

BLESSED IN THE MESS

How to Experience God's Goodness
in the Midst of Life's Pain

JOYCE MEYER



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INTRODUCTION

Life is often messy. We hear people say, “My life is a mess,” or “This situation is a mess.” What they mean is that life has become difficult, painful, or confusing. God never promises us a trouble-free existence. In fact, His Word teaches us to expect the opposite. Jesus says, “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33 NKJV). In addition, the Bible is filled with instructions on how to handle ourselves when difficulty comes our way. Remaining patient, continuing to trust God when we don’t understand what is going on, and staying positive are just three ways we are to respond when we feel life is a mess (Romans 12:12; Proverbs 3:5), and they are all for our benefit. No matter what unpleasant circumstances we may face, if we remain patient, trust God, and stay positive, we can enjoy life while He works on our problems.

Thankfully, trouble is not continuous in our lives. We also go through seasons that are peaceful and pleasant. But life does not *always* go as we would like, and we need to be prepared and strong spiritually for the times when it gets messy. It is important that we learn not to behave one way when we like our circumstances and another when we find them challenging. We need to be stable in every situation, and our ability to do so is based on our thinking and believing. If we think positively, expecting something good to come from our trouble, and if we trust God and remind ourselves that He is good, we can make it through difficulties more easily than if we are negative and don’t trust Him.

Jesus has given us His peace, but He also tells us not to let ourselves be fearful, intimidated, worried, and unsettled (John 14:27 AMPC). The fact that God has given us something doesn't mean we make good use of it. Peace is available, but Jesus says, "Do not *let* your hearts be troubled" (John 14:1, emphasis mine).

You can be blessed in the midst of trouble and pain.

The message of this book is simple: We will all face trouble and pain in life, but if we handle it the way God wants us to, we can be blessed in the midst of it. In the Old Testament, Job endured great trouble, but in the end, he was given twice as much as he had lost (Job 42:10). This principle appears throughout God's Word. The question is, do we want our troubles to make us better or worse? Do we want our pain to make us pitiful or to make us powerful? Since we will encounter trouble either way, why not let our difficulties make us better and stronger? Why not live in such a way that we will end up better off than we were before the trouble began? We should never waste our pain. We can learn something from it, use it to stay out of trouble in the future, and let it inspire and equip us to help other people.

There is a way to be blessed in the midst of your mess and to receive God's reward at the end of it. In this book, I hope to show you how to do it. We all have trouble, but not all of us handle it well. If we don't, we can change, and thank God, we can always change in positive ways. If you have not handled your problems and pain well in the past, then with God's help, you can begin to handle them better, starting now.

I have been in a serious relationship with God for more than forty-five years. Like everyone, I began as a baby Christian, behaving like a baby and reacting emotionally every time life became difficult or situations didn't go my way. However, over the years, I have learned how to behave, and God's Word and His Spirit

have changed me. I can testify that the things that once upset me greatly do not disturb me at all now. Why? Because I know how they will end if I do what God asks me to do.

I am far from perfect. Just a few days ago, a situation threatened to ruin my plans for the day, and I became impatient and frustrated. My family started preaching my sermons back to me, which only added to my frustration. The good news is that within ten minutes, I felt peaceful and the day turned out as I had planned after all. There are times I don't behave properly, and I am still growing. But thankfully I have improved a lot, and I am determined not to let the devil steal the joy of my progress by causing me to focus on my remaining weaknesses. I know I will be strengthened in all my troubles as time goes by. God doesn't change us all at once; He does it little by little. Start thanking God for the little you have, and you will be given more.

*God changes you
little by little.*

I believe that learning to be stable in problematic situations is one of life's most important lessons. Unless we become stable, we will always be subject to upset and distress when our circumstances are unpleasant or painful, as they will be at times. Learn how to be blessed in your mess and come out better than you were when your difficulty began. Learn to use troubles to your advantage instead of letting the devil use them to weaken and perhaps defeat you. God has taught me how to do this, and I know He can teach you too.