Enjoying Everyday Life

Trade Your Pain for God's Beauty

By Joyce Meyer

Everyone deals with emotional pain to some degree. Whether it's a difficult relationship, an addiction, abuse, or depression…it can cripple us and prevent us from moving forward. But regardless of what's happened in our past, God still wants us to have a great future.

For years, I thought I had to settle for a second-rate life because I had been sexually abused by my father. I thought my future would never be as good as it could have been.

That's what our enemy, Satan, wants us to think. He wants us to believe that our past pain has permanently ruined what God can do with our future.

Maybe that's where you are today. You look at everything you've been through and think, "My situation's just a hopeless mess. Maybe it would be different if God had done something sooner, but now it's beyond repair."

If so, I want you to know that God can fix the unfixable and bring dead things back to life! Jesus said in Matthew 19:26, "…*With God all things are possible"* (NIV).

If you are brokenhearted—if you've been hurt, abused, disappointed or unfairly treated in any way—it doesn't limit what God can do in your life. In fact, God can give you a future that's better than it would have been if you had never gone through the painful times you've experienced.

Double for Your Trouble

Isaiah 61:7-8 has meant so much to me over the years. It says, "*Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours. For I, the Lord, love justice...*" (NIV).

This scripture helped me understand that no person could pay me back for what I'd gone through—but God could! And He'd even give me double for all the pain I'd been through.

I've witnessed this firsthand in my own life. God has used His Word to transform me from the inside out. Instead of anger and bitterness, I now have peace and joy. Instead of being a victim of past abuse, He is using my experiences to help many find healing and total restoration from emotional pain.

Isaiah 61:1-3 says Jesus came "*to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners...to comfort all who mourn...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair…"* (NIV).

Jesus has already opened the prison doors! We no longer have to stay in "prisons" of emotional pain, rejection, disappointment, worry, depression, anger, addictions, or bad habits.

Let It Go and Move On with Your Life

Pain from the past has a way of lingering and even affecting your future. But you don't have to live stuck in the pain of your past. You can make an exchange—you can trade your pain for God's promise and have beauty instead of ashes.

God offers each one of us healing and restoration, but we also have a part to play in the process. We can't expect to keep our "ashes" and still receive God's beauty. We have to choose to move forward and leave things like bitterness, resentment, and self-pity behind.

Self-pity is a major trap that will keep us stuck in our pain—it's turning inward and pitying ourselves when we should have compassion flowing out of us to other people.

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NC Baptist Aging

Southern Baptist Communicators Connect with Missions in Western North Carolina

By Carol Layton

Southern Baptist communicators from across the country recently joined hands with Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) to create bags to share with foster children, independent college students, and senior adults served by BCH. The communication professionals took the event to heart—not only filling the bags but writing prayers and encouraging messages to tuck inside.

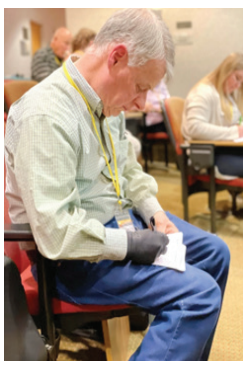
Mission Project Two-Fifteen was part of the 68th Annual Workshop of the Baptist Communications Association (BCA) held April 17-20 at the Ridgecrest Conference Center.

BCA Lifetime Member, Art Toalston, helped fill the bags and remarked, "Learning of North Carolina Baptists' compassion ministries in foster care, outreach to lone collegians, and so many ministries to seniors certainly has heightened my compassion in these areas. I needed that and am greatly appreciative." Toalston has served as editor of the Baptist Press and as a writer for the International Mission Board.

Conference-goers pack "Care Kits" for Western Carolina University students who have aged out of foster care.

"Mission Project Two Fifteen" provided an opportunity for attendees to learn about the breadth of BCH services while completing hands-on mission projects. The session featured three BCH ministries: foster care and adoption services through Every Child, HOMEBASE outreach at Western Carolina University for college students who have aged out of foster or residential care, and NCBAM (NC Baptist Aging Ministry) which helps adults 65+ maintain their independence.

After learning of these outreaches, attendees created "Welcome Bags" for children entering foster care, "Care Kits" for HOMEBASE students, and "Red Bags" – a life-saving medication management tool developed by NCBAM for older adults.



Art Toalston, the retired editor of the Baptist Press, writes a note to include in a HOME BASE "Care Kit."

Attendees were most impressed with BCH's breadth of services and how the ministry that began as an orphanage in 1885 has constantly adapted to meet the needs of the marginalized, and now encompasses ministries for every stage of life – from first heartbeat to last.

BCA is a professional organization of communicators who serve in editorial, public relations, electronic media, photography, management, marketing , and graphic design positions principally within Baptist agencies and institutions. The organization has more than 250 members across the United States and around the world.

BCH staff presenting at the mission project session included: Jim Edminson, assistant to the president and editor of BCH's publication Charity & Children; Jim Dean, HOMEBASE director; Mark Smith, Every Child church liaison; and Angie Gregg, west regional director for NCBAM.

Carol Layton is the Director of Communications and Administration for NCBAM at Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina

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