



The Part Of God's Will No One Wants

In the most difficult times, we can deeply trust that those are the very circumstances God will use to accomplish His eternal plan in us! He is faithful not to wound us at random; He is faithful to save us forever. Throughout our lives, we will surely experience pain and heartache, but they are not meant to thwart the mission of the Lord, but to further it! So, keep standing. Keep trusting.

Day 1

[Job 1:21](#)

Today I can say that the answer is yes. Throw a dart at the pages of the Bible and you're likely to hit a character whose story could confirm that yes. Job. Paul. David. Peter. Look at Moses, journeying for years with less-than-faithful followers, coming close to the Promised Land but without getting it. Struggles, setbacks and wounds are undeniable facts of life. God's people don't get passed over by hardship... but hard times are the part of His plan we'd almost always choose to omit if the choice were ours to make.

The hard times might be easier to understand if our pain could always be traced to our own sinful choices or those of others. But struggles can and do befall us that we have had no hand in. In most miscarriages, nothing that the parents did caused their baby's heart to stop beating. Sometimes the uproar of life is a natural result of choosing sin or selfishness; but just as often it is not. So how do we handle pain or heartbreak in a way that keeps us moving forward? Even if no 1-2-3 foolproof plan exists, can we at least hope in a higher way? I think we can.

Right now, I am writing with my daughter, Valerie, in my lap. If we had not suffered the miscarriage, it is possible that Valerie would not be here. Obviously, conception is God's business. He is the giver of life. But in Kelly's and my little microcosm of planning, the child now in heaven would have completed our family.¹ We would not have tried again. Now this little blonde-haired girl sits in my lap with a fuzzy bear on her shirt and her hands on my keyboard ... and I can't imagine life without her.

Her presence speaks to a truth we all need to grip for dear life and savor well: God is working things out during those very parts of His will *we do not want*. He is crafting, shaping and planning at a deeper level than we can see.

He is looking at a line that stretches from eternity past to eternity future, while we are looking through a straw at a tiny black pencil dot set on that line of life. He is looking at eons of eternity at once.

Note

1. In 2 Samuel 12:22-23 David said he would go to his child upon his death.

Day 2

[Exodus 13:17](#)

[Psalm 119:90](#)

[1 Thessalonians 5:24](#)

[1 Corinthians 1:9](#)

When Moses and the children of Israel stood at the edge of the Red Sea, with the Egyptian army closing in, they made an almost unbelievable tactical choice: *they stayed put*. They just stood in place. Why? Because God was weaving a story that a bridge across the water could not tell. The Israelites would have to *walk through* the sea to tell God's great story of deliverance. Surely there were other routes, other plans of escape. Certainly, battles awaited them on the "shorter roads" too—but God wanted to take them the long way in a story that required an unprecedented miracle: the parting of the Red Sea.

"Our whole perspective changes," says Robert J. Morgan, in his book *Red Sea Rules*, "when, finding ourselves in a hard place, we realize the Lord has either placed us there or allowed us to be there, perhaps for reasons presently only known to Himself."¹ His goal for the hemmed-in Israelites was not the "dot" of the moment Moses must have seen through his straw like perspective, but a timeless story of God's greatness that would be told and retold throughout history.

When you and I begin to look at the whole of God's plan instead of the tiny part immediately before us, trust opens up. We can trust our great God to see us through. He has been faithful to those who've come before us, and He will be faithful to us. The psalmist wrote, "Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures".

Martyrs, widows, orphans, the impoverished, the forgotten, the persecuted and the wounded have all found Christ faithful. With such a rich history behind Him, He is not going to ruin His reputation by hanging us out to dry. He doesn't just act faithfully; He is faithful. I don't just act like Gregg Matte—I am Gregg Matte. That is who I am, and all that I can be. He is faithful. That is who he is, and it is all that He can be. "The one who calls you is faithful," Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church, "and he will do it". And again, to the church at Corinth he wrote, "God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful".

Note

1. A Robert J. Morgan, *Red Sea Rules* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), p. 7.

Day 3

[John 6:66-69](#)

[Matthew 26:47-56](#)

[James 1:20](#)

In the most difficult times, we can trust deeply that the parts of His will we don't want are the very things He will use to accomplish His eternal plan! He is faithful not to wound us at random; He is faithful to save us forever. Throughout our lives, we will surely experience pain and heartache, but they are not meant to thwart the mission of the Lord, but to further it! So, keep standing. Keep trusting. Echo Peter's words as your declaration of truth in troubled times:

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God".

As Jesus drew closer to the cross and to His death, His disciples became more and more frightened and disoriented. They were hoping for something more "secure". Not surprisingly, some of His followers began to fall away. But Peter had it right. He understood that the best thing for them at the time was to press in even closer to Jesus than before. There was no better place for them to be.

Those times when we want to move just to keep from feeling trapped are the very times we need to be still and lean in closer to embrace His will. Don't leave ... cleave! The more closely you walk with Christ in the uncomfortable of the unknown, the greater clarity of life you will experience. Are you confused? Hurt? Disoriented? Cling to Christ and His Word like never before.

