centered life and going after your God given dreams.
Several days later Felix (the governor) came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus.

As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, “That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.”

When confronted with Jesus we have to make a choice.

Ronald Reagan;

Once had an aunt who took him to a cobbler for a pair of new shoes. The cobbler asked young Reagan, "Do you want square toes or round toes on your shoes?" Unable to decide, Reagan didn't answer, so the cobbler gave him a few days. Several days later the cobbler saw Reagan on the street; And asked him again what kind of toes he wanted on his shoes. Reagan still couldn't decide, So the shoemaker replied, "Well, come by in a couple of days. Your shoes will be ready. "When the future president went into the cobbler's shop; He found one square-toed shoe and one round-toed shoe! The cobbler said to him: "This will teach you to never let people make decisions for you, "Ronald Reagan said years later, "I learned right then and there, if you don't make your own decisions, someone else will."
26 At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.  
27 When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

James Brown, Evangeline Baptist Church, Many believers today often confuse having faith in God with trusting in God. Faith is a noun. It is something you have or possess, a “substance” or “evidence” of things both hoped for and not seen (Hebrews 11:1).

Faith in God is the confident belief that He is the sovereign Creator of all things and that He can and will do what He claims.

Trust, on the other hand, is a verb. It is something you do or act upon. Faith always comes first, but trust is never guaranteed. It is a willful choice, a deliberate action, and can only grow out of your faith.

There is a vast difference between faith and trust, and the story of Charles Blondin and Harry Colcord provides a great illustration.

Blondin was the foremost tightrope walker of his time. He gained worldwide fame in 1859 as the first person to cross Niagara Falls. Colcord was his friend and manager. A cable made entirely of hemp, 1,300 feet long and two inches in diameter, was wound around an oak tree on the American side, while the other end was
ferried across the Niagara River and secured to a Canadian rock.

To limit swaying, Colcord had stabilizing guy ropes affixed at 20-foot intervals to anchors on both banks—except for 50 unreachable feet in the center, which sagged and swayed dangerously. Thanks to Colcord’s savvy marketing, tens of thousands of spectators gathered for the spectacle. Gamblers took bets on whether Blondin would fall and die, and vendors hawked everything from lemonade to liquor.

 Shortly before 5:00 p.m. on June 30, 1859, Blondin started his slow walk from the American side. Once past the center section, he broke into a run! After a brief rest, he started back again, but this time toting a box camera on his back. Balancing precariously near the middle, Blondin carefully set up the camera and snapped a picture of the crowd. Then he repacked his burden and continued the rest of the way. The entire round trip took 23 minutes. Once safely back on American soil, Blondin immediately announced a series of encore performances, each more daring than the last. The press ate it up.

Over several weeks, Blondin walked backward, blindfolded, backflipped, pushed a wheelbarrow, and even cooked an omelet during one of many trips across the rope. He had faith he could accomplish these feats, but he also trusted his abilities to complete them.

The spectators, on the other hand, only had faith—a difference seen in Blondin’s daring walk in August 1859. After he had crossed to the Canadian side, the
crowd was horrified as Blondin reappeared on the rope with his manager, Harry Colcord, clinging to his back.

A few ropes snapped during their transit, but Blondin never wavered and safely made the crossing. It was later reported that Blondin told his manager, “Look up, Harry…you are no longer Colcord, you are Blondin.

Until I make it across – I need you to be a part of me, mind, body, and soul. If I sway, sway with me. Do not attempt to do any balancing yourself.” This is the difference between faith and trust. The spectators had faith in Blondin and believed in his abilities. But only Colcord trusted him enough to climb on his back and allow him to carry him across.

Proverbs 3:5
5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

The Author ALWAYS knows what He is doing!