

Value of Pain

Accepting pain as part of the pathway to growth helps us get a Fresh Start Now. This idea runs counter to popular thinking as Michael Casey notes in his book, *Toward God*.

Casey writes, "In the industrialized western world it is difficult to accept suffering. We are led to expect that it should not occur. If we lack acceptance of love or self-confidence, perhaps some consumer item will remedy the situation. Like some vast pharmacy, our technological society offers a remedy for almost every ailment. We have come to believe it is not right to experience pain."

Not so. Pain is inevitable. Pain is also indispensable. An earthy example illustrates the value of pain. A bucket of cow manure is worthless alone. But in the hands of a skilled gardener, it can be placed around the roots of plants to produce beauty and life. Our sadness and pain may seem worthless, but they become the "fertilizer" God uses to produce beauty in and through us.

C.S. Lewis said it best. "God speaks to us in pleasure. He shouts to us in pain. Pain is His megaphone to arouse a deaf world." Pain gets our attention. Pain purifies motives and clarifies priorities. Pain minimizes independence and maximizes dependence.

Accept your pain as part of the means God wants to use to help you get a Fresh Start. Ask God two questions in the midst of your pain:

1. What do you want me to learn?
2. How do you want me to respond?

God may or may not answer your questions. But you can be sure that God will use your pain to help you begin again.