Getting mad doesn't help either. Anger is a secondary emotion. It doesn't achieve the will of God. In tough times our anger and resentment can begin to simmer. We imagine that by drifting away or giving God the cold shoulder, we can teach Him a thing or two. The beginning step is to seek an ally that will love us better than God. Some see alcohol as a ready friend offering quick comfort. Others believe a church switch to where "people really understand me" will relieve their pain. Coping mechanisms and strategies for handling hurts and disappointments abound. But regardless of the action we choose, we're focusing again on a tiny pencil dot on the line of eternity. Maybe that very realization is what prompted Peter to declare to Jesus, "Where else would we go?"

Day 4

[John 13:22-25](#)

[Colossians 1:17](#)

[Habakkuk 3:17-19](#)

The trials of life are meant to push us closer to Christ. The night Jesus was betrayed, we find John with his head on his

Master's chest. When Jesus announced that one of His disciples would betray Him, wouldn't John's reflexive response likely be to quickly lift his head and draw back in shock? In my imagination, I see Jesus placing His hand gently on his head to draw him near again.

Near Jesus is exactly where I need to be when troubling words or wounding circumstances come. This kind of intimacy can feel a little uncomfortable for some, specially for men, but the physical image points to a deeper spiritual reality. When one of my kids wants to crawl into my lap and press in close after a skinned knee or a scary dream, I can't help but be reminded of the tender love God has for His children. I am glad to be the one they run to. Think about it: There is a short list of folks who have an open invitation to place their head on your shoulder or chest. My list includes only my wife and two kids. No one else gets those kinds of hugs, because there is a depth of relationship that precedes such intimate contact.

When I am hurting, when I'm experiencing that part of God's will that I do not want, He is the one I run to. The truth is, God has "rigged" this life to require Jesus Christ at its center. Faced with the part of God's will I do not want, He is the One I draw close to, trusting that He is weaving a plan— even when I don't understand how.

Through that difficult morning of loss and heartbreak, Kelly and I learned immeasurable lessons in trust. We chose to pray and believe that God was in control. We returned home from the hospital and cranked up some of our favorite songs of praise in the stereo ... and we cried. We focused our attention on God and pressed in to Him, hurting, but knowing it was Him we needed most. We didn't like His will and did not want it, but He didn't ask us about that. He does not have to. He is the Sovereign One. My job is to cling to Him in trust.

Day 5

[1 Corinthians 10:13](#)

[2 Corinthians 1:8-10](#)

Have you ever heard someone say, "God will never give you more than you can handle"? I'm guessing they're paraphrasing 1 Corinthians 10:13, which says God will not let you be *tempted* beyond what you can bear. But trouble and temptation are two different things. There will never be an instance when we are forced into sin with no way out. Sin is always a choice, not the inevitable result of crushing temptation. But somehow that verse has been twisted to mean that we won't experience more trouble than we can bear —when in fact nothing could be further from the truth. God will *often* allow more than we can handle, but He'll never allow more than He can handle. In fact, my whole life is more than I can handle —that is why I need Christ!

I needed God to stay the course while I was in school. I needed Him as a single man who longed for a spouse. I needed Him when I needed a job. Now, with two kids, a marriage, friends and a great church to love and lead ... I definitely have more than I can handle. I need God when Kelly and I struggle to be "two who became one" and we're arguing over which one of us we became! Only in His strength and wisdom can I know what is best for my family and whether or not my desires are selfish or pure. It is possible to "win the fight" but lose ground in marriage ... a lesson most of us have learned the hard way. Bottom line, this life is hard. I need God every minute of every day, because I am often faced with "more than I can handle." Paul must have understood this when he wrote these words to the Corinthians:

We do not want you to be uninformed ... about the hardships we suffered ... We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us...

Day 6

[1 Peter 3:15](#)

God will undoubtedly allow more than we can handle. Great pressure results in great reliance. Settle it and rely on Him. The “I can’t do this” sweat of life is where we learn to trust Him most deeply. “Trials and troubles are dumbbells and treadmills for the soul,” writes Robert Morgan. “They develop strength and stamina.”¹ God has used the pressures of miscarriage and cancer to draw me closer to Him. They both looked as “uncrossable” to me as the Red Sea must have looked to Moses. But such challenges cause us to rely on God more deeply than we might otherwise. Sadly, if we could handle these things without Him, many of us would try.

When was the last time you prayed for the strength to take a single step? Today, someone in a hospital or a physical therapy clinic somewhere is asking God for that much strength. That single step to them looks impossible. It is more than they can bear. They need their God just to shuffle a few feet forward—and when they do, the resulting celebration will be even louder than for someone else’s marathon!

Those parts of His will that we do not want, cause the volume of our faith to get turned up. C. S. Lewis said that God “whispers to us in our pleasures ... but shouts to us in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”² Not only do we hear God more clearly, but our attentiveness to Him can also cause the ears of others to incline toward words of hope.

As my wife endured a miscarriage and the loss of her mom, she sought God like never before. You should see her Bible. Ink stained, pages curled, writing in every margin, cover torn. But the wear of her Bible also shows where the protection of her heart came from. Imagine a woman losing a child, caring for her cancer-ridden mother and then speaking at her mother’s funeral. It was more than she could bear. But she trusted God to bear it for her, and He did. She leaned into Him and not away, and once again He proved Himself faithful.

When God’s will is not what you wanted, you’ve received your chance to shine. So stay put and trust as you lean into Jesus. He will surely see you through.

Notes

1. A Robert J. Morgan, *Red Sea Rules* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), p. 96.

2. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001).