Would You Choose a Perfect Life?

Caron Bass 31 October 2017



This was the first time that I was able to attend the Four12 Conference in South Africa. I came to know Jesus as my Saviour in 2011, but despite this wonderful gift of salvation, I've still walked a challenging road with God. Anxiety and extreme fear have been a daily battle for me, and though God has walked with me and brought me from being crippled in fear to being able to function on a "normal" level, the fear has not disappeared completely. Every time it (the fear) came knocking, I would feel frustrated all over again and ask God, "How long am I still going to battle this?" Discouragement would creep in and I'd feel as though I was right back at the start of my journey.

> **...despite all my feelings of fear and heartache, I still had an expectancy and hope in my heart for this time of equipping.**

Just before the conference started, I had been having an especially challenging time, as my aunt, to whom I was extremely close, had passed away from cancer just a month before. I was also going through a rough time at work, feeling the constant pressure of having to live up to other people's expectations of me and the pressures of my own attempts at being "perfect" all the time.

I entered the conference doors on Day One with a real heaviness and physical fatigue that I just couldn't shake...but I had made it there, and despite all my feelings of fear and heartache, I still had an expectancy and hope in my heart for this time of equipping.

When Daniel Barnard spoke on 'Advancing the Kingdom Through Hardship', it really spoke to my heart. Hearing of Paul and Silas (Acts 16: 25 – 34) who, after being flogged and put in prison, still had the faith to praise and worship God at midnight, even in their hardship. How God used their faith through suffering to bring that jailer to a knowledge of salvation.

> **Would you choose a perfect life with no hardships…but without the intimacy of God walking beside you?**

Daniel asked the question, 'Would you choose a perfect life with no hardships, where everything went smoothly and there were never any trials to face, but without the intimacy of God walking beside you? Or would you choose the trials that you have to walk through now, knowing that God is right there beside you, going through every hardship with you?'

It hit me that the truth is that through the battles I have had to face, I have come to know God so intimately and personally. The very trials I've wanted to escape from have been the very proof that my relationship with Jesus is real, living and active in my life. I have come to a place where I long for and lean into His word, where I have deep quiet times with Him (which were a struggle in the beginning), and my heart has experienced a satisfying love to which no earthy relationship can compare. When I began to see this different perspective and truth, I knew I would take the hardships I'm battling now for the continuation of this great prize of intimacy with Jesus. God was going to show me in a new way how 'when I am weak, He is strong'.

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I went up for prayer after Dan's message and was overcome by an immense release of emotion. Whilst crying, I sank to the ground and, for the first time in a long time, I stopped 'striving' and just allowed myself to be weak in the safety of God's arms. As I became weak, the heaviness that I had been carrying from mourning my aunt was broken off and I felt a fresh infilling of God's strength.

Another part of Dan's message was about their eldership team going through a time of repentance. It was in that moment that I realised that being made "perfect in God's image" is not "perfectionism in the world's eyes", which is something with which I really struggled in the workplace, and within myself. I felt God set me free from striving for that worldly perfectionism and finally felt the freedom to make mistakes.

The Thursday evening of the conference was an incredible worship session with Mervis van der Merwe, where we spent time soaking in God's presence. God showed me a picture of the words "Golden Harvest". I wasn't sure what or for whom this meant, but I spent the next two days asking God for greater clarity. A while later I felt the answer drop into my spirit: God was telling me that the Golden Harvest is for me, and that every trial I push through is a seed, and all the seeds that I am planting in the hardships I face are growing to produce a "Golden Harvest".

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This great encouragement from my Father has given me a new hope and vision for my own life and God's Kingdom.

'He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.' (Romans 4:20 -21)

Now that I've been to and experienced all that God does during these conference times, I don't think I will ever miss the Four12 Conference in South Africa ever again. I'm certain that three days of my yearly leave will most definitely be saved to ensure I can be at the Four12 Conference in the future, and I'm already looking forward to the 2018 one